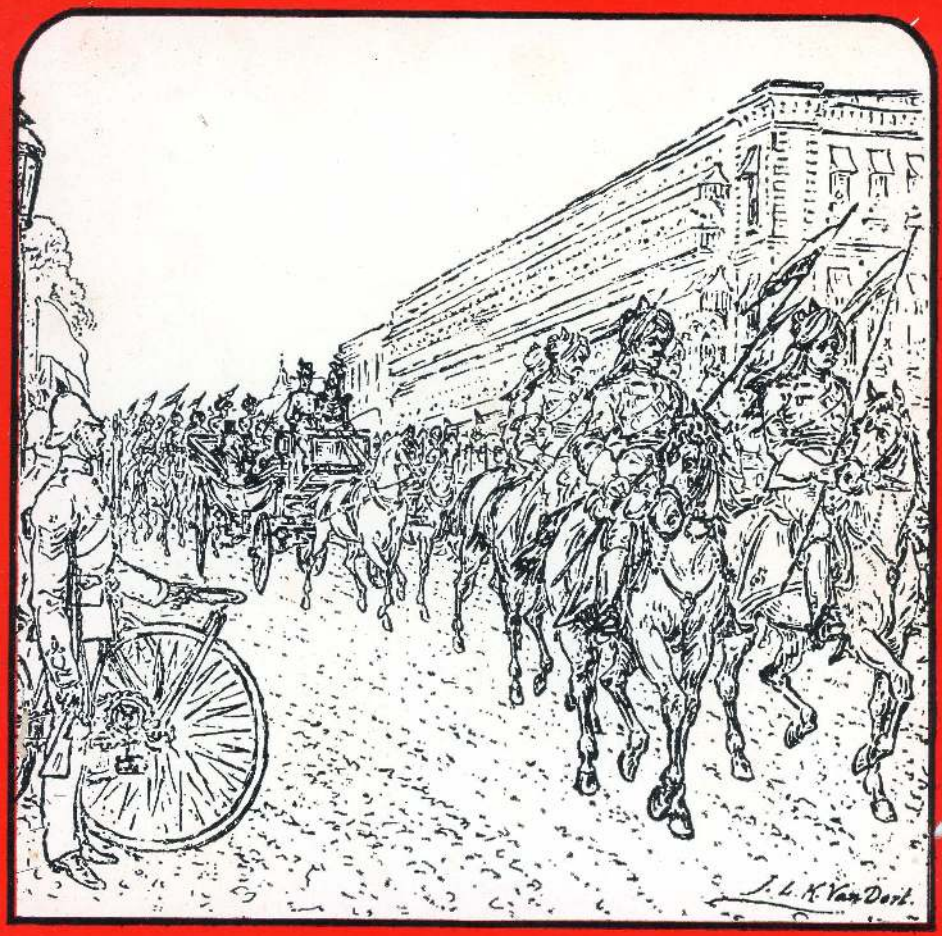
BRITISH GOVERNORS and COLONIAL POLICY in SRI LANKA



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British Governors and Colonial Policy in Sri Lanka

By

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This Book is

Dedicated to the Memory

of

Don William Rajapatirana

Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka
1959 to 1967

and his wife

Eugene Cecilia

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ILLUSTRATIONS

NOTE

I am indebted for the illustrations in the book to Mr. Ismeth Raheem who obtained the pictures from the *Illustrated London News*, to Mr. Sarath Gooneratne, of Studio Mins, who did the photographs and to Mrs. Chitra Mendis for her indefatigable work in both the collection of photographs and seeing the publication through the Press.

Tisara Prakasakayo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Living in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, one cannot help being fascinated by the living memories of British Governors which are around. These are the street names, statues like that of Edward Barnes, Gordon Gardens casting a shadow on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chalmers' Granaries an eternal obstacle to a motorist venturing from Fort to Pettah, Galle Face, the great esplanade for old age and whispering lovers made, the Musuem of Gregory pearl white and chaste looking in its spacious horticultural setting in the heart of fashionable Cinnamon Gardens. These are a few of the growing up memories in Colombo and this book is to some extent an exercise in nostalgia to conjure up these memories of a city strewn with colonial relics.

Several of its monuments evoke such images. The Victory Column now moved into the seclusion of the park, at one time stood in solitary grandeur at Galle Face and witnessed an annual ceremony, when His Majesty's representative looking white and solemn in tropical uniform would lay the traditional wreath of poppies while the guns boomed, the gathering sang "Oh God our help in ages past", the priest intoned Laurence Binyon and the nations prepared for the next war. The Senate chamber was intact until 1972 and was the old Legislative chamber where as Macaulay would say the Arunachalams and the Pereras would fulminate against the colonial overlords. The House of Parliament until 1982 was the State Council to which the Governor would drive in an open carriage for the ceremonial opening of the sessions. There is Queen's House of course, its whiteness gleaming through a screen of trees, a cool oasis in the bustle of modern Fort, where for over a century the official custodian watched over the affairs of his domain. This book is dedicated to these memories my own

boyhood memories I should say but it also has the purpose of drawing attention to the need for taking a closer look at this period and evaluating the role of the Governors.

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to the Government Archivist of Sri Lanka, Mr. A. Dewaraja in helping me with source material, Dr. L. S. Dewaraja for valuable advice, to the scholarship of the University of Ceylon History, to the officials of the Library of Congress in Washington for the facilities extended to me for research, Mr. Ranjit de Alwis of IBM for technical help, to my wife for assistance in typing, to my son for useful suggestions. I trust it will give to those reading it some measure of the enjoyment I had writing it.

INTRODUCTION

No memories of the British period of Sri Lanka history are so well known to the public of today as the names of its Governors. These are household words in the everyday experience of citizens particularly of the capital Colombo. Unfortunately these are for the most part two dimensional memories, of place-names of the streets and sites which have been named after them in the more fashionable parts of Colombo and its commercial quarter. Indeed as residents and visitors are aware the Colombo 7 quarter in particular is a veritable chequer board of streets bearing the names of past Governors and hence a monument of nomenclature to their memories. In configuration these streets are concentrated into a particular locality which by a coincidence is where successive Sri Lanka's heads of governments have been residing. This is like an enclosure formed by Ward Place on the west and Gregory's Road on the east containing within it Rosmead Place, Barnes Place, MacCarthy Road, Campbell Place, Horton Place, Maitland Crescent, Ridgeway Place with McCallum Road and Havelock Road in the periphery. Thus a drive inside it is like a guided tour of "Governor land" for these insistent and pervading echoes of the past. There is no special connection between the streets and the names they bear but today Rosmead Place and Ward Place are more famous in their own right as the first has the residence of two of Sri Lanka's well known Prime Ministers the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and the other of President J. R. Jayewardene. This is fitting as the two Governors concerned were outstanding. This association applies also to the residence of another Prime Minister the late Mr. Dudley Senanayake in that it is adjacent to Gregory's Road, named after a famous Governor.

If the names of Governors have endured up till now, not so knowledge of them which has faded and become increasingly scant with time. It will not be long before only their names will remain,

divorced from knowledge. This would be a pity not only for their intrinsic importance but that one would lose a significant chapter in Sri Lanka's historical experience. There are several explanations for this trend. This is partly due to the depersonalized tendency in historical writing and evaluation in which the emphasis is on forces and subjects instead of persons. This is a reaction against the old Carlyle cult of personality which was conspicuous particularly in colonial history where in the case of India for instance Clive and Hastings dominated the scene. This is also the impact of the developmental, economist view of history particularly of third world countries as a study of infrastructure and economics. This is a rupees and cents cum statistical approach in terms of agricultural output, imports and exports, revenue, etc. A good example is the University History of Ceylon Volume 3 which is monumental for its learning and documentation but the substance of which, as the chapter headings would show, is on various developmental aspects of the country and highly compartmentalized and references to Governors are incidental and have to be traced in the index. This is basically the technique of the universal history as the structure of the standard Cambridge history would show. There is usually a compromise between the evolutionary approach in phases and pure subjectivization.

This method is also based on a particular ideology of history and historical writing. This is the sociological, materialist view of society as being moulded by particular inexorable forces rather than the human will or the initiative of an individual. On this view the latter merely follow and influence forces. In developing countries this view is particularly strong because to be sure the economic factor is uppermost in any evaluation of their past histroy or their future. Still one can exaggerate this and miss the human drama in thinking of history as an impersonal ticking of a clock. The impact of personality may be lost and the strength of character. To cite an example in Sri Lanka's history the rise of the Karava was not a mere economic phenomenon but an achievement of personality and initiative just as much as the impact of the Nayakkars, who were more than "Moorish scum" but astute traders and rivals to the Dutch. This vivisected approach to the British period is not entirely new. One of the pioneers Lennox Mills adopted it and even Dr. G. C. Mendis another pioneer followed an evolutionary approach. There is merit in it so long as one does not thereby miss the whole view, the grand design

not visible to the microscope. It is like an astronomer who in studying the behaviour of a few stars misses the grandeur of the solar design. In excess it can lead to computerized, potted history and the dehumanizing of history as a humanistic study, the key note of which is the nature of the human personality who, amidst all the pressures material or economic, is yet the centre of the historical stage.

The British period is particularly notable for the human factor in the person of the Governor. By his constitutional position alone he was the key figure and his personality and outlook could be decisive. They could alter the shape of events according to their judgement of it. Manning's ruthless communalism is an instance of the impact of one Governor. These Governors therefore had much power and authority to affect events. Before the advent of the cable this power was considerable. The conduct of a Governor was not the result exclusively of the Colonial office instructions. More often it happened the other way round. Throughout the 19th century the Colonial office was never so well organized as to be in a position to dictate to colonies. Until 1870 it was a limited operation focused mainly on the Dominlons and India and Crown colonies like Ceylon got very little notice indeed except on a crisis when its affairs would be ventilated even out of proportion. Later in the century this opinion was reactionary and Governors like Gregory had to fight for their colonies. Thus at all times the Governor had a major role and his advice actually shaped policy more often than not. The Governor's attitude was shaped by his character and experience and this was a matter of antecedents, upbringing, birth and growth, the environ, the social background, the education and cultural attainments all of which moulded him. Hence a knowledge of the Governors as men is indispensable to an understanding of the British period. The Governor had more power and stature than his Portuguese and Dutch predecessors. To the latter the headquarters were close at hand in Batavia while the Portuguese Viceroy was at Goa in constant touch. To the British Governor the government was an year's journey at the start in respect of despatches. His local power mattered a great deal.

This book is written primarily from this standpoint. It attempts to evaluate the British period in terms of its Governors. The latter are considered from two viewpoints, as the products of their environ and antecedents on the one hand and of British politics and foreign

policy of their times. Hence the chapter on backgrounds is focused on the first and the first three chapters on the other. This book is not a biography or human story but a study of Governors against the background of the factors which moulded them and made them what they were. The chapter on Queen's House sees the role of their families and domestic establishments. The task of getting the required information was not easy. The lives of these Governors are not that well known. Except for Gregory who was an extrovert the others said little about themselves leaving only their tightlipped impersonal despatches. The other exception is Clifford whose fictional writings are very revealing. The author is indebted to the pioneer work of Mr. Hulugalle which is the only biographical work on the Governors. Another valuable source, a veritable eye witness account would have been the "Remembered Yesterdays" if only the author had paid the same attention to the Governors whom he served as he has to his dogs and horses. The information about Governors is disappointingly small and confined to stray references. One would indeed have expected more information about one of the ablest of that time West Ridgeway considering that he named his own son after him. For the historical background I have depended on the University History especially the chapters by Drs K.M de Silva, Roberts and Wilson which are models of perceptive scholarship.

With all their ability and prestige British Governors of Sri Lanka were an ideological contradiction. They were placed in the position of preaching one thing at home and practising another. On the one hand they represented the star democracy in the world which was the envy of Europe, creating models overseas in the Dominions, but in the Crown colonies it was otherwise and they had a hundred excuses. The skill of the Governor lay in living down that contradiction and yet giving credibility to British rule. The Portuguese and Dutch counterparts never had this contradiction because they were no less authoritarian at home. British Governors were not unaware of the contradiction and their split personality. They tried to reconcile it by trusteeship, by professing concern for the natives. Some like Ward and Gregory carried it off with aplomb because of persona ability. To others like Gordon it suited his patrician temper. Later Governors had fewer qualms and like McCallum were hard cynics. The strain told on some. In Clifford the split personality

took him to the edge and almost toppled him over. Others like Manning had no compunction and relished their role.

Still despite their limitations and inherent contradictions these Governors were a rare breed. With a few exceptions they were the finest of their kind unsurpassed in devotion to duty, incorruptibility and conscientious application. They represented the other aspect of British political life which was its moral tone in matters of administration. They may or may not have believed that it was their mission to educate lesser breeds but they certainly did not spare themselves in doing what they could. In their dilemma one sees the unfolding of the tragedy of Ireland where the noblest intentions foundered on the realities of power. The colonies were each one a prospective Ireland on which its policies were ultimately impaled. What made Gregory a good Governor was his sensitiveness to the parallel. Governors were also influenced by their experience elsewhere In Sri Lanka this was a handicap as it was far more advanced than other colonies. Some Governors were thus retrograde in their ideas and tried to apply them to the Island. Perhaps an India experience might have been more useful but none of the Sri Lanka Governors ever had India experience.

This book has not examined the individual achievements of Governors as it did not seem necessary to enumerate facts which can be found in a text book. The basic skill of a Governor was in administration and it was in this sphere that they made concrete and lasting contributions. They stood for efficiency, discipline and application but they were always circumscribed by financial constraints and the hostility of their own compatriots over matters of priority where the latter wanted their own interests to have precedence. There was no essential difference between the Governors in the tasks undertaken except those of circumstances. Thus the first Governors did pioneer work blazing trails while the later ones continued and perfected these undertakings broadening their dimensions.

It is interesting that some of the early text books on the modern period used to deal with the Governors individually under separate headings. One sees this to some extent in the section on the British period in the book by Fr. S. G. Perera. This reflected the influence and atmosphere of those times which were the twilight of British rule but the Governor was yet the centre piece and historians

had to take their cue from him. The tendency today is in the opposite direction which is also unsatisfactory. There is also a trend towards individual studies which have resulted in two monographs on Ward and Gregory. These are valuable contributions but limited in perception, being somewhat like administration reports. It might have been better if they were written from a biographical perspective without concentrating on Sri Lanka alone. Still it is an useful direction in studies of the British period and it is hoped that a full series can be undertaken covering the administrations of all the Governors or at least the more important. This would be an appropriate venture for Departments of History in the Universities and considering the wealth of source material available with the Archives just waiting to be tapped, it should be feasible. The relevancy would be greater than of other periods as the roots of today lie very much in those times. The decisions of British Governors on many matters have decisively affected the character of institutions and affairs today.

There are several other aspects of British Governors which merit study. These include basis of selection, relations with the Home authorities, the structure and operation of the latter, relations between the Governor and the sovereign and the Secretary of State. Information on all these subjects is still very scant, a circumstance which calls for an in-depth study of the Colonial office and its functioning in those times. Part of the problem is that the latter evolved very slowly and grudgingly and its concentration for the most part was on the Dominions. A separate Secretaryship came into being only around 1825 but the calibre of its incumbents was inconsistent. In fact the post was looked down upon and treated purely as a stepping stone until Chamberlain gave it respectability but for his own purposes. Balfour found it difficult to find a successor after the prestige first and notoriety later which he gave it. The Permanent Under-Secretary made up for this but they had protracted incumbencies. Stephen dominated in the first half and in the last quarter Sir Robert Herbert rated as the most brilliant ever. Another problem is that the Permanent Under-Secretaries were somewhat one sided in their background. Most were African specialists that being in those days a major problem. Herbert was an African specialist, and so was his successor Robert Meade. Another Under-Secretary at this time Edward Fairfield was likewise an authority on Africa who was involved in shaping policy towards South Africa. In this context the affairs of the Crown

colonies certainly went by default. Structurally too the situation was very unsatisfactory. It was not till about 1880 that a separate department known as the Eastern Department was formed to deal with the Asian crown colonies and included Gibraltar and Malta. In 1925 there was a separate desk dealing with Ceylon and Mauritius. This situation precluded proper attention being given to the affairs of Crown colonies. One heard the complaint which is very common from ambassadors of third world countries nowadays that their affairs were in the hands of clerks and rarely went up to the heights. It is not untrue that for most of the time decisions were being made by very junior officials on no basis besides sheer ignorance and prejudice and perhaps hearsay. This was a situation on which the pressure groups could capitalize. The latter were the planters and business interests and it is not unlikely that much was done in this way through private correspondence and contacts to get decisions which undermined Governors. This traffic would not appear in the official collection of papers. The result is that if the Governor was a strong man he could have his way. This was true of Robinson from the way he laughed off an indiscretion. After the laying of the cable the Governor was under tighter control but as the departmental structure itself did not grow, the situation did not necessarily improve.

A very unsatisfactory feature of the system was the poor calibre in respect of background knowledge and post experience of the officials at the Colonial office who were responsible for the conduct of the affairs of Crown colonies. Owing to the restrictive structure, the work load and the priority given to the Dominions, these officers were invariably the clerks and writers who handled the day-to-day business and the submission of papers to an Under-Secretary would have been an exception. These clerks and writers were for the most part during the 19th century and early 20th essentially personal appointments. There was no formal recruitment as such through public examinations on the basis of set qualifications. Initially they were personal nominations from a list compiled by the Under Secretary but later they were selected through an interview conducted by a Board or recruiting officer. The procedure was for applications to be submitted to the Colonial office by the parties concerned and they would be processed by the recruiting authority. We have the assurance of Ralph Furse in his memoirs on recruitment that these appointments were absolutely above board and that the recruiting officers like him

were sincere and conscientious in their desire to ensure that the very best were selected free of nepotism or pressures. We have no reason to doubt his word and it is possible that the nominees had a good character, school record and competency. However the question at issue is the character and relevancy of their qualifications to their particular responsibilities in the Colonial office. The conventional educational background of those days was the public school followed by Oxford or Cambridge with a Degree in Classics or History or Mathematics, the exceptional ones getting a Double First. This was invariably the academic record of the Governors but as an equipment for colonial administration it was very limited indeed and if at all inculcated an air of cultural snobbery based on the imagined superiority of the Western classics over other branches of knowledge. This may explain their familiarity with classical allusions and readiness to quote them in their speeches as a mark of erudition. Governors with a few exceptions like Gregory and Chalmers were essentially Macaulayan in their intellectual attitude to non-Western knowledge and this is one reason why during the later empire anthropology and ethnology flourished under the patronage of British Universities in lieu of Oriental studies which was left to German and French scholars for the most part. The background of Western classics gave a predisposition on their encounter with non-Western societies towards these primitive studies, the classic illustration of this intellectual gravitation being the "Golden Bough" of Frazer which was an application of Western classics to the Hades of primitive mythology and magic. Ralph Furse quotes a comment by President Radhakrishnan about the insensitiveness and ignorance of English officialdom to the art, religion and philosophy of India as rulers of the latter. This is an oft-repeated limitation of British colonialism which contrasted with the mental attitude of the French.

There is no doubt that the persons thus recruited to the Colonial office suffered from these limitations in their educational background. The overseas visitor to Britain even today would be surprised at the ignorance and insensitiveness among the rank and file about these countries and the painfully common experience for Ceylon to be regarded as a part of the sub-continent. What is ironic is that a citizen of modern China or the Soviet Union is much more aware and

appreciative of the true position. The difference is not due to propaganda but an attitude towards education, about the world and preconceptions. One can imagine the state of ignorance which would have prevailed among the public at large from whom officials were selected during those early times and hence their relative competency to preside over the affairs of these countries. The key to administration in a Colonial office as in a Foreign Ministry would be the geographical Desk or Bureau which is the chief monitoring agency whose function is to study papers, evaluate them and submit them for orders or otherwise as the case may be to the Government. Essential to this operation is the inside expert knowledge of the Desk which should be an authority on that country manned preferably by persons with personal knowledge of it. Unfortunately this personal familiarity was not true of it at that time and did not even apply to the Foreign Office where the practice was to differentiate between field staff and the Foreign Ministry. The latter was the stronghold of mandarins whose task was to cut the others to size and clip their wings when possible. There is hardly a case during the 19th century of even a senior official either coming from a Colonial office desk or returning to one. John Anderson was one of the few instances of an official with long experience of the Colonial office being appointed Governor. Chalmers in contrast came from the Treasury. Thus the staff of the Colonial office, particularly the clerks and writers who dealt with the Crown colonies would have not possessed personal knowledge of their subjects let alone sympathy and whatever information they had were the despatches and hearsay on the basis of which they had to form expert opinions and advice the government on policy. From complaints of Governors it would seem that the tendency was for them to sit on papers due to indifference, overwork, or other priorities. Without that essential link between the desk and the colony in the personal experience of the desk officer one could hardly expect justice to be done according to the merits of a case. Perhaps it was too much to expect these administrative concepts which are the bedrock of foreign offices today to be understood in those times. Even today one finds Foreign Offices treating overseas posts like a Christmas tree from which plum posts are given as presents to personal friends and party men thereby disrupting that essential circuit between Foreign office and mission, that ploughing back of knowledge and contact process which is integral to professional diplomacy, the loss of which

as a result is irreparably damaging from a service and national point of view. This is more heinous for a modern state because it is the national good and image which would pay the price but in a colonial context the sacrifice was of a colony. It is clear that the administrative arrangements of that time and the quality of head office staff was not conducive to efficient, knowledgeable or sympathetic handling of their problems. The well-being of colonies hence rested to a large extent on the calibre and initiative of the Governors. The Colonial office was not geared or constituted to give proper service or do justice to their problems or requirements. The very idea of welfare was unknown. Political problems were uppermost because of their link with the party struggle. In the last quarter of the century the Colonial office was dominated by the South African problem and from Secretary of State downwards concentration was in that direction. The policy towards Crown colonies was in effect "quieta non movere" and the task of the Governor was to ensure that the boat would not be rocked.

About the basis on which Governors were chosen no clear policy was followed. In the second half of the century with better organization in the Colonial office there was a move to limit them to professionals and promote a regular service. Of 33 Governors in 1865 there were 11 professionals in the sense of those in it as a career. The Governors Pensions Act of 1864 was a step in this direction. An attempt was made to draw up a Governor's list from which future appointments would be made but political appointments continued from high society and the services. The appointment of Gregory in 1872 was an obvious breach. Towards the last quarter and in the 20th century a career pattern evolved of rotation of posts. Local knowledge did not seem to be a principal criterion. In Sri Lanka only three Colonial Secretaries returned as Governors. Unlike in diplomacy perhaps post experience may not have been an asset possibly creating prejudices. Regional experience would have been more desirable but this was an exception because many Governors appointed to Sri Lanka had an African post experience pattern. The conclusion seems to be that appointments were haphazard and probably circumstantial but with time personal nominations became less. Later Sri Lanka attracted high quality, two instances being of Gordon who was Governor of New Zealand and Robinson who was sent to South Africa at the height of the crisis. Not much is known about the official briefing of Governors. No system appears to have existed

and it depended on the inclinations of individual Secretaries of State or Governors. Thus Gregory, conscientious man that he was, had met Torrington whose only advice was that he should avoid Trincomalee because of malaria. The Colonial office had dissuaded him from pursuing the project of a Colombo harbour. Governors usually arrived from other posts and there is no evidence that they received post reports and other briefing paraphernalia of modern diplomacy. However, with the exception of North whose prior experience of life was confined to the Greek classics and the Mediterranean and of Torrington, no Sri Lanka Governor on appointment was a complete ignoramus. Even nondescripts like MacCarthy, Longden and Havelock had some saving grace and were needed to set off the ability of the others.

The character of the relationship between the Governor and the Home authorities is not very clear. It does not seem to have been as close as between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State where, as the Morley-Minto correspondence would show, the personal relationship was an important factor. Of course India was a different proposition entirely compared to a Crown colony like Sri Lanka. The medium of communication was the official despatch but whether accompanied by personal letters and lobbying is not known. Contacts of this kind took place during visits to Britain when invariably there was a feverish round of meetings and looking up people and cultivating MP's. It does not seem that as a rule personal influence was exercised. An exception was the case of Manning and Milner because being birds of the same feather they could see eye to eye. In general the administration seems to have been impersonal in the unhurried remote way which marked the mentality towards Crown colonies. Of connections with the sovereign, a known instance is the aversion of Queen Victoria for Robinson not because he was too old but bureaucratic, resentful of the masterful Chamberlain and his roughshod way of handling the Transvaal. Robinson like Chamberlain knew of plans for the Jameson Raid but chose to do nothing about it. Governors came into contact with Royalty on their visits to the colony. Thus the Duke of Edinburgh came during Robinson's time and the Prince of Wales during Manning's time. Also the future King George V came as Prince George in 1882 during the Governorship of Longden. There is no indication otherwise of Palace interest in Sri Lanka affairs.

This cursory glance at the administrative position of the Governor would show that several aspects have to be studied to gain a proper evaluation. In general it would seem as if the Crown colonies were ill served partly because of the unfamiliarity of the desk officials with their subjects and the serious structural limitations of the Colonial office. There is a parallel to this in the position of a Foreign Ministry in a developing country where if it is under the Head of government it has more prestige and its administration is on a par. However, when it is a separate Ministry, its affairs may suffer by comparision with other national priorities, like the Colonial office of the 19th century, and the Minister concerned will be left to do as he likes. The only curb should have been Parliament but the affairs of Crown colonies rarely got a hearing in the latter just as in Parliaments today the subject of foreign affairs is usually foreign to everyone.

The moral of the story seems to be that while it is true that the loss of colonies was due to inexorable forces which were democratic aspirations, at the same time it was equally a case of administrative mismanagement and insensitivity. A machinery better geared towards understanding local sentiment would have served the purpose better. As Ralph Furse himself admits, the notion of development never entered the horizons of the Colonial office except in a marginal sense, like the irrigation policy of British Governors in Sri Lanka. It was not till 1940 that on the initiative of Malcolm MacDonald that a Colonial Development Fund was opened. Ironically a CRO had to await the end of the colonies and the Overseas Development Ministry likewise. If they came earlier they would not necessarily have altered the time table of independence but would certainly have improved the lot of those countries and lessened the burdens of independence. As it is on independence they had to cope with a backlog, undo things before embarking on creative activity.

The British Governor of Sri Lanka thus found himself in a contradictory position. On the one hand British policy particularly in the educational and economic sphere released powerful forces in the creation of a Western educated intelligentsia and an affluent, ambitious middle class both of whom were serious threats to British rule. On the other hand as the servant of the Crown it was his duty to preserve British rule and keep it impact. In a sense the Governor and British rule which he represented were hoisted on their own petard as victims of the very forces which they had initiated. How the Governor stood

up to the challenge of this dilemma and yet steered the government for almost a hundred and fifty years is the drama of British rule. The success was due in great measure to the personal qualities of the Governors, their masterful characters and their combinations of ability and statesmanship. Resort to naked power was, if at all, the great exception in the island which occurred twice and was brutally overdone. After the 1818 showdown the country was quiet not because the people were docile by nature but that they were tired and the British gave peace in the first instance and there were constructive features in their rule as it unfolded itself under successive Governors. More than ever it opened it to the free play of economic forces in a way which worked to the advantage of sections of the people whose support was thus the foundation of British rule.

A word is in place about the contribution of Governors to the economy. As the pivots of British rule and the local architects of policy it is but natural that they played a key role. What is noteworthy is the personal initiative which was taken by some of them in initiating and regulating policies. It is true that colonial policy as expounded by the Manchester school of which Colebrooke was an early exponent was to leave economic development to market forces in an environ free of monopolies or discrimination. To that extent one may think of the Governors as being borne by the waves, as being carried spontaneously by these forces and merely reacting to them. This is an oversimplified application of the Marxist view because ever so often the Governor had to step in with a rescue operation. Two clear instances of this in Sri Lanka were the successive coffee crises in Sri Lanka and the banking crisis. In both cases the timely initiative of the Governor particularly Gordon saved the situation. It is no exaggeration to say that it was the personal energy of Edward Barnes and his enthusiastic endorsement of coffee plantations and the example which he set that plunged the country into the coffee plantation economy thereby decisively transforming the character of its economy. Given the circumstances of the time perhaps there was no alternative to solve the economic problems of the country but perhaps another Governor may have acted differently. Having embarked on this course it became the endeavour of the Governors from thereon to provide the servicing and the infrastructure to develop and expand it. No doubt they were acting under the relentless pressure of the planters who were pushing them at every turn but still it was

the individual energy of the Governors that mattered. An illustration of this was the dynamic career of Ward whose administration was a veritable tour de force in all these fields providing the railway, labour, roads and gearing the administration accordingly. Under Gregory, Robinson and Gordon this process was carried forward in widening circles and greater momentum, entering new fields in a policy of progressive state intervention in the name of welfare and development. The Governor was thus not the mere plaything of impersonal forces but one who constantly shaped and monitored them. The trend under these Governors towards the restoration of irrigation works and increased output had in mind the possibility of self sufficiency to counteract the adverse effects of the plantation imbalance. Blake's abolition of the grain tax was another far-sighted measure. The Governor also intervened effectively on monetary matters. Gordon's speedy intervention when the Oriental Banking Corporation collapsed in guaranteeing honouring of notes was one such case which averted a catastrophe. Colin Campbell encouraged the formation and operations of the Bank of Ceylon and the Western Bank of India at a time when credit facilities did not exist for planters. Thus the Governors complemented their political role of steering the ship of state by major contributions to the economic well being and advancement of the country. An enumeration of them is a factual catalogue of roads, bridges, public works, financial measures, legislative aids which would speak for itself.

A word of explanation may be due on the scheme and underlying conception of this study. Three of the chapters are on subjects which some may be disposed to regard as external to its subject and title. These are the first three chapters on British political history, foreign and colonial policy. The answer is that the author views the Governors as essentially the product of these forces. Some Governors were literally so, as for instance Sir William who came straight from the party politics of Britain or West Ridgeway who had participated in major imperialist military operations or Robinson who had negotiated the cession of Hong Kong. They were all steeped in the affairs of empire and Governorship was not some retirement from the arena a period of seclusion but a link in a chain in each career. Their actions and ideas have therefore at every turn to be viewed against the broad sprawling canvas of an empire and of the latter vis-a-vis the world. Sri Lanka as a Crown colony was a limb of a far-flung tree and the

gusts to which the latter was exposed shook the branches as well. The trunk from which they sprouted was the parent state and any disturbance in the latter would reverberate through the frame. The Governor was in a sense the link between the part and the whole, the latter reaching out into the far corners expressive of strength or weakness. From that standpoint the history of the Governors cannot be written in terms of Sri Lanka and should necessarily be seen as part of the wider picture, the global and imperial dimension. This approach has not been favoured in the past in the understandable desire to give precedence and pride of place to the local scene in what may be called the country view of colonial history which is a study of their internal administrations. This is also the effect of the pragmatic approach of regarding the present as essentially the product of the immediate past and hence the emphasis is on functional themes like education, communications, land, agriculture. This could lead to an over insular view which would miss the grand sweep of imperial history and the tides of world events.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND IN BRITAIN

Britain entered the 19th century in the throes of an apparent political, social and economic crisis. In many respects the domestic situation was as explosive as the explosion in France against which Britain was fighting. No doubt these were partly the distorting and deleterious effects of the war but it had its roots in the character of Britain in the 18th century which the war merely aggravated. Ironically despite the agrarian and industrial revolutions which technologically had put it ahead of others, the country and society at large had not benefited evenly from their fruits. In many respects Britain was still old world, its institutions effete and its outlook feudal and its people divided. The two nations of Sybil was much more true of it then than during Disraeli's time. The political reality in Britain and its social values bore little relation to its economic changes consequent on technological progress. This impression would have been evident from a glance at the main features of life in Britain at the dawn of the century.

Politically Britain was like a pocket borough writ large. It was the property as it were of a number of land-owning families who ruled the country by turns ostensibly as ministers of the king but essentially for themselves and their class. It was almost the opposite of the situation in France where the monarchy had progressively divested the nobility of the substance of their power leaving only the shadow of their privileges. In Britain instead the nobles had repeatedly humbled the king in the Magna Carta, in the Civil War and in 1688 in the Bill of Rights which outwardly enthroned Parliament but in effect installed the land-owning oligarchy in power. The monarchy survived not only through the innate attachment to it of the nation, which could

not always be taken for granted and was perverse at times but also the adroit manoeuvring of one group against the other somewhat like the Nayakkar monarchs of Kandy. Indeed there is much in common between the politics and its underlying foundations of Hanoverian England and the later Kandyan kingdom. Thus the English political system was essentially an oligarchy and an aristocracy combined ruling through its control of Parliament and it must be admitted a certain competency and a sense of things which distinguished them from their contemporaries in the continent and earned for them their position. The conception of a conscientious ruling class which underneath its foppishness and condescension could still be sensitive to popular needs was a uniquely British contribution to civilization. In effect out of a membership of 658 in the House of Commons the great majority was virtually nominated through the system of pocket boroughs and other pockets of influence through a variety of vested interests such as landowning families, corporations, special interests, Universities. The members were elected by a voting public of approximately 245,000 out of a population of around 10 million. Thus the representation was doubly restricted in the small proportion of the electorate and the vested interests for which they stood. The limitations did not end there because there were besides the denial of the franchise to several elements on sectional grounds, the ineligibility of Catholics. These included a population of 60,000 Catholics and other groups such as Jews, Quakers, agnostics and those unable to swear allegiance to the Established Church. The House of Commons had its own limitations in the power of the Lords to reject bills which as the former increased in power, escalated into a constitutional crisis no less acrimonious than the conflict with the Stuarts.

The political system was a picture of the state of British society at this time. It was a truly divided society, separated by class and economic interests into competing or mutually hostile groups rather than the facile two nations of writers which is an oversimplification. On the upper floor the aristocracy of birth rivalled the lords of the land while below there were the rural farmer and labourer both of whom would become the urban proletariat. In between them was the mezzanine intrusion of the incipient factory owners, captains of industry and trade, nabobs from overseas, middlemen, professional classes, intellects forming the middle class whose historic destiny it would be to dispossess or merge with the first in common exploitation

of the other. The nobility which consisted of around 287 temporal peers, 26 Anglican Bishops, 340 Baronets and 350 Knights overshadowed society with their influence, pomp and circumstance and was to be more tenacious and persistent than expected as a hallmark of British life. Their palmy days were still ahead when the divisions of party politics in Parliament would invest them with a decisive voice in affairs. There was a patrician flavour in this picture like in a family portrait of Gainsborough where the aristocracy and rural gentry would combine to preside over the land.

The social gulf was now becoming an economic and cultural chasm as a result of the polarization in life styles caused by the industrial revolution. This was in the offing for some time in changes in the means of production in agriculture and industry. These were gradually eroding the character of English life, defacing the picture of rural bliss and Arcadian innocence which was depicted by Goldsmith in his "Deserted Village" or Gray's "Elegy". The old England of villages nestling in a rural setting presided over by the patriarchal despotism of a De Coverley like Justice of the Peace and the country parson was disappearing under the plough of scientific farming and its skyline ripped by chimney stacks and smothered by their effiux. Soon the land would be pitted with those cesspool-like industrial cities into which humanity would be compressed in conditions of disgraceful squalor. This so-called revolution was the outcome of a technological breakthrough in a number of key sectors such as spinning, weaving and the textile industries, metallurgy, agriculture, transport which not only gave a new direction to the economy but irreparably transformed the physical and social landscape of Britain. Apart from the obvious dichotomy which it created between a captalist and working class, thereby adding to the multiplicity of nations within, it introduced a new dimension in existence and misery to British life. The great and Satanic urban conglomerations of the North arose into which workers were crammed with no time or thought for proper sanitation, hygiene, minimal housing standards, thereby condemning these early generations to a life of unspeakable squalor and degradation. Working conditions were characterized by sweated labour, exploitation of women and children, long hours of work for as much as 12 to 14 hours a day, insecurity of service and subjection to the vagaries of market forces and the machinations of industrialists and factory owners intent primarily on maximization of

profits with few restraints of law or conscience. This was perhaps the nadir of British working class conditions and shocked observers of that time. De Tocqueville thought that it marked a return to savagery and Carlyle that the medieval serf had been better off. The industrial transformation was as yet limited to only a part of the country, its emphasis being on the North which contained the resources needed to power them. Elsewhere perhaps the country had the air of sylvan bliss. Still there is no doubt that it had taken an irrevocable course which would grow in momentum to encompass the whole nation and be its mainstay and pose great challenges to its conscience and statesmanship. As yet the full dimensions could not be discerned though there were far-seeing spirits like Robert Owen and thinkers who sensed it and prepared the country for it.

The oligarchical character of Britain at this time pervaded almost every sphere of its life. It was not a mere gulf between Lords and Commoners, Capitalists and workers but a far-reaching intellectual, political, ecclesiastical hegemony as well. Politically the executive was the king in Parliament but he had to depend for his cabinet on the overlords in Parliament and could scarcely act independent of them. Even if he wanted to defy Parliament as George III attempted, it had to be through one or other of them. Still there was room to outwit them if the king was adroit and the later Hanoverians had spirit and had their way from time to time. So long as this accorded with the public will it could work or even pay off and monarchs were not lacking in an intuitive sense or at times like Victoria asserted themselves through sheer force of character. Throughout the 19th century, despite some of the most powerful politicians any country has ever known from Pitt to Peel, Gladstone, Balfour and Churchill, the monarchy has not been unequal and was rarely brow-beaten. They evolved their own system of living with these giants and even getting the better of them. At times of heated party divisions and polemics the king could act and stand for the totality of the nation.

In religion, despite the British tradition of dissent, free thinking, non-conformity, sympathy for rebel causes, the church and state were not less Gallican than in France. The Church meant the Established Church of England, the cornerstone of which was the 39 articles to which every faithful subject had to subscribe as a pinch of incense not only to qualify for its blessing but to enjoy civil rights. Those unable to take the oath as prescribed were disenfranchised. The

representatives of the church at all levels were partners of the secular leaders not only in fox hunting but in their singular devotion to the old order. A notable illustration of their apparently rooted opposition to reform was when 21 bishops voted against the first reading of the 1832 reform, 11 in the House of Lords, thereby effectively killing it on that occasion and obliging Lord Grey to resign. The church regarded itself in a Burkean sense as a prop of continuity, a bulwark against revolution and the upholder of order and tradition at a time of disruption and collapse of the past. Its limitation was an apparent lack of social conscience and an insensitivity to the human problems of the time despite the patent relevancy of its teachings and its calling to that situation. Unfortunately the church and its representatives had ossified no less than its counterpart in France and was more a symbol of a past order than a live social force playing its part in the crisis of the time. The popularity of dissent, the great vogue of the extra curricular religions such as Methodism, and of free thinkers like Paine preaching an enlightened humanism must be attributed to the inability of the church to channel and use what seemed to be an instinct amongst many thinkers and leaders towards social reform and the awakening of the conscience on behalf of the dispossessed and unprivileged. The initiative of these elements which in the case of Methodism became a national hysteria made up for the omission of the church carrying out what should have been the function of the latter and perhaps saved Britain.

One of the foundations of the ruling class oligarchy was its intellectual monopoly which deprived the nation at large of the benefits of education. The latter was confined to members of the ruling class, Oxford for the Parliamentarians and proconsuls and Cambridge for the intellects and scientists and equipped them for that role. To that extent this ruling class was perhaps one of the finest examples of elitism the world has known, far surpassing the oft-quoted classical models. It was Periclean in the dimensions, intellectual perception of its leaders their innate wisdom. Men like Pitt, Canning, Castlereagh, Peel, Sidmouth, Eldon who, apart from steering the country through a critical phase in its evolution, had to preserve its sovereign existence were perhaps the superior of their counterparts in any age. It is not too much to say that they saved Britain and perhaps civilized values at a time when they were being trampled by the jackboots of reaction and revolution. Still for their elitism, for this

model of Plato's Republic the nation paid the price of the educational impoverishment of the people in addition to its economic deprivation and division as a society. The statistics of education are painful. In 1806 it is estimated that two million children were not receiving education. In 1819 only 1/15 of children were attending schools. There was no lack of private enterprise in lieu of state activity but the main obstacle was the insistence of the church on religious instruction which impeded these attempts at non-sectarian schools on the part of well wishers, an example of which was the Royal Lancastrian Association. The nation had to wait till Forster's great Education Act of 1870 to realize a national undenominational system of education.

Britain at the turn of the century, as moulded by these forces and factors was an elitist society under the domination of an aristocratic ruling class which combined political with economic power. Its keynote was complacency and self assuredness and a faith in reason and orderly progress which was reflected in its Augustan verse and addiction to classicsm, a notable example being the Bank of England which was built like the Parthenon. It was not a coincidence that Gibbon chose the Roman empire as his theme as this merely symbolised the mental affinity of his times with the subject. Indeed there was some similarity between the political atmosphere of the later Roman republic and of Britain at this time in that the Senate like Parliament was the seat of authority and the Senators were a wealthy domineering land-owning class, wielding immense power and patronage even presiding over a world empire like the British ruling class which likewise was acquiring an overseas empire. The city state like quality of its Parliamentary debates with their wealth of classical allusions reflected this nostalgia and a sense of identity. Figuratively the image was of a stately mansion in a horticultural setting with an ornate frontage of classical capitals and cornices, an imposing driveway leading up to its entrance which opened into pillared halls, the whole a fortification secured from the outside by gamekeepers and anti-poaching laws standing in grandeur like a park in the midst of a forest or an oasis set against the growing desolation of the countryside. The spirit of its occupants was mirrored in the family portraiture on the walls or the canvases of classical scenes projecting their narcissistic self indulgence and sense of importance with visions of immortality or divinity like the figures of classical mythology. These were not only retreats into a pagan world but the bastions of a life style and

of a political philosophy which was the divine right of the ruling class to lead the nation and keep the helots under control. If it was democracy this was the Periclean sort confined to an elitist circle. The ruling classes had a faithful ally in the Established Church which gave its sanction to the prevailing ethos. The English public was still God-fearing and the leadership set a good example by their regular attendance at church. When the latter failed to meet the new generations of industrial Britain, these turned to their own forms of religion rather than abandon it altogether. The continuing hold of religion and faith on the people was one of the distinguishing features of British history which explains the different course it took compared to France. Even those who opposed religion and the church offered a new humanism which incorporated the essence of religious beliefs and was animated by a lofty selfless idealism. Owen may have quarrelled with religion but no Christian could seriously complain about his vision of society.

This sedate, status quo existence was not without threats to its self satisfaction. Like the Roman republic this complacency was shattered on a number of occasions such as the Gordon riots, the Jacobite uprising which were the equivalent of the sudden invasion of the Cimbri and Teutones or the murderous social war to the former. The traumatic loss of the American colonies was the parallel of the Mithridatic war which was a drain on the republic. The climax was the French revolution which figurativeiy was to Gibbon the onset of the barbarians on Augustan Britain though whether in his mind this was revolutionary Jacobinism or the fall in literary standards with the rise of the popular press and the erosion of coffee house culture is a matter of opinion. There were however more tangible threats in the offing to disturb the tenor of life. These were the ripening grapes of wrath, the simmering resentments of the downtrodden working classes relegated to workhouses and concentration camp-like industrial towns, the mood of rebellion which erupted from time to time in manifestations such as the Luddites, the naval mutiny, the popular uprisings which blazed in the countryside and cities. Many regarded this not incorrectly as Jacobin infection or the example of the revolution and took refuge in repressive measures as acts of security. This reaction was perhaps necessary but it caused injustice and misled the government into underrating the genuine grievances underlying them.

There was thus a secret war within the bosom of British society parallel to its struggle against France, which perhaps undermined it.

The misery of the working class and their inflammatory state of mind was one side of the industrial challenge. The other was the aspirations of the entrepreneur class for their rightful place in politics and society. This was a classic situation in Europe at this time where the progressive elimination and decadence of the upper classes accelerated by economic change was bringing the bourgeosie to the forefront. The situation in Britain however was unique. In Czarist Russia, the Czar and the nobility had been a kind of joint stock company for the exploitation of the peasantry until they rose in revolt under the impetus of the middle class and overthrew both. In France the nobility was a parasite class which was a burden on the country and the revolution was directed against the monarchy as a punishment for its patronage of an effete ancient regime. In Britain the nobility had long since tamed the monarchy. They had decapitated one, expelled another, imported others and generally bludgeoned the monarchy into an occasionally defiant compliance. The position in Britain was therefore a confrontation against the oligarchy and the dispossession by them of the rising middle class. The latter was fast becoming a force in the land representing the accumulating wealth and power of a few decades of the industrial revolution. The middle classes were a motley company of factory owners, entrepreneurs, merchants, tradesmen, intellects, professional classes, shopkeepers pursuing their individual interests but sharing a common disability of being politically unrepresented. They did not however originate exclusively as a consequence of industrial growth. They were equally the product of the colonial empire which Britain had acquired since 1763 and which was a source of capital to industry. This empire embraced Canada and India and was the largest known to history until then. India was to Britain what the Asiatic provinces had been to Rome, a gold mine which sustained the Sybaritic lifestyles of the Roman upper class and where Senators and proconsuls like Lucullus and Crassus had made their fortunes fleecing the inhabitants and draining the countries without mercy. It was said by Macaulay that a shelf of English literature was worth all the wisdom of Indian philosophers. It could equally be said that the single loot of Bengal was probably more than all the profits of industry until then. The career of Clive was typical of how this wealth was acquired. He was a

Shropshire lad not neccessarily a military genius but of the same reckless adventurous breed as the Spanish conquistadores like Pizarro and Cortes who were gifted with the pluck and resourcefulness to grasp the initiative at a crucial moment and turn the tide of events in their favour. Clive's victory at Plassey or Pizarro's capture of Atahualpa were classic instances of such bravado and bluff. With the fortune which he made in India, the modesty of which he later regretted, he was able to purchase a seat for himself in Parliament. He was one of the more notorious of the Nabobs who invaded British society flaunting their wealth and upsetting aristocratic sensibilities with their parvenu manners. They anticipated the later generations of peers, soldiers and statesmen who won their spurs in India and returned to preside over the nation. It was a repetition of the intellectual conquest of Rome by Greece following the annexation of the latter by Rome in the 2nd century B.C. Colonial adventurers and industrial pioneers were thus the vanguard of the new Britain which was taking shape and demanding recognition of the class-encrusted institutions inherited from the past.

In contrast to this political and social stagnancy, the turn of the century into the first quarter was a peak period of intellectual and artistic creativity which compensated for the deficiencies. Major discoveries were made in science and technology which gave Britain the lead. They included Rumford's demonstrations on the nature of heat, the versatile genius of Thomas Young who was a physician and physicist combined, made pioneer discoveries on the theory of light, on vision, human disease and even contributed to the decipherment of the Rosetta stone, Dalton's atomic theory, Davy's experiments on electro-chemistry, Jenner's discovery of the small pox vaccine and the writings of Erasmus Darwin on biology and evolution. In the arts it was notable for Britain's most typically English painters like Constable with his idealizations of the countryside and the court painters with their unfaithful documentation of aristocratic genealogy and their opposite in the stormy petrel Turner whose upsetting turbulence was like an apocalyptic vision of the wrath to come and foreshadowed impressionism. In architecture, Nash epitomized the decadent taste for Gothic and classical recreations and Oriental extravagance which faithful to his royal patron's taste in that direction, he tried to harmonize wih classical symmetry and grace.

It was in letters more than elsewhere that the British creative genius excelled at this time. This was principally in two fields: philosophy and poetry. The philosophical speculations reflected the full brunt of the intellectual ferment in France, its iconoclastic assaults against institutions and values and the exaltation of reason in place of custom and tradition. In Britain it became a rational enquiry into the nature of institutions testing them critically in the light of science and reason according to criteria expounded by its two intellectual prodigies, Bentham and Godwin. Their conception of the greatest happiness of the greatest number or of individual happiness being an integral part and reflection of group harmony, whatever that meant in practical terms, was their touchstone for the creation of a new society. These ideas were a curious blend of laissez faire and institutional responsibility. The role of the state was to provide the right environ which together with a proper system of education would guarantee the future of man and enable him to attain his natural perfectability, with a minimum of official intervention. This approach was an invitation to leave man to his own devices, believing in his innate capacity through the exercise of reason to realize happiness, but as the critics pointed out it could be to anarchy as well given the emotional instability of man. The course of the French revolution was to painfully bear this out. Still the utilitarian philosophy as expounded in the "Principles of Morals and Legislation" of Jeremy Bentham and the later dissertations on similar themes of his disciple James Stuart Mills alerted British statesmen, notably Peel, to undertake that reform and scrutiny of British laws and institutions which probably saved the country from an upheaval and laid the foundations for harmonious development in the future. As against them, the prophets of the dismal sciences Malthus and Ricardo found an economic and biological rationale for the old order which justified the policies of drift, laissez faire and even repression of the government on the same grounds that at a later date Darwin was invoked for imperialism. The British intellectual upsurge did not have the same scale or intensity of the Encyclopaedists in France which as a tour de force of philosophy was unprecedented. Still it embodied the same sceptical approach, the questioning of assumptions, the spirit of disbelief until rationally established which was the hallmark of the French. This was the legacy partly of the sceptical philosophy of David Hume and Jeremy Bentham was his disciple. The philosophy of disbelief was like the new learning of the Renaissance in its impact.

The latter questioned and eroded the foundations of the universal church while 18th century humanism was focused on its successors which were the sovereign state and establishment and likewise critically examined their underlying political theory, intellectual values and accompanying social system.

A feature of the literary activity of this time was the rise of a popular press through which the new learning and ideas were disseminated among the public at large. It was part of the popular literature and mass culture which was coming into being and in which the novels of Fielding, Smollett and Richardson played a notable part. The popular press was initiated by resourceful and rebel writers like Cobbett and Place and soon multiplied into a number of dailies and weeklies which kept a running fire of commentary on events and problems. They reported Parliamentary proceedings bringing them before the public in the light of their own reflections and lampoons and cartooning by such masters as Rowlandson. They became the spearhead of the movement for Parliamentary reform but at the outset they were a powerful and stimulating forum for radical opinion. They included dailies like the 'Times', 'Courier', 'Morning Post', weeklies like the 'Political Register' of Cobbett and prestigious quarterlies such as the 'Edinburgh Review' and 'Quarterly Review'.

The poetry of this period was a new dimension and a veritable Elizabethan age. Like the latter there were many stars in the firmament, perhaps none towering over the rest like Shakespeare but each one of equal intense brightness. The circumstances of the two were different. The Elizabethan age was one of exultant nationalism, victory, discovery, exploration, expansion of mind and body into new spheres. The other was a time of distress, disenchantment, suffering, rebellion against human misery, the ordeal of a war which was a series of recurrent setbacks with no end in sight. There was no monarch to rally round, no heroes like Drake or Raleigh, only Nelson and Wellington was still emerging. Elizabethan verse was thus politically inspired, a kind of court poetry artificial, sycophantic, ornate, bombastic, royalist, a recycling of classical drama and heroic themes. It was parochial despite its eclectic air and only the tragic insights of Shakespeare lifted it into heights of universality and immortality. Elizabethen drama like the Greek theatre were terrestrial in their horizons, unable to see beyond the world of man. Its tragedy was a cosmic loneliness of man's introspection. It was literally

crammed within a wooden O. The romantic age in contrast was the poetry of revolt, of just anger against the degradation of man, of frustrated indignation which drove some of them into escapism into a world of magic casements. They escaped both physically and spiritually, Byron on a clas. ical odyssey which was the physical counterpart of his imaginative flights and both Shelley and Keats on their Meditteranean pilgrimage, in their pursuit of idealized loveliness and beauty. It was still classical aestheticsm, the adoration of sensuous pagan values but it was in their invocations to nature which were inspired by their instincts for freedom that they struck a note of immortality. With Wordsworth the Lake poets attained a cosmic awareness when he saw in nature "the still sad music of humanity" and that "our life's star hath had elsewhere its setting and cometh from afar". These were visions of immortality of which Coleridge and Blake had mystical glimpses. The romantic notions of liberty tended to be libertine which the poets were ready to carry through in defiance of convention. They were just cupids gambolling at the feet of Venus or children chasing after skylarks and the West wind.

A comparison of conditions in Britain and France at this time will strike an observer with the similarity between them. The question which would automatically come to mind is as to why the course of their history was different, France through revolution and Britain by reform. At the time of the revolution the population of France was around 24 million. Socially it consisted of the three estates, namely, the nobility, clergy and bourgeoisie which was the basis of representation in its national assembly known as States General. However, the nobility and clergy were as one vis a vis the third estate and hence the situation was similar to the dichotomy in Britain between the upper classes and the rest. In France however the gulf was essentially the privileged position of the nobility and their clerical counterparts which bore heavily on the rest and was an iniquitous burden and rank discrimination. These were feudal vestiges which had survived the elimination of the larger nobility by the monarch and subjected the peasantry particularly to vexatious dues in addition to a load of taxation. The economic gulf between them was not as great as was imagined. 55 per cent. of the land was in the hands of the nobility and cultivated by sharecroppers but the rest was owned by peasants though holdings were small. Reports of conditions of the time indicate that while farmers were worse off than in Britain still there

was relative prosperity in areas. The essential difference was the subjection to privilege like the corvee, hunting rights and a host of harassments and crushing taxation such as the taille, gabelle all of which extorted around 53 per cent. of income.

In trade and industry the similarity of conditions was greater. Both had benefited from their mercantilist and empire building policies of the 18th century which in the case of France was under the able direction of Colbert. This had given rise to capitalistic enterprise, joint stock companies, development of industries, particularly in textiles, building, mining, metallurgy and shipping. Textile factories arose in Abbeville, Amiens, Paris, Orleans, the silk industry in Lyons and shipbuilding in Bordeaux and Marseilles. These industrial centres grew into big populous cities which were filled with the same urban miseries as their counterparts in Britain. Industrial growth was likewise the product of scientific advances in which the French were not second to the British. The premier invention of this period was the hydrogen filled balloon in which Blanchard made his cross-channel flight. These developments had a similar effect on both countries in the progressive control of their economic destinies by the middle class and their demand for political recognition. In France their composition was more diversified than in Britain and apart from the merchants and entrepreneurs, included a multitude of professional categories like engineers, scientists, clerks, bureaucrats, chemists, artists, teachers, writers, civil servants, doctors, lawyers and magistrates. French financial circles were particularly strong as the banks gave large-scale credit to the government which was beholden to the creditors. They had a vested interest therefore in wanting to gain control of state finances and check its ruinous extravagance. It is not a coincidence that when all else had failed the king in despair turned to Necker, a Swiss banker The middle classes therefore wished to overthrow the monarchy in order to protect the state and thus save their investments. Their plan was to use the populace of Paris as a demolition squad to serve their ends but their own divisions enabled the latter to gain the upper hand and irreparably alter the course of events. The intellectual background of the French revolution stands apart as a monumental outburst of human genius to which history has few parallels. It was an exercise in soul searching, an agonizing re-appraisal when society took stock of itself, its values and institutions in the light of intellectual canons, mercilessly vivisecting

their nature, evaluating their intrinsic worth and function. No aspect of human activity or institution escaped the scrutiny of the intellectual giants who arose at this time and whose labours permanently changed the outlook of civilization. Their impact was volcanic, emitting ideas lava-like in spate and fury and when it subsided normal life returned but it would be never the same again. Britain was not deafened by this sound and fury which was alien to the essentially inhibited English genius but the thunderclap was heard on those shores and re-echoed by its poets in the melodious and lyrical strains of the Lake poets and the swashbuckling verse of Byron. In Britain its moral indignation and intellectual fervour was muted and transformed into the cynical irreverence of Hume or the journalistic outpourings of Cobbett. English pragmatism would not allow truck with the noble savage of Rousseau and would rather concern itself with the eradication of savagery in some of the laws, institutions and living conditions in Britain. Britain thus re-echoed the revolutionary fervour of France but in benign forms and it had none of that universality of scope and range which within a few decades could produce Voltaire, Diderot, d'Alembert, Helvetius, Rousseau, Condorcet, Necker, Houdon, David, Beaumarchais.

There were thus so many similarities between pre-revolution France and Britain that it seems surprising that the latter did not have a revolution. A short answer is that unlike in France there was no common object, no public enemy against whom to revolt. In Britain there was no lack of revolutionary sentiment and indignation but it was diffuse, not focused on any one in particular or generalized. Indeed Britain did not have a revolution as such but instead a series of revolts and uprisings at different times and on various occasions such as the Luddites, the conspiracies or the mass movements like Peterloo. Britain did not have a target on whom resentment could be concentrated. The usual targets like the monarchy for instance was in Britain the object of a kind of love-hate relationship where the more unloveable the more loved it was, as the instances of the mad King and Queen Caroline the unsavoury wife of the regent will illustrate. France had in the monarch a convenient scapegoat who deserved this opprobrium for the profligacy of Louis XIV and the incompetency of Louis XVI. The middle classes ill advisedly used the populace to overthrow the king without first putting their own

SIR EDWARD BARNES

Statue of Sir Edward Barnes, Governor of Ceylon 1821–1831 outside President's House, Colombo Fort.

Photograph Studio Mins.

house in order. In Britain Parliament stood firm and the king was popular, providing a sheet anchor and both were able to weather the storms.

The new century thus began inauspiciously for Britain with a part of the nation on the threshold of rebellion, due to the apparent inability of the political and social systems of the country to reflect economic change and accommodate the aspirations of the middle class. This failure was attributed to the insensitivity of the administration but a fairer explanation was its preoccupation with the war and the fear of Jacobinism in the country. The latter was not without cause, because of the sympathy for the revolution in various quarters and the mutinous mood of the working classes but it was as much a cover for repressive measures such as the Six Acts which incidentally were strict but not brutal. Indeed the working classes were in the same dilemma as the nationalistic struggles for political liberation in the colonies after 1945, in that the colonial powers attempted to suppress them on the grounds that they were Communist uprisings and thereby continue their colonial hold. The administration likewise viewed popular discontent as security threats and its repressive policy inflamed it by denying opportunities for expression of legitimate grievances. On the other hand one wonders whether the government could have been seriously expected to address its mind to political and social reform when its total energies were absorbed in a struggle for its very existence. This administration which has not received its due from historians was quite extraordinary. It had in Pitt one of its greatest Prime Ministers who was the answer to Britain's problems but had scarcely the opportunity to solve them because of the war. His was the tragedy of an administrator of genius being miscast as a war Minister. Castlereagh was after Wolsey the only European Foreign Secretary produced by Britain besides whom Palmerston looked a bluff and Disraeli a dilettante. Canning, his rival, was an irrepressible genius who left an enduring mark. Fox the Whig leader who led a brief administration in 1807 was the true counterpart of the Encyclopaedists of contemporary France in the combination of profligacy and genius. a kind of mixture of Mirabeau and Condorcet. The others like Sidmouth and Eldon had outstanding ability. After the death of Pitt in 1806, the leadership lacked lustre under undistinguished Prime Ministers like Portland, Percival and Liverpool who masked the latent talents but gave continuity.

Some of the limitations of these governments had their roots in the state of the administration and politics of the time. The government was a group of individuals nominated by a leader who was acceptable to the king but not owing any particular loyalty to him. Although they were referred to by party labels as Whigs or Tories they were as yet not bound by professed adherence to principles. Governments were thus clusters round individuals who were nominated according to circumstances and their ability to form an administration rather than the party struggle. It was still a far cry from the organized party politics of the second half of the century which was made possible by the progressive universalization of the franchise. This loose combination had the merit of giving scope for ministers to make individual contributions and act on their convictions while giving rein to talents. Thus all administrations of this time tended to become Ministries of all talents. At the same time the government was seriously handicapped by the backwardness of the administration which was still a feudal partnership of Ministers, magistrates and justices of the peace with the latter virtually presiding over the countryside like the barons of old. This was hardly suited to comprehending let alone coping with the problems of an emerging industrial society.

Despite these shortcomings the successive governments had safely steered the nation to a victory which left Britain with more prestige than ever before. Peace however proved to be an illusion because it created a host of problems which aggravated the domestic situation and kept it in a state of smouldering unrest for the next six years. These problems were mainly economic in character and originated in circumstances accompanying the end of the war. The war had benefited British industry by accelerating production and providing an impetus to exports which with increasing sea power found expanding markets. The end of the war caused the inevitable cut back of production as the demand ceased, exports declined and Britain had to face competition. This meant closure of industries, reduction in wages, part time employment of labour to cut costs resulting in unemployment, insecurity, impoverishment and exploitation of labour. Besides, quarter million men were demobilized for whom employment had to be found. The government at the same time under the influence of prevailing laissez faire withdrew intervention from wage disputes with the repeal of a number of Acts like the Spitalfields Act, the wage regulation clauses in the Statute of Artificers. Indeed this underlying

attitude towards labour was as alarming as the condition of the latter and obstructed efforts for their amelioration. This was the belief to which various currents of thought evangelical, Malthusian, idealistic contributed that solicitude or welfare would be detrimental to character and contrary to laws of economics. This seemed to justify outright victimization which now occurred in other forms as well. On the agricultural side landowners had reaped a windfall during the war but with its end they secured the passage of the corn laws to protect prices. This was a blow to the working class at a time when wages were being cut. Thus without security of employment, a living wage, civilized working or living conditions, with prices high and victimization at the hands of the employer, the working classes were reduced to the nadir of existence. This was the context of their resort to violence in the immediate post-war years, through rick burning, attacks on mills and sporadic unrest. At the same time a popular movement was taking shape, incited by radical opinion which was politically motivated. Its object was political enfranchisement and Parliamentary reform and to that extent was middle class in inspiration but it also provided an outlet for working class agitation. Indeed the lunatic fringe of demagogues and desperados who capitalize on such movements also joined the bandwagon as a cover under which to pursue their own machinations. Thus an atmosphere of mass agitation and conspiracy was nurtured which resulted in a series of political disturbances and subversive acts. The best known of these were the Spa Fields riot of 1816, the uprising of Brandeth, the Peterloo massacre of 1819 and the Cato Street conspiracy of 1820, all of which were cases of crowds going out of hand or the acts of half-crazed fanatics. The government was inclined to panic and retaliated with the Six Acts but the disturbances were short-lived as they subsided with good harvests and the welcome diversion of the Regent's marital problems which kept the populace in good humour.

This was the closest Britain came to revolution and what staved it off were not only these fortuitous occurrences but also certain infrastructural factors in English civilization. Some historians have attributed this to the mesmeric effects of John Wesley and the spread of Methodism in Britain. If this was true the credit should not go to Methodism alone but also the multiple dissentient and non-conformist sects whose fundamentalist beliefs kept the spirit of piety alive unlike those who lost their faith because of disenchantment with the

establishment. This feeling of religiosity underlying dissent was the essence of British democracy which steered it away from revolution and kept it on a law-abiding course. The other factor was the unique capacity of the British ruling classes to rise to the occasion above class when the need arose and act with conviction putting country, nation and humanity above self and party. This was a uniquely British trait which has been its salvation more than once and contradicted the conventional view of the ruling class that like the Bourbons they learnt nothing and forgot nothing. There were several examples of this during this period and throughout the 19th century when it had in Peel and Disraeli great exemplars. Such enlightened conduct on their part has justified the privileged position of this class in the country and given it a distinctive and almost indispensable role in British history. This role has continued until today and is a key pervasive force in its politics and society. The testament to this is not merely the House of Lords and the royalist mentality of the upper class but also the aristocratic character of its national life where apart from the symbolism of the monarchy, their representatives hold high offices in the state and the economy and even their rivals ultimately end up with the Lords.

It is no exaggeration to say that in spite of the leaven of the Labour Party and working class politics, the upper classes have been and continue to be the driving force of the nation not as the 18th century oligarchy but like a web enmeshing national life. Still, whether lord, lesser nobility or tycoon, they have not lacked leaders ready to identify themselves with wider national interest irrespective of class or sectional prejudice and promote the greater good of Britain. It is such men who saved it from time to time and gave to their class the stamp of patriotism. They helped to bridge and mitigate the divide between the two nations. They also gave the nation an establishment of meritocracy where proconsuls, soldiers and civil servants trained in public schools and the halls of learning provided an elite corps with which to govern the nation and empire. They were the closest modern states have approached to philosopher kings and improved upon the Platonic model by combining to wisdom great pragmatic sense and physical courage. There were Spartan elements in that 19th century picture of a working class helotage and an elite militarism but it was tempered by the fellow feelings of the latter and the flashes of idealism which

would move them. This spirit was very much in evidence in early 19th century Britain and no less than religious feelings saved it from revolution.

They were of two kinds, namely, outsiders who were not in the establishment and those within it. The first were off-beat types, rebel and unorthodox in their disposition in the distinguished line of English eccentrics who abounded at that time. Indeed in Mary Wolstonecraft, Lady Hester Stanhope, even Jane Austen and the later Brontes a rebel strain came into being following the lead of the arch rebel Shelley who were to enrich English life and literati and save it from its, at times claustrophobic oligarchism. To this group belongs Robert Owen, the apostle of British Socialism, whom the latter would later disown, who anticipated the communes of Mao's China with his Lanark communities; Broff the pioneer of national education and the elder Peel who first advocated social legislation to protect workers. Their example was followed from within the establishment by a number of enlightened administrators in Liverpool's administration whose labours not only kept alive the torch of humanity but demonstrated the built-in corrective capacity of the British system. These were the comprehensive and sweeping law reforms of Peel the younger which embraced the penal code, bringing it abreast of civilized values, the judicial service, the prison system and culminating in the police force, for which he is best remembered. Robinson first and then Huskisson at the Board of Trade simplified the navigation laws, overhauled an outdated tariff system, facilitating British trade. Joseph Hume secured considerable concessions to labour, including collective bargaining, which ended restrictions and discrimination imposed during the war. In 1826 the banking structure was overhauled, ending a situation in which the indiscriminate issue of paper money unrelated to specie created a panic in 1825 when several dozen banks had to close.

The Liverpool administration was the first of the great reform administrations which were to overhaul and transform Britain into a modern community compatible with its technological changes. Its achievements were primarily institutional in removing feudal vestiges in law and trade and initiating a social dimension. However, it fell short in the area of political and civil disabilities which, with the end of the war and the upsurge for freedom in the rest of the world, was now uppermost in men's minds. It seemed ironic that Britain which

had fought for them should be backward in this regard. Attention was focused on four such major disabilities, these were the Test and Corporation Act on dissenters, the need for Catholic emancipation, Parliamentary reform and the Corn Laws. These supported the main pillars of the establishment, namely, the Established Church, the land-owning oligarchy and the Parliament. The undergrowth on the way to the temple had been cleared but the temple itself remained the refuge of rites and ceremonies of the oligarchical college. These issues were hard fought, as vested interests were involved, the king being adamant on Catholic emancipation. After political manoeuvring and change it fell to the lot of the Wellington administration to secure grudgingly the abolition of the Test and Corporation Act and Catholic emancipation which was unanswerable after the rise of Daniel O'Connell.

Parliamentary reform was a far more formidable proposition which few were prepared to touch for fear of political suicide. It was the last stronghold of privilege and a fight to the death was expected, now that the church had gone. However, there was a new king and the country was in an uproar. Opinion had been whipped up by Hampden clubs and the popular press and the country was in a dangerous mood. The reactionary forces as in 1911 were ready for a last ditch stand and it required another act of enlightened patriotism above class by an outsider to save the situation. This was the intervention of Lord Grey, an old Foxite who saw an opportunity for the Whigs to redeem their reputation and stand up for their traditional cause for freedom. His espousal after desperate manoeuvres and Wellington's unsoldier like but typically honourable undertaking to retreat, secured its passage after many setbacks and reverses. The result was the 1832 Reform Bill. It has been hailed as a turning point in British history but one need not labour the point of whether this was so or as some think it was much ado about nothing. Some supporters later found its provisions too drastic for them. Still some of its effects are incontestable. Its lowered franchise qualifications of 40 shillings in the county and £10 in the boroughs enfranchised a large section of the middle class and even working class. It shifted the balance irrevocably from the country to the town by the elimination of many pocket boroughs and increase of representation for cities. It was the first major breach in the political hold of the land-owning oligarchy. Until then British politics had been an erosion of the

monarchy by the Parliament which transferred to it some of the powers of the latter and now it was the turn of Parliament to be democratized. The Reform Bill set a precedent which was to genuinely inaugurate an era of reform and widening enfranchisement. Finally it was a vindication of the innate good sense and good faith of the ruling class and their willingness to act for the greater good. This was in the determination of Grey, Wellington's truce, the support of the king and only the church stood out. It was as a beginning that the Bill is important because it opened the gates and the future was to see the widening of the breach. Yet the paradox of British history is that despite infusions, the blue blood continued to predominate in the bloodstream of the nation. The admission of other sections of life did not quite shake the primacy of the ruling class or alter its essentially elitist character.

The effect of the Reform Bill was to be seen in the comprehensive programme of legislation which was undertaken by Parliament in the next few decades. It is not that Parliament had become omnipotent because of the Bill but that the latter had admitted a small group of radicals who injected life and ideas into the body and moved it by the force of their energy and enthusiasm. They were the spokesmen of radical and popular causes outside the House and therefore accurately reflected the pulse of national opinion. They were men like Cobbett, Fielden, Burdett, Attwood, Grote, Lytton and Russell. They were from widely assorted vocations and pursuits which illustrated the unique nature of British radicalism. Cobbett was a diehard anti-Jacobin and Tory turned radical, Fielden a factory owner, Attwood a banker, George Grote a banker and Grecophil author of a monumental history of Greece, Edward Bulwer Lytton, future Viceroy of India, novelist, classical romanticist and imperialist, Lord John Russell, solicitous in his concern for the working class whose confidence he never got. To their fiery idealism and zeal, erratic and tangential as it may have been at times, which was a shining testament to the innate knight errantry of the ruling class must be attributed the humanitarian impulses and the political conscience of the next few decades. Details of this record which was sweepingly comprehensive need not concern us here except that it was a continuation of the earlier programme for institutional remoulding and purification, administrative overhauling, codification to which were added humanitarian concern for welfare and moral values, idealistic zeal for the lot of the underdog. These

were to influence overseas policy as well. To achieve this, certain political adjustments had to be made. The King and the Lords were uneasy over the growing radical demeanour of the reformed Parliament and caused problems to Grey, who resigned, and Melbourne, who also resigned, but returned and soon entrenched himself through the favour of the young Queen. This was an essential setting for the success of the programme. The Lords for their part had not forgotten the lesson of the Reform Bill and would not lightly stand in the way.

This ensuing legislative programme embraced several categories. Humanitarian concern was represented by the movement for the abolition of slavery for which the dissenters and evangelists had been pressing after its abolition in Britain in 1806. Yet the trade itself had been flourishing in the colonies where it was integral to their prosperity. The question of civil rights and disabilities loomed large in connection with the privileged position of the Established Church and discrimination against dissenters on matters like marriage, admission to Oxford and Cambridge, as well as reform of the body of the church itself in its administration and gross disparities. Rights related to trade unionism of workers and their position vis-a-vis employers for settlement of their grievances and elimination of injustice. These were both issues of social justice and human rights. They further extended to working class conditions in the factories and general terms. This was the scandal of industrial Britain, the blot on the conscience of the nation, in that in the scramble for industrialization and quick profit, execrable conditions had been created of squalor and degradation for the workers in work place and habitation which aroused shame, indignation and despair among the affected. The undertone of rebellion in this period was the tremor of an imminent cataclysm. The report by Engels on[66] The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844" remains a monumental indictment of the situation. A corollary to this was the treatment of the poor on which there was a diversity of opinion.

On all these subjects major legislation was effected, some of which were decisively beneficial while others though falling short of objectives still caused fundamental changes. These may be enumerated as the Statute for the abolition of slavery in the colonies of 1833; the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 which established elective councils and vested them with considerable powers for the development of towns;

the Act of 1835 permitted marriage outside the church by civil ceremony and registration; an Ecclesiastical Commission was appointed in 1836 which centralized administration of the church; the Factory Act of 1833 which was based on Ashley's proposals provided substantial protection for children and measures for enforcement; the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 which, based on puritan and evangelical notions of poverty, seemed in the eyes of the poor to treat poverty as a crime and thus sanction deterrent measures and later was the target of Dickens. An enigmatic and significant development of this time was the rise of Chartism which became a rallying point at a national level for workers and in the hands of Fergus O'Connor almost a militant demagogic movement. The charter as drafted by Lovett was very bourgeoisie and demanded universal manhood suffrage, annual elections, secret ballot, equal electoral districts, abolition of property qualification for membership of the Commons, payment of members. However, it became an outlet for large sections of the working class, aggrieved by the poor law and dispossessed, such as manual textile workers. Their agitation which culminated in a Convention and a petition in Parliament were a fiasco. The Chartist movement which historians have found it difficult to identify was the groundswell of general working class discontent with the piecemeal actions of the government in dealing with their lot. It failed because it had no mass supporting organization and the movement lacked cohesion. Soon, with industrial prosperity, the case for Chartism evaporated. Besides, after the tentative uncertainty and instability of the first half century, the government attained stature, credibility and power under some of its greatest Prime Ministers such as Peel, Disraeli, Gladstone and coupled with a monarchy who though obstreporous was an enduring almost immortal image of stability, led the nation to the greatest heights.

The reform era reached its climax under the administration of the great Robert Peel from 1840 to 1846. Peel was already a master politician with a Midas touch who adorned everything he handled. He had served several times before, each time making his mark by his competency, thoroughness, integrity, dedication and sense of purpose. He had all the attributes of Pitt and was what the latter would have been if there was no war. Peel was everything which Britain needed at that moment, a master administrator who, like a good general, could instil discipline, forge sound administration and streamline the nation to assume its future responsibilities as a premier industrial nation.

For him it was a completion of tasks already undertaken when he reformed the penal code or the banking system under earlier administration. He had an extraordinary team in the future Lord Derby, Gladstone, at the Board of Trade. The record of his administration is therefore of widening extension to new areas as part of the overhauling of the nation and tuning it like a machine. This can be measured and illustrated by the following enumeration of his achievements. Sir James Graham the Home Secretary secured a factory Bill reducing working hours of young children but a clause for compulsory school attendance was withdrawn due to panic by dissenters worried by the High Church revival, the Bank Charter Act of 1844 revived the old problem of note issue and invested the Bank of England with a monopoly of note issue which it differentiated from other branches of commercial activity; the Railway Act of 1844 attempted to introduce discipline and supervision to the laissez faire situation prevailing since the advent of the railway age with the Liverpool and Manchester locomotive service. Since then it had spread throughout the country, transformed British civilization and opened it to exploitation in several ways. A Railway department was created in 1840 and the Act merely established norms and objectives, private enterprise being too strong; an Act for the registration of companies with the Board of Trade which opened them to government supervision and protected the interests of the public from commercial fraud. The cause which was closest to Peel was of course free trade on which he had already disclosed his mind. One of his first acts as Prime Minister was a Bill with a new sliding scale of duty on wheat imports. In his first budget he drastically reduced imports of raw materials and manufactured goods. Drop in revenue was made up by the impo ition of a relatively mild income tax. Free trade however was catching on and in particular an anti-Corn Law league had been set up which was agitating with violent methods for repeal. Peel was embarrassed and his life threatened by the agitators who fought with Chartist supporters on the issue that repeal meant wage cuts. What forced the issue was the Irish potato famine which left Peel who, in any case, was already converted with the task of carrying through repeal. The Whigs under Russell could not form a government and it fell to Peel's lot to move for repeal. The Bill was successful but his embittered party had its revenge. Peel shattered the party which Gladstone already had left and opened the way for a new leadership and a new philosophy.

With his fall and death soon after, went his hopes of creating a new Conservatism which he announced in his Tamworth manifesto. Himself an industrialist, his idea was to combine with the land-owning Toryism in a forward looking party which could offer a leadership to the working class. Hence his support of the 1832 Reform Bill and his espousal of administrative reform. His aim was to modernize the country, increase efficiency, gear its society and economy to technology. It was essentially the same approach of Pitt adapted to modern industrial context. The Whigs like the later liberals depended too much on abstract values, laissez faire and the natural perfectability of man to bestir themselves to positive action. Peel saw that abstract rights were not enough but should be harnessed to a dynamic programme of development and reform of institutions. Disraeli shared the same outlook with the difference that his flamboyant nature and Oriental streak led him to find this dynamism in imperialism and grandiose foreign policy.

The mid fifties is regarded as the heyday of British liberalism and Victorian prosperity and was symbolized by the famous Crystal Palace exhibition of Prince Albert. Its object was to advertise British industrial primacy and assert the undoubted abundance and superiority of its products. Britain seemed to hum as never before in that century and the Chartist rumbles were dying. The Peelite administration with its tuning of the nation had given a setting on which industry and trade were able to capitalize. In many ways Britain seemed to have come of age and entered a period like that of the Antonines. On all sides there were signs of consolidation, stability and buoyancy. Agriculture was flourishing, dispelling fears over its future after repeal. The volume of exports and in particular of invisible exports more than made up for imports. This was the height of free trade which was a form of imperialism capitalizing on the industrial supremacy of Britain. Its financial investments extended throughout the world and in 1875 its total value was estimated at £1,200 million. Education made headway in the public schools under the stimulus of Arnold and in the universities through the pressure of dissenters who had secured the opening of the University of London. A major development was in the field of administration where the Commission of Trevelyan and Northcote which was appointed by Gladstone laid the foundations of the civil service in their report. This led to the establishment of the Civil Service Commission in 1855.

The Victorian age is associated with a mental attitude of complacency and self satisfaction. This reflected a situation where the world seemed to be enjoying a Palmerstonian peace and where British goods like the British navy ruled the waves. This was also a smugness and self confidence over the British achievement in industry, pride over its institutions and the comparative state of peace which it enjoyed compared to Europe which in 1848 was convulsed by a wave of upheavals. This mood was personified in the life and writings of John Stuart Mill and permeated the idyllic verse of its premier poets Tennyson and Arnold with their fanciful epics of far away things and places and patriotic strains. The symbol par excellence was the domestic bliss of the royal family, the touching picture of fidelity, devotion, rectitude almost of beatitude. This tranquility was illusory and soon to be shattered like the tragedy which deprived Victoria of her Albert, by the Crimean war, the Franco-Austrian war, the Franco-Prussian war, the Civil war in America which left Britain isolated to face a hostile world.

The period between the death of Palmerston in 1865 and 1890 was dominated by what was ostensibly an ideological struggle between Conservatives and Liberals but was really a personal duel between the two giants of British politics, Disraeli and Gladstone. Their contrast in background, style and temperament sharpened the political rivalry. Each was faced with the same task of remoulding their respective parties. Disraeli had to forge a new conservatism out of the fragments of Peelite Toryism. Gladstone had to rejuvenate the Liberals after two decades of stagnation and complacency. Each represented a different facet in British political ideology. This was the opposition between academic or abstract liberal values and the traditional approach of the sacro sanctity for tradition and institutions, respect for orderly progress, the philosophy in fact of Burke and the integrated view of society as an entity held together by mystic bonds which could not be pulled apart to serve sections or individuals. The liberal espoused moral and humanitarian causes involving the rights of the individual, justice, human dignity, freedom from tyranny a kind of addiction to classical values. In a sense the two were at polar opposites in their character as well as approaches. In addition Conservatism had now acquired a new dimension in its alliance with empire which became to Disraeli a kind of divine mission. His elevation of Victoria as Empress of India apart from being a kind of Elizabethan court

flattery to ingratiate himself with the Queen and also draw her out of her seclusion also betrayed his Oriental streak and incurable Semitic romanticism to view the empire like the Ottoman or Byzantine realm. He saw himself as a Tancred, a medieval Crusader retrieving these historic domains for the West. With his imperialist orientation Disraeli charged Conservatism with a patriotic fervour and notions of king and country. Gladstone was no less patriotic but he saw his true vocation as the espousal of freedom, the rescue of people from tyranny, the liberation of the human spirit to find its way to fulfilment. His approach was epitomized in his belief that the Balkan solution was in the breasts of freemen, meaning the recognition of the independent Balkan nations. It was the contrast between the doctrinaire democrat and a benevolent despot. Another contrast was in their social philosophy. Gladstone was an old laissez faire stalwart but he had learnt from Peel about the value of efficiency in administration, of tempering enterprise with sound management. To that extent he was a Peelite and his appointment of the Commission on the civil service was a measure of his administrative sense. Thus he had grown out of non-interventionist laissez faire into a certain positivism but this was still tempered by his faith in human progress left to itself, the echoes of his Christian beliefs in the potential of man and faith in human nature. His Education Act was his greatest testament to this belief. His object would be to create the right moral environ in which all else—social justice and economic freedom would fall into place. This was the liberal belief in progress, given the right environ of freedom for untrammelled fulfilment. To Disraeli, in contrast, state action for the promotion of social welfare was a tenet of his new Conservatism, reflecting his patrician belief that the aristocracy was the natural leader of the working class and morally responsible for their social upliftment. This was presumably his answer to his two nation theory. Actually this idea was influenced by the welfare state cult which was in vogue in the continent, a notable example of which was Bismarck's social legislation and represented positivist ideas of German thinkers of that time, such as Hegel on the rote of the state. This marked a divergence between Disraeli and Gladstone on their conceptions of the state which was in turn a difference in their political philosophies. The nature of this ideological gap has been succinctly described as follows by Bertrand Russell: "Hegelianism and Lockean liberalism stood diametrically opposed to each other. For Hegel the state is in itself

the good, the citizens do not matter as such, but only in so far as they minister to the glory of the whole. Liberalism starts at the other end and regards the state as ministering to the individual advantage of its various members. The idealist view easily generates intolerance, ruthlessness and tyranny. The liberal principle fosters tolerance, consideration and compromise." (Wisdom of the West, p. 253). Thi, was not a far cry from the white man's burden which connoted not any particular solicitude for the downtrodden but of glorification of the former. Likewise leadership of the working class by the aristocracy was an acknowledgment of the latter's superiority.

The crux of the difference was probably in their respective attitudes on empire and foreign affairs. Disraeli can be regarded as the architect of 19th century British imperialism which was the projection of his romantic imagination imbued as it was with exotic notions of the Orient and the Roman empire. He saw himself as a kind of Doge of Venice and his purchase of Suez canal shares or the exaltation of Victoria as Empress were part of this vision. However, it was a romanticized, idealized conception of empire like a successor to Constantinople rather than the crude racism which it was to be under the Unionists. It was to be a revived Mediterranean empire which would hold both the Scythian slavs and the Teutons at bay, a Sulaiman the Magnificent come to judgement. He was an imperialist to be sure but a greater artist and stylist, one of the most consummate diplomats history has seen. His peace with honour of overturning San Stefano was no mean feat despite the bragging. Empire in lesser hands became downright Anglo Saxon racism. Unfortunately Disraeli opened the door to it.

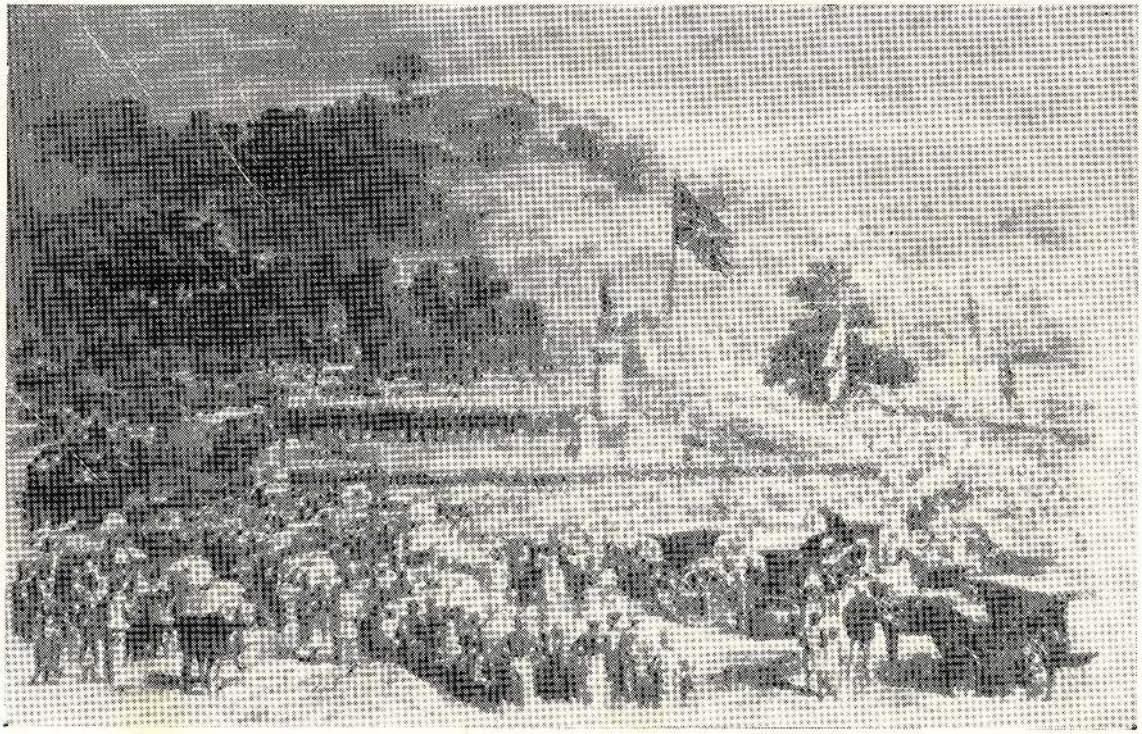
Gladstone was at his worst over empire. He was impervious to glory and saw only human values of freedom and fulfilment. In Ireland he saw inhumanity the justice of the Irish cause rising in righteous indignation against centuries of degradation but to the imperialists this was betrayal of empire or sacrifice of patrimony. For the Sudan he selected an unpredictable eccentric and churchman perhaps secretly hoping that with his charmed life reputation he would pull off a miracle but he had a national humiliation on his hands. At Majuba, Afghanistan there was fumbling of policy without conviction. In foreign affairs he did not fare any better. His outspoken sympathy for the victims of Ottoman atrocities collided with

a sacred tenet of British foreign policy. In Europe he stood by while Prussia with its humiliation of Austria and France laid low yet another tenet. Thus Gladstone seemed to spell disaster in imperial and foreign affairs. Yet his greatness is perhaps unquestioned as the most powerful expression ever of the British political genius. He stood for all that was greatest in English politics not only in his Parliamentary contributions but as a moral force representing courage and conviction to stand up for the right. Compared to him Disraeli was a trimmer, essentially a clever craftsman, a cunning merchant on the Rialto, the contrast between Shylock and Antonio. He was a continental type statesman, his models being Richelieu and Talleyrand and in the tradition of forbears like Wolsey, Carteret, Shelburne. He was unBritish, so different to the phelgmatic Castlereagh or even the breezy Canning but he stood for nothing besides himself. Gladstone was commitment to virtue and principles.

The vicissitudes of this political duel need not detain us here except to observe that it occupied the period from 1867 to 1892. It began with the leap in the dark of Disraeli in the form of his Reform Bill of 1867 and the last government of Gladstone. The issues were as towering as the personalities and ultimately it was Ireland that shaped their destiny and of the country. These governments continued the transformation process of Britain, each party according to its light, but the cumulative effect was indeed the enrichment and modernization of the country. The two Reform Bills of 1867 and 1885 continued the enfranchisement process begun in 1832, increasing the electorate and widening the scope of the franchise to incorporate large sections of the working class in town and country. Effectively they eroded the political power of the oligarchy. Its impact on the political system was to strengthen the party, sacrifice the individual voter and member to the group and introduce the political totemism of party as an operative mechanism in its politics. It limited the scope for the radicals, the mavericks and loners who had been the spice of British politics. From now the stress was on party loyalty the Whip and the fidelity to the party line over conviction. The fate of Randolph Churchill and Joseph Chamberlain were the signs of the new era and only a Winston Churchill could through sheer force of his overbearing personality change colours with impunity and tower over party. It is interesting that the crystallization of British political parties should have coincided with the dissolution of the great families

unlike in several third world countries where the limitation of the party system was that it was based on family rivalry and tended to perpetuate social and tribal divisions. In Britain the party machine took over a notable example of which was the National Union of Conservative Associations of Joseph Chamberlain. The key to political success from now on was skill at party management and this explains why Churchill had to perish in the wilderness, a burnt out volcano, and how relatively ungifted leaders like Salisbury and Campbell Bannerman were able to lead the country while the promising ones like Rosebery failed.

The legislative measures of the successive governments will illustrate their respective ideological positions and they were likewise the means by which the nation was shaped and moulded during this time. Disraeli's Reform Bill did not pay immediate returns as he lost the election and Gladstone formed his first administration which was the Liberal apogee and the grand testament of its philosophy. These were contained in a series of monumental measures long overdue and which cleared the backlog of centuries of injustice and insensitivity. These were the disestablishment of the Irish Church and the Irish Land Act of 1870 which gave a measure of recognition to the tenant, both being part of his mission to pacify Ireland; the great Education Act of Forster of 1870 which subsidized existing voluntary schools and empowered local boards to open schools; the Trade Union Act of 1871 legalized trade unions; the Central Local Government Board combining poor law and local government administration, the Order in Council for all government appointments except the Foreign Office to be through open competitive examination; Cardwell's dramatic army reforms which, profiting by the sensational blunders and scandals of the Crimean War, ended an era of aristocratic mismanagement of the army to control of the services by the Secretary of State for War; the reform of the legal system which inter alia established a single Supreme Court of Judicature. After such an exhaustive record they justified Disraeli's description of the government as exhausted volcanoes. When Disraeli took office in 1876 he was not in his prime and moved soon to the Upper House as Lord Beaconsfield. His main achievement was in foreign affairs and in his sleeping beauty like act in inducing the Queen out of the cloisters into the daylight of national affairs to become Empress. His administration made its mark in social legislation with a series of almost radical measures including



SIR HENRY WARD

The unveiling of the statue of Sir Henry Ward in Kandy. Ward, one of Ceylon's ablest Governors, was honoured with a statue in Kandy near the Dalada Maligawa. It was pulled down in an undergraduate protest in the 1960's and never reinstated.

Photograph Studio Mins.

the Artisan's Dwelling Act, the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, Public Health Act, an Act for protection of seamen and compensation for improvements by tenants. Between them and by dint of their competition British institutions, laws had been overhauled, standards of life improved and ameliorated and the class disparities mitigated. The foundations were at least laid for social transformation and new political vistas. Gladstone had two more innings but Ireland was his consuming passion and graveyard which dragged both himself and his great adversary Parnell down and the Liberal Party at the same time. This opened the way to a decade of Unionist hegemony. In between there was the Roseberry interlude. He was to many, like Randolph Churchill, one of the great might-have-beens of British politics. He had everything one could want, a Vanderbilt heiress as wife, great oratorical ability, omniscience, wit, all in fact except conviction and he was a bad manager of men, being hardly on talking terms with his colleagues Harcourt, Morley, Asquith or even Gladstone. With cannon in front and cannon behind in the new back bencher Lloyd George, Roseberry could not last. At least in foreign policy he made an impact.

The Unionists who held office from 1895 to 1905 were a loose combination of Liberal defectors led by Joseph Chamberlain and the Conservatives among whom Balfour was now the star. Till 1902 their leader was his uncle Lord Salisbury and after him the redoubtable but enigmatic AJB. The Unionist administration despite its longevity was barren of any serious domestic impact and its fame rests on its overseas record where it virtually created the so-called third British empire in Africa. It was really a junta of Blimpish militarists like Kitchener, Garnet Wolseley, the aging war horse Cambridge, proconsuls like Milner, Bartle Frere, adventurers like Cecil Rhodes and Jameson, firebrand politicians like Joseph Chamberlain, all under the leadership of the cynical patriarchal Salisbury presiding like some authoritarian Rabbi, in a painting of Rembrandt. He was an ancient mariner like a rugged captain at the head of a motley crew not really concerned about where he went but only to keep his ship afloat. His problem child was Joseph Chamberlain the *enfant terrible* who having wrecked the Liberals was considering similar possibilities among the Conservatives. With his conversion to protection and his assumption of the Colonial Office the scope for this was very promising indeed and took him into the death trap of the South African crisis and the Boer

War. Unionism meant almost a radical departure in the tone and outlook of British politics where instead of being as in the past a merchant adventurer, it became a conquistador competing for expansion of empire in exotic foreign parts at the instigation of megalomaniac Sirdars and sundry militarists to the strains of Kipling's war cries and with magazine rifles and the Maxim gun to do the job very fast and not too much inconvenience. It required the shock tactics of the Boer frontiersmen to shake the smug invincibility of the thin red line. Balfour took over in 1902 but without much to offer. An achievement claimed for this government was the extrication from so called splendid isolation. This is an euphemism for straight diplomatic bankruptcy as Britain had lost its grip on the continent, being despised by most and it needed the bluff somewhat coarse charm of Edward VII to restore Britain's name and rehabilitate its image. For this he paid a price or at least misled the Liberal government into new directions. The background to the rampaging imperialism and militant political temper of this period of which the khaki election is an example was a besieged complex in Britain due to the fall in trade, a growing economic strangulation as cheaper imports poured into the country and Britain lost its industrial supremacy. This period is called the great depression. Though this has in the eyes of economists been exaggerated, as Britain was yet a premier force in world trade, still its place in production and industry fell in areas like steel, cotton, agriculture. Increased territory only brought political problems because the trade increase was just 2½ per cent of the total. These were really flag waving operations which Britain undertook not to be outdone. At the same time this was inspired by genuine fear at the heart of which was the threat of an expanding Asiatic Russia to counter which Britain had recourse to the Anglo-Japan treaty which set up a new challenge in those parts.

Meanwhile there were new intellectual trends in the country which were changing its outlook. It is fashionable to refer to them as the end of Victorianism whatever that is supposed to mean. The latter is usually associated with a smug self satisfaction born of pride in the British achievement and symbolized in the domestic felicity of the royal household with its loving parents, conjugal bliss, annual additions in the family and epitomized politically by the Palmerstonian peace. This was in many respects a false picture of Poet Laureates and court painters because it concealed horror and ugliness, the social injustice which Dickens exposed mercilessly, the turbulence of

Chartism, the resentments of dissenters, scandals overseas like the Crimean blunders, the Scutari winters, the Indian mutiny preceded by the Phyrric Sikh wars, the opium wars and somewhat later the shock of Isandhlwana and the massacre of the Kabul residency. A lasting contribution was certainly the standard of family life of the Queen to which all later Queens at least have adhered to and ennobled the monarchy. Otherwise all was not as quiet at home and abroad. There was disquiet, unease, intellectual stirrings which were to be expressed in the new trends. The Victorian idea of progress and the ability of man through the innate spark within him to shape his destiny remained but it was given a different rationale and foundation. This was not as one might think through the physical and applied sciences which were making spectacular strides but rather through the social sciences and history. This had been in the offing since Malthus, Ricardo, even Bentham had sensed certain biological and other regulatory mechanisms shaping human society and history. The notion of God as the sole unaided architect of creation according to the timetable indicated in the Genesis had been questioned by Tom Paine. In 1734 Montesquieu had anticipated Gibbon in his philosophical enquiry into the Roman empire on the circumstances that had caused its dissolution. His "Considerations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur decadence" was monumental conceptually as an approach to history and the study of societies. In the second half of the 19th century the flood gates were veritably forced open by a convergence of powerful currents from a number of directions some already in spate and other new ones. This was again a kind of intellectual revolution not different to the age of Reason of the 18th century because it engulfed every sphere of activity: politics, knowledge, administration, religion. These were the biological propositions of Darwin on evolution, Lyell's studies on geology, the opening of the so-called Dark Continent by primarily British explorers cum missionaries like Livingstone and Stanley and Baker, the impact of their discoveries and revelations on knowledge, the archaeological discoveries of Lepsius and Rawlinson and later Schliemann in the Near East—these all opened a new world of mystery and challenge to the European intellect to which it responded in various ways. Apart from the cruder and obvious one of territorial imperialism there were the theories of life and history which were enunciated. A measure of the emotional impact can be gained from Winwood Reade's moving "Martyrdom of Man". Of course this was not the first exposure of

Europe to pagan societies because the Spanish conquistadores and their priestly companions had been aghast by their experience of horrendous sacrifices on the altars of Tenochtitlan. The Portuguese knew of African societies from their pioneer activities in the Guinea coast going far inland. The difference now was the Darwinian view which gave a totally different synthesis and gave rise to social theories of superior culture, master race, primitivism and savagery, the culminating conclusion of Europe as the apex of civilization from which they could look back on savagery as a subject for anthropological investigation. This was the setting of the new learning, the social sciences of which Tyler's "Primitive Culture" and Frazer's "Golden Bough" were the precursors. A host followed like Perry, Malinowski, Margaret Mead for whom primitive societies became merry sport and the third world to boot as the laboratory in which to test notions of savagery and superiority. These ideas gave an impetus to evangelism and to political theory in the view of imperialism as an instrument of evangelism somewhat like the Jesuit view of Spanish and Portuguese imperialism. The proconsuls like the Boers saw themselves as carrying out God's work in their persecution and extermination of natives. Literature was caught up in the flood through Kipling but history was a principal victim which gave rise to geopolitics which was the view of the outer world as an integral security area for Europe.

Thus the 20th century opened with Europe in a bloody aggressive mood relentlessly pushing their gory record in Africa and Asia and fighting over spoils and endangering peace. Britain had its share of it in the Boer War which cost her 5,700 dead, 22,800 wounded, 16,000 dead from disease. This was a mere rehearsal which her Generals would vastly improve in the first World War and then mourn them with phallic like monuments to honour the glorious dead. In 1905 the Liberals assumed office under the aging and ailing but capable Campbell Bannerman. It could have been one of the greatest Liberal administrations. Like other British governments of the 19th century it was bursting with talent. It had in Lloyd George, the mighty atom, Haldane at the War Office, Churchill as President of the Board of Trade, Asquith soon to be Prime Minister, the only jokers being probably John Burns and Grey of Falloden at the Foreign Office. They achieved much in furtherance of their policies of streamlining and updating British laws and institutions and in this particular

juncture heading off militant Trade Unions smarting under the Taff Vale decision. These achievements include the Trade Disputes Bill, the Merchant Shipping Act of 1906, the Patents Act of 1907. However, their best efforts were aborted. These were an Education Bill, a Plural Voting Bill, Land Reform Bills, a Licensing Bill. The problem was of course the Lords who were Unionist and who were now ready for a constitutional crisis in the spirit of their Stuart forbears. In personal terms it was an unhealthy combination between Balfour in the Commons and Lansdowne in the Lords who co-ordinated strategy. Matters came to a head when they decided, in order to meet the Liberal tactics of including death duty in the budget, to throw out the budget than which there could not be a more flagrant act of war. It became a cry of peers against people and the Liberal government for all its promises became an exercise in futility, a giant in chains. The conduct of Balfour was inexplicable. It was not on a par with his intellectual stature. An intellect and an aristocrat, he was remote in both but capable of flights of erudition as the following extract from his best known work would suggest "Man so far as natural science by itself is able to teach us is no longer the final cause of the universe, the Heaven descended heir of all the ages. His very existence is an accident his story a brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. Of the combination of causes which first converted a dead organic compound into the living progenitors of humanity science indeed as yet knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings famine, disease and mutual slaughter, fit nurses of the future; lords of creation have gradually evolved after infinite travail a race with conscience enough to feel that it is vile and intelligence enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past and see that its history is of blood, sweat and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future and learn that after a period long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed and the earth tideless and inert will no longer will tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit and all his thoughts will perish. The uneasy consciousness which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe will be at rest. Matter will know itself no longer. Imperishable monuments and immortal deeds death itself and love stronger than death will be

as though they had never been. Nor will anything that is be better or be worse for all that the labour, genius, devotion, and suffering of man have striven through countless generations to effect". (The Foundations of Belief). Yet he had no scruples about holding the nation to ransom more for power than class and bringing it to the verge of a crisis. It was averted but not without an unseemly misunderstanding between the king and Prime Minister. The government had won but it was too late. Clouds were gathering on two sides in Ireland and in Europe. Balfour was succeeded by the insipid looking Bonar Law whose bank clerk like appearance however concealed the sting of a hornet. Only Lloyd George saw him for the tough opponent he was. Ireland had been overtaken by events and with the rise of Edward Carson, the formidable destroyer of Oscar Wilde, the complexion of the situation had changed completely. It was too late for Home Rule even on a suspended basis for Ulster because the latter had made up its mind to have no truck with it. Of the nine Ulster counties Antrim, Armagh, Down and Londonderry were fully almost Protestant and the others had powerful Protestant minorities. Matters really came to a head with the Curragh mutiny and clear unreliability of the armed forces to impose Home Rule on Ulster. The statements of Bonar Law amounted to clear support of civil war. With the riots of July it seemed round the corner but just then the fatal shots of Sarajevo were fired and events moved to a global dimension.

The conduct and course of the war is not immediately relevant here. A major domestic event was the Representation of the People Act of 1918 which added two million women and six million men to the electorate and at long last gave full democracy to Britain. This was to change the character of British politics from now on. In end 1916 Asquith fell and was succeeded to everyone's surprise by Lloyd George who formed a war Cabinet instead of the usual cabinet. It was a coalition consisting of Curzon, Bonar Law, Milner, Henderson, joined later by Smuts and Carson. Lloyd George had the capacity of a great general in his tremendous energy, thunderbolt like personality, lightning intellect but the Northcliffe press, the junta of Boer war Generals and their patron saint the king who was a close friend of Haig were too much for him. His policy of cutting munitions supplies for the monumental massacres of the Western front failed in their purpose. Ultimately victory was wrung out of the blood of

most Frenchmen and a good part of Britain. His real triumphs came after the war in the peace settlements where he dominated the scene. The war ended the Edwardian era which is the designation of the pre-war decade. It is named after its king who at the end of 60 rakish years attained the sweet fruition of an earthly crown. In his life style he was faithful to the traditions of English heir presumptives like Henry II and V, the Regent and its tragic culmination in Edward VIII. It was an urban culture where the glitter of the stately mansion was transferred to Mayfair and Belgravia and Eton Place and the Upstairs Downstairs life style came into being symbolizing the social structure of the time. The country mansions became the weekend resorts for fox hunting and amorous frolics. The monarch however was of continental stock after his father but unlike the latter this was more Latin than Nordic and found in Paris and Biarritz an appropriate setting to disport himself, almost inviting Asquith and his Cabinet to Biarritz for the act of kissing hands. Edwardian culture was a flowering of the theatre with Shaw and Wilde in London, Sean O'Casey in Ireland as counterparts to the great theatre of Ibsen and Strindberg on the continent. It was also the time of popular music, a mixture of the ponderous and the light of Wagner and Berlioz and Richard Strauss with the bawdy music hall wit of Mistinguette and Josephine Baker, the stately power of Sarah Bernhardt and Ellen Terry with the scintillating mockery of Gilbert and Sullivan who set to music the irreverent wit of Shaw in mirthful strains which have enlivened music ever since. This whole world crashed on that sweltering bank holiday as Von Kluck set out with the legions of his mighty first army on the long trek to Paris.

The war ended with Europe not only decimated but the British political scene changed irrevocably. The main difference was the rise of the Labour party which was eroding the sacro sanctity of the British two party system. The rise of British labour was a long march which had its beginnings in a number of sources and was the convergence of several streams. These were principally the Communist inclined Socialist Democratic Federation of Hyndman which Marx himself despised, the Socialist League of Morris and Ruskin, the Fabian Society of 1885. The first two subsided, due partly to their militancy and their value was in highlighting the popular discontent of the time. The real impetus came initially from the intellectual cum administrative impact of the Fabians, their meticulous if weighty

intellectual labours and their tentacle like influence into quarters of local government and the administration. They were not radicals or even men of action, doctrinaire at best and arm-chair critics but they stimulated an intellectual awareness in furtherance of the radical tradition of Britain which attracted thinkers. Their leaders like the Webbs, Shaw, Cole were greater literary figures than serious politicians but they prepared the way. The turning point which set labour on an independent course were the labour uprisings of the eighties, the development of the Trade Union movement and the disenchantment with the Lib Lab combination. The eighties saw a series of incidents notably Black Monday of 8th February 1886, the rioting in Hyde Park in October 1887, the Bloody Sunday in Trafalgar on November 13. These drew attention to the gravity of the discontent in the country which was soon amply documented by the disclosures of Booth and the rise of the Salvation Army. A turning point in the labour agitation was the London Dock Strike of 1889 where solidarity won the day and revealed its potential. The Labour movement now moved into two directions. These were the growth of a Labour party and the development of Trade Unionism.

The decision to have an independent labour party was due to frank disappointment with the Liberals who had been accepted as natural leaders till then. However Gladstone had little time for them. His Newcastle programme scacely referred to them and he even complained that they were putting themselves before Ireland. It was the Irish preoccupation which lost labour for the Liberals. Still there was no room for both under one roof. Lloyd George knew this in his reservations about labour legislation. An independent labour party was formed in 1893 with Keir Hardie as one of its first representatives. He was truly a herald of a new order with his disregard for hallowed tradition and his conviction. Trade Unionism meanwhile made headway gaining increasing recognition. The Trade Disputes Act of 1906 which was the sequel of the Taff Vale judgement strengthened it and was the setting of the vigorous and militant trade union action preceding the war. This was brought about by an alliance between the three main strongholds of labour, namely, docks, miners and railway. Continued reverses like the Osborne decision of 1909 and the ingrained feeling of a supercilious defensive attitude towards them politically and by the establishment turned them to militancy following the example of revolutonary trends in the continent

and under the influence of a new generation of leaders like Ben Tillett and Tom Mann both from Australia. The result was the increase in trade unions and strikes leading up to plans for a general strike. Thus the eve of the war found a second front within, in addition to Ulster, in the inflamed state of the Trade Unions and their determination to press for social justice through union action from outside and Parliamentary action from inside. The next few years were to see that junction effected and a new era dawn in British politics. This was the virtual deposition of the Liberals by Labour which justifies the description of this event as the British revolution. It was more than the mere birth of a political party. It was a challenge to the elitist structure of British politics. It was genuinely peers versus the people, a more sophisticated version of the confrontation in the House when Keir Hardie first entered it, working cap in hand, speaking up for the emotions of the common man as against the stilted Protocol of the establishment. Thus with the end of the war one enters the era of Labour party politics in Britain and the corresponding change in the substance of British politics. The essential difference from the past was in the incipient disbanding process of empire, beginning with the concept of the independent dominions, the eschewal of expansionist adventures, the progressive grant of internal autonomy, a vision however distant of decolonization. This was of course a long way ahead and there were the fulminations of Churchill to contend with and the last ditch stand of the proconsuls like Hugh Clifford for example in Ceylon.

The first post war election known as the coupon election referring to the Liberal Conservative pact was held in 1918 a month after the armistice. It was a victory for the Lloyd George-Bonar Law coalition in which the Conservatives benefited with 338 seats. Although Lloyd George was Prime Minister, he was beholden to the Conservatives under the watchful eye of Bonar Law. In his own circle he was isolated as Asquith disliked him and the unpredictable Churchill alone was faithful distinguishing himself as usual this time as a strike breaker, Lloyd George however was supreme. This was probably his finest hour dazzling everyone at home and abroad with his spell binding oratory, persuasive charm, electrifying presence, the mystic Celtic genius incarnate. He became a cult at home in whose name funds were launched which were handled with the dubious probity of priestcraft. He was in his element in international affairs and nego-

tiation and was in that sense the man of the hour as one of the Big Four. As things went he was probably four in one but the problems were overwhelming even for his Mephistophilean genius. Wilson was disowned by his own Senate leaving Britain to carry his baby of the League of Nations. France was the persistent thorn in his side with its insistent demands for reparations, restitution, which included occupation of the Saar, restrictions on German industry and differences with Britain over the settlement in the Middle East. Indeed this inter-allied settlement of claims, pledges somewhat like the allied conferences of the second World War seriously bedevilled the peace process with a host of conflicting demands such as in Africa by South Africa and in Oceania from Australia, Uncertainty hung over Britain's own reparation claims on which it was counting to some extent for economic reconstruction. This became a somewhat lugubrious expectation when the Commission estimated this at 33,000 million dollars inviting the scathing condemnation of Britain's Treasury representative Keynes whose "Economic consequences of the Peace" was an indictment of the reparations policy. In addition there was the Russian problem of supporting Poland and the White Russian armies and on the door-step the declaration of Irish independence and a long drawn out civil war.

At home Britain started well with the usual post war boom and its innate industrial strength which the war had not greatly diminished. However the problems of contending with a new world the frontiers of which had been brutally disrupted, economies destroyed, dislocated its own visions of reconstruction which had made impressive headway. In 1921 the dream ended with a reduction in government spending of £1,000 million, increases in prices, taxation and unemployment the last up to two million. Welfarism was dropped in areas like the railway and the famous Geddes axe was applied hacking ruthlessly at incipient state enterprise. As often happens the worst affected were those affording social and moral welfare a notable victim being the Addison housing programme which despite extravagance was the pride of post-war Britain which went closest to creating a new Britain fit for heroes. The miners were up in arms against wage cuts and the failure of the triple alliance which was the lack of support by the railwaymen and transport workers forced them into submission and almost precipitated a general strike. A state of demoralization ensued which rebounded on the image of the Prime Minister who besides was

hardly around to deal with them, being constantly away seeking glory abroad. This was his undoing because his end came with one such adventure which was as unexpected as it was an anti-climax. This was the Chanak affair when the great hero of Gallipoli stood out once more against foreign invaders of his land. This was a jolt to national pride over which Conservative elements revolted against the coalition. At the historic meeting of the party at Carlton Club on 19th October 1922, Bonar Law egged on by the rank and file officially declared the end of the coalition.

At the election which followed, the Conservatives profited from the Liberal split between the Asquith and Lloyd George groups to win comfortably with 345 seats. However the significant feature of the election was that Labour secured 142 with only a million votes less cast for it than for the Conservatives. This was an ominous crack in the traditional party structure which prefigured the future. Equally significant was its choice of Ramsay MacDonald as Parliamentary leader. In the years since his defeat in 1918 he had distinguished himself as a writer notably on Russian affairs, showing a sound critical sense with praise where due and caution and prescience. He was also outspoken on party affairs advocating an organized approach to policies and strategy. His leadership marked a transition from trade union to political management of the party. Bonar Law was Prime Minister at last but fate was cruel to the little man. His Cabinet described derisively by Churchill as a second eleven had six unknown Peers, Baldwin at the exchequer and Nathaniel Curzon back from Viceregal glory in India at the Foreign Office. Its performance during its brief career was ill starred. Baldwin's attempts to resolve the debt to America were ill received by the latter. France under Poincare was as difficult as ever bringing Germany to its knees and inaugurating the financial crisis that was to rock the world. Curzon's Treaty of Lausanne was the only notable event. The end came in May 1923 with Law's tragic departure from the scene. The sequel was more sensational when King George V under advice from Balfour or using his own judgement preferred Baldwin to Curzon when the latter in full expectation of being chosen was already preparing to celebrate and assuring his supporters of his humility in victory. For George Nathaniel Curzon too that was the end. Pompous to the last he faded like a punctured balloon in 1925. Ironically Baldwin was also only an interlude. For reasons which have

baffled the historian and given rise to the many conflicting views about him, Baldwin chose to go to the country ostensibly on protection. The result was the biggest shock in British history since the execution of Charles I in that the Labour party secured the second largest number of seats and Ramsay MacDonald was invited to form the first Labour government. On that occasion the king wondered what Grandma would have thought. An year later seeing the fate of that government Grandma's comments would have been more interesting.

For its time span the first Labour government will also go down in history as no more than an interlude or perhaps a trial balloon. The misgivings which it aroused were not confined to the ghost of Victoria and were further justified by its poor composition. The only members with Ministerial experience were Haldane as Lord Chancellor, Arthur Henderson at the Home Office while the others were strangers like Chelmsford the ex Viceroy of India to steer a real ship as First Lord of the Admiralty, Snowden at the Treasury, Jimmy Thomas a veteran Trade Unionist at the Colonial office. Yet it far surpassed the preceding interludes. Ramsay MacDonald with his handsome figure stood up very well internationally almost vying with Lloyd George in negotiating skill. Some of his achievements in this field were the acceptance of the Dawes plan on reparation persuading both France and Germany to accede to it, the adoption of the Geneva Protocol on the League of Nations. Foreign policy however was also his undoing because his decision to extend recognition to the Soviet Union, sign a trade agreement and recommend the grant of a loan had a very hostile reception from a public distrustful of that country and resentful of its attacks against British. Conservatives and Liberals combined in opposition and Lloyd George was foremost among the latter.

In domestic policy the government did not measure up to the highest expectations and usher in the millenium but it had positive acts to its credit. These were the Wheatly Act which improved on the measures of Addison and Neville Chamberlain as a major breakthrough. In education the Minister Charles Trevelyan made a great contribution with the help of R. H. Tawney famous as the author of "Religion and the rise of Capitalism" At the Treasury Snowden was surprisingly cautious because at a time when protection was the cry and there was even cause for it, he even abolished the modest

McKenna duties. The government also fell foul of Labour and a major strike almost ensued. The Conservatives and Liberals were now ranged against the government and over the Campbell prosecution case they defeated the government. In the election which followed the famous Zinoviev letter which has since been proved to be a fabrication turned the tide and the Conservatives won with 419 seats. The wheel had turned full circle for the Conservatives and brought Baldwin back to office.

The succession of governments between 1918 and 1924—there were four of them in six years may give an impression of political instability but this is a mistaken one. On the contrary it was a sign of vitality marking the assertion of new forces, of a new order crashing against the ancient regime which in Britain unlike on the continent had never really disappeared. Instead thanks to enlightened leadership it had coalesced with the new forces, heading off revolution and upheaval, reforming the system from within in the way advocated by Erasmus for the Catholic church. Still the events of 1911 had demonstrated the obstructive persistence of the past and certain unhealthy passions were released. Perhaps the war widened the social gulf by the spectacle of an elitist and anachronistic High Command in league with the king abetting murder and carnage on the Western front. Lloyd George's problems with Haig and the king's support of the latter were common knowledge. The end of the war saw the birth of a new age. There were far more who wanted a new Britain than those who merely wished for the past to return. Baldwin referred to the hard faced men in the 1918 Parliament. They were hard faced in another sense than the one he meant. They were of a different stock and antecedents. Many like Clement Atlee who had fought at Gallipoli were war veterans. The age of the Gods in British politics had past. Most of them had returned to Valhalla. These were the Balfours, Curzons, Randolph Churchill, Joseph Chamberlain, Salisbury, Lansdowne. Even the next generation of Birkenhead, Austen Chamberlain, Bonar Law were slipping out. Of the old order only two Titans remained whose fire was yet to come namely Winston Churchill and Beaverbrook. This was the classic age of transition in British politics, what S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka said of that country in 1956 as a transition from one that was to another that was yet to be. The substance of the change shorn of this imagery was the rise of Trade Unionism and its political corollary

the Labour party. The transition was a progressive replacement of Liberals by Labour. The two were not as one might think complementary. They were different people standing for different things. The Liberals were still the old Whigs, doctrinnaire, abstract in their values, bureaucratic and wedded to the establishment, inhibited elitist at the core very aristocratic and mentally linked with the old order. Labour were men of the earth. As Butler a member of the 1946 Soulbury Commission said of himself, his background as a railwayman was shunting and hooting and not hunting and shooting. Their typical representatives were Ernest Bevin of the Transport Workers Union, Jimmy Thomas, Arthur Henderson, Ramsay MacDonald. In this context Lloyd George was a paradox. Although socially a herald of the new order he had in him an unique genius which lifted him above the normal dimension of politics. Intellectually he seemed closer to Gladstonian Liberalism.

The new order in politics was also a commentary on the social economic conditions in Britain after the post-war boom had subsided. The salient features in the situation were the growing militancy and organization of the Trade Unions, the common strategy of a Triple Alliance, the resistance of Capital through the formation of the Employers Federation, the ambivalent policy of the government in its legislation, an instance of which was the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act of 1927 in the aftermath of the General Strike. Even the first Labour Government fell foul of unions who almost threatened a strike and were restrained by Bevin. Among the workers the lot of the miners became increasingly worse with the government seemingly helpless. These were manifestations of a deteriorating economic situation arising from Britain's losses during the war and the entirely different economic shape of the post-war world where it could not do as well as in the palmy days of empire. The empire was itself in retreat, on the defensive. The reaction to Chanak was a sign. The imperial conferences and the birth of dominions were an euphemistic admission of the loosening ties. India alone remained but with Gandhi and the Indian Congress its days were numbered.

One could in fact draw a parallel between conditions at this time and those at the beginning of the 19th century. It was still in some respects an oligarchical situation. The bulk of the national wealth was yet owned by only one per cent of the population. The annual

income of the great majority was less than £100. The upstairs downstairs of Edwardian life still persisted with urban and rural life as stark as ever. Agriculture had slumped with a fall in land values and diminishing population employed on the land. The overshadowing problem was unemployment which was caused by the declining fortunes of the great industrial empires of coal, cotton, shipping and steel. The level of unemployment at this time was a persistent 1 million. 60 per cent of this was due to the cotton and coal crisis where between 1921 and 1929 cotton exports had fallen by half and coal exports from 73 million to 50 million which meant an annual drop of 30 million in production. In both cases the reasons were heavy competition in textiles from Japan and in coal from Europe. In the heavy industries, ship building was at a standstill affecting iron and steel which were dependent on it. The production of steel was below the production capacity which new factories had made possible of 12 million tons. Worse than the facts of the problem was an apparent inability to appreciate the factors which were responsible for it. Few people in position saw it as the result of the drastic change in Britain's position in world trade where from dominating it, Britain was now facing severe competition in its key industries causing a fall in exports, an alarming increase of imports over the latter and even a progressive decline in the value of investments which till then had bridged the gap and supported her dominance. The symbol of British commercial supremacy was the sacro sanctity of the gold standard which in the 20th century had become a tenet of world trade and banking. The trouble is that despite the post-war changes which had invalidated this, the belief persisted so much so that an expert committee in 1918 advocated a return to it as the obvious remedy. This in fact became the object of British monetary policy in the years to come in disregard of circumstances which demanded alternative approaches and the urgent warnings of economists like Keynes. Government could only think of stock commonplace solutions like high credit, lowered wages, expenditure cuts the victim invariably being social services but it baulked at protective tariffs which might have made sense but for Baldwin's bitter experience of 1923. Britain's problem was therefore a part of an overall situation in the world where fallen from its pedestal it had to adjust itself to an embattled competitive situation where it had to shed notions of grandeur and dominance but their chronic persistence like Britain's incurable elitism at home stood in the way of a timely realistic adjustment of its sights to the contours of a new age.

The Baldwin government which took office at the end of 1924 had to bear the brunt of this situation. Likewise the nation had Baldwin as its Prime Minister for the second time. Baldwin continues to be a mystery to historians. Others of his time like Law, Asquith, MacDonald have been vivisected, given the usual historical post mortem, the cause of death or nature of disease, the coroner's verdict so to say delivered and finally labelled in the archives of history. Not so Baldwin who in his own time aroused conflicting opinions. To Lloyd George he was "the most formidable antagonist whom I ever encountered". To Churchill rarely charitable to those whom he thought his inferiors he was "the greatest party manager the Conservatives ever had" and this to a man who almost shattered the party by his snap election. Beaverbrook found him unspeakable, cunning. Harold Macmillan called him a supreme Parliamentarian and Amery described him as a personality with "a breadth of outlook, a tolerance and a warm humanity". Except for Beaverbrook's characteristically uncharitable remark the consensus underlying the conflicting appraisals is of sincerity, honesty, one who felt things deeply with a conscience more active than his intellect. The assessment is thus of a sincere man and it is not unusual that in the amoral world of politics this was easily misconstrued for diabolical cunning. This was of course the writers projecting themselves. Perhaps it is not that Baldwin's personality was such a mystery but rather his acceptability to a nation still elitist ridden and equating virtue with aristocratic antecedents and upbringing. Politics was still the business of the ruling class and an ironmaster who presumed to become Prime Minister had to be diabolical or some kind of fanatic or mystery man. Baldwin has never received his due in history. This was partly because it was his misfortune to play an avuncular role to an irresponsible rakish monarch and thus incur the unforgiving wrath of the royalists who thought that he had wilfully ousted their king.

The main problem was the socio-economic problem which it had on its hands and to cope with it he had of all people Winston Churchill as his Chancellor of the Exchequer to whom the gold standard was like the Union Jack. With its resumption in his view it would be all's right with the world. In reality it widened Britain's gulf from reality. As a historian has observed "It was a step backwards into a dream world of which Britain ruled the waves and the pound sterling commanded awe and respect throughout the world". Some of its

acts were creditable. These included unemployment relief, contributory old age pensions, restoration of the McKenna duties, establishment of the BBC, and the Central Electricity Board, lowering of the voting age for women. However, as everyone knows, its undoing was the mounting conflict with the Unions to which the gold standard decision contributed materially by overpricing British goods and increasing costs. The coal industry was hard hit and it was in the running battle with the coal miners that the historic General Strike of 1926 originated. The government survived but had its revenge with the infamous Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act of 1927.

Above all, Government seemed to be bankrupt in ideas coping with the problem except for Churchill's relentless churning out of his free trade, anti-inflation, lowered wages budgets which only aggravated the industrial unrest causing unemployment and conflict. However, there was no lack of ideas in the country which arose from many sides such as the Oswald Mosley programme in his "Revolution by Reason" and the proposals of the Liberal Industrial Enquiry which included Keynes, and contained boldly imaginative ideas ahead of the time. Labour ironically trailed behind in thinking as Snowden was more timid than Churchill. It was thus a confused nation but with a highly augmented electorate of 29 million that went to the polls in 1929 and their verdict reflected this indecision. Liberals who deserved better for their ideas and votes cast were routed and the honours were shared by Labour and the Conservatives. Labour really had nothing to offer to justify this choice nor did the Conservatives necessarily deserve their rejection. Future events were to bear this out when Ramsay MacDonald would decide on a national government.

MacDonald took office in time to face the biggest crisis that has rocked the world since the first World War. This was the collapse of Wall Street in October 1929 and the consequences on the world Capitalist economy. Britain stood up to it better than other countries but Snowden was as unimaginative as ever with his orthodox straitlaced balanced budgets, gold standard and free trade which Churchill would have warmly endorsed. However, the May committee on National Expenditure published a report which predicted a dire crisis and advised drastic economies including reduction of unemployment benefits. Faced with this national crisis MacDonald decided very rightly on a national government on the advice possibly of the king.

The national government took drastic steps including the dropping of the gold standard. A fresh election was held which routed Labour and returned the Conservatives overwhelmingly but initially under Ramsay MacDonald as a figurehead Prime Minister.

The outbreak of the second World War in 1939 has clouded recollection of the national government. However, for its achievements it ranks among the greatest administrations. No doubt it marked a departure from traditions, a reversal of concepts, a shedding of false notions but these were all for the good and made for a better Britain. These included the adoption after a century of agonizing appraisal of protection with the Import Duties Bill of 1932 passed by, of all people, the son of Joseph Chamberlain: the acceptance of imperial preference at the imperial conference of 1932, the agricultural marketing scheme which from a century of agricultural slump made Britain a great farming nation, measures for nationalization of industry which in effect were more rationalization: housing boom through subsidized council measures and dynamic building societies with attractive mortgage offers. Thanks to these measures the eve of war found a much better Britain than perhaps it had ever been where a tide of national prosperity was engulfing pockets of elitism. Politically too the decade was active, almost dramatic. On the left it saw the revolt of Mosley to form the Blackshirts and the formation of the Socialist League under Stafford Cripps and Harold Laski who were the intellects, what the Fabians had been to the early Labour party. Like the latter they were doctrinaire in their uncritical adulation of the USSR, their enthusiasm for Marxist and the left movement, which found classic expression in John Strachey's "The coming struggle for power" and his own conversion to Communism. There was even talk of a popular front between ILP and Communists. The Labour party and movement in the meantime was coming increasingly under the influence of the Trade Unions. The dominant figure was Ernest Bevin, the most outstanding leader of the Labour movement of the century. He and Attlee represented a new leadership. In the Conservative party, Churchill had broken with Baldwin, his sensitive stomach being unable to digest the independence of India although 30 years before he had hailed independence of South Africa much as Wordsworth hailed the French Revolution. It was too much for his aristocratic disposition, reared fighting natives in the North West Frontier and the river war to accept them as equals whereas the apostles

of apartheid ranked higher in his estimate. There was also a kind of leftish revolt from stiff upper lipped intellects like Rab Butler and Macmillan. Baldwin was returned as Prime Minister in November 1935 to face yet another crisis. This was the revolt of King Edward VIII against hallowed tradition in proposing the exaltation of a twice divorced lady love as the English Queen. Not since Anne Boleyn had such a thing happened, as royalty was normally quite adept with the help of friends at keeping their amours within decent limits. Baldwin and the Archbishop of Canterbury handled it in characteristic British fashion. The honour of the throne was saved but the king had to go to three decades of restless tormented exile.

By now the focus of Britain and the world was Europe and its frightening domination by dictators. The latter were not so unique as they were the apotheosis of European racism which had produced British imperialism. British diplomacy had lost its grip everywhere. Unlike in 1914 when it had at least the treaties with France and Russia, it was now in isolation. Its old ally Japan had also reneged in Manchuria. The result was the appeasement policies culminating in Chamberlain's journey to Canossa. This was not peace with honour of course but it may have earned a respite for Britain to be ready for the war which everyone knew was unavoidable.

CHAPTER III

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL AFFAIRS

Foreign and colonial policies are theoretically two sides of the same coin but they were not always in accord in Britain's history. In fact at the outset of its colonial career there were instances when they were even at variance. During the 18th century the British government had to repeatedly restrain the British East India Company and take it to task for engaging in hostilities against the Dutch company (VOC) in Bengal. The latter with equal vehemence protested to its government against the aggressive posture of the British company towards it. These inter-company hostilities ran counter to the Anglo-Dutch alliance against France in particular, which was the cornerstone of their diplomacy at that time and were therefore most unwelcome to the two governments. This problem arose even between Portugal and Spain in the 17th century as the companies were opposed to peace between them at home. The circumstances were of course that, though part of the same nation, they were two different branches of activity as state and commercial companies. Thus the two interests frequently collided. Even the companies found it difficult at times to control their overseas agencies and this was one of the causes for their decline. The trend in the history of European overseas activity was towards the decline and elimination of the pioneer trading companies and their absorption by their respective states. Thus the VOC was disbanded in the end of the 18th century and the British East India Company was abolished after the mutiny. In any case its history from the end of the 18th century had been a progressive control of its affairs by the state, starting from the Regulating Act of 1774. This trend and its culmination meant equally the progressive subjection of colonial affairs to the state so that in Britain in the second half of

the 19th century, they came almost totally under the control of the crown. That ended any dichotomy between colonial and foreign affairs from the view point of responsibility and management. Still there remained a question of primacy as to which had more importance, precedence in the scale of national interests. In practice this meant that overseas policy whether foreign or colonial became an interaction, a co-ordination of policy rather than opposing interests. The famous Eastern Question was thus as much a colonial as it was an European problem. However, in the age of Imperialism of the last quarter of the 19th century, perhaps it is true to say, that the overseas interests became the predominant consideration for which Britain was even ready to shelve its position *vis-a-vis* the continent. At that stage the colonial factor was the key to its foreign policy. Some may go as far as to say that for a time it replaced its traditional interests in the continent such as the low countries, the Rhine, the Mediterranean which had been the focal points of British diplomacy until developments in Europe jolted it back. In this survey the two themes will be traced separately highlighting inter connections.

In contrast to its domestic situation, Britain emerged from the war in 1815 with its prestige higher than it had ever been before internationally. Its celebrated victories over France in the Hundred Years War had been local achievements boosting national pride but not much wider impact. During the wars of the Renaissance, Wolsey's diplomacy and Henry's bluster had given Britain a friendly parity on the continent. The great victories of Marlborough were a high water mark of British military genius on the continent but the Phyrric character of Malplaquet and the ignominious treaty that ended the war has clouded the achievement. In the other wars of the 18th century, Marshall Saxe was the hero of the Austrian Succession, Frederick of Prussia of the Seven Years War while the War of American independence was a disaster from which it was retrieved by the diplomacy of Shelburne. On the other hand in the wars against Napoleon while the latter had overthrown almost every European coalition against him, it seemed as if Britain had virtually stood up to him single handed and encompassed his end. This was by a combination of Acre, Aboukir, Trafalgar, the Peninsular War, culminating in Waterloo where Wellington with his mixed army had to bear the brunt until well into the evening and although Blucher's timely intervention saved him and turned the tide, Britain was the acknowledged

hero of the field. It is not without justification that Britain was an acclaimed leader of the post-war world and that peace arrangements should have revolved round her.

Britain had already foreshadowed this role in its contribution to the post-war settlements which were made by the allies at the closing stages of the war. These were mainly in the Treaty of Chaumont of March 1814 which was a military alliance between Britain, Austria, Russia and Prussia, the two treaties of Paris of 1814 and 1815 which laid down the lines of the territorial settlements, the definitive treaty of Vienna which ratified the post-war settlement and the Quadruple Alliance of 1815 which established the Concert of Europe and was intended to be a diplomatic mechanism to maintain peace in Europe by friendly means. Britain's representative at these events was the Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, whose role and personality made history in their own right. He is unique in British diplomacy not only as the only holder of that office to commit suicide or fight a duel but also for his combination of unsavoury traits for which he was reputed. These were misanthropy, paranoia, conceit and reaction. One fact is undisputed and this was his supreme diplomatic sense, particularly his perspicacity and insight. He was perhaps the only truly European statesman Britain produced and he was the pioneer of global diplomacy. He was a statesman of the 20th century in a company of 18th century minds. He had a continental mind like Disraeli but while the latter was Oriental, regarding the empire like some matriarchal Caliphate, Castlereagh was in the tradition of Grotius in his concept of a Concert of Europe.

In any discussion of Castlereagh it is customary to contrast him with his successor Canning, not only as rivals who fought a duel, but temperamental opposites. The difference was in personalities and not policies, in perspectives rather than objectives. Like all good British statesmen, each was wedded to the country's interests but expressed in different styles. Canning was so much the opposite of Castlereagh that agreement between them would not have looked plausible. Castlereagh was secretive and Canning a publicist, the latter played to the gallery and the other despised the public and even Parliament. Castlereagh was dour and Canning a wit, capable of flourishes like his famous calling in the new world to redress the balance of the world. Historically however the real contrast is not between Canning

and Castlereagh but of the latter with Metternich against whom he was pitted and whose confrontation shaped the foreign policy of Britain at this time.

Metternich is often regarded in diplomatic folklore as the symbol of reaction and the archtype of the old order. Post-war Europe is usually referred to as the Metternich system. What is meant is that it was dominated by Metternich and impregnated by his essentially 18th century spirit and outlook. He was in truth an epitome and a product of that time. Married to the grand-daughter of Kaunitz and like him Foreign Minister, he saw his role like the latter as the preservation of the Hapsburg empire in all its sprawling diversity and its linguistic and ethnic contradictions. Europe to him was an extension of the latter to be dealt with by the same methods and kept similarly under control. His policy was thus a naive application of the notion of indivisibility of local and international problems. Unlike Palmerston for instance he could not afford the luxury of being a liberal abroad and a reactionary at home. Metternich indeed was being faithful to his milieu of 18th century diplomacy in which peace settlements, treaties and conferences had been regarded as cyclical adjustments of the power balance without implications for the underlying order of things. The notion of a popular dimension was totally alien to his view which invested him thereby with the reputation of being its antithesis and arch enemy which indubitably he was. Metternich thus became the main obstacle of the popular forces which were astir in Europe at this time. These were the idealization of freedom and liberty of romantic writers, the Pan aspirations of minorities for fraternal union, the revolt against political and cultural repression through measures such as the Carlsbad decree of 1817, the widespread activities of secret societies such as the Carbonari, the Federati, the Tugendbund which formed an underworld of conspiracy and subversion against the states concerned, the ferment in Universities and literary circles. It was as yet an intellectual, romantic, elitist movement far removed from the sterner popular agitation of later times but they signified a revulsion with the existing order and a desire for its replacement by the ethos of post-revolutionary Europe.

Metternich met the challenge as is well known by his time-honoured technique of divide and rule and setting one race against the other within the Hapsburg empire and the repressive decrees to

which he was able to convert his Central European colleagues. His real diplomatic answer was the Quadruple Alliance supplemented by the Holy Alliance which was Czar Alexander's contribution not to be outdone, to the peace process. Despite its solemn declaration that the states concerned "having reached the profound conviction that the policy of the powers in their mutual relations ought to be guided by the sublime truths taught by the eternal religion of God our saviour" the comments which it evoked did not show much faith in the sublimity of its motivations. Metternich described it as "high sounding nothing", Talleyrand "a ludicrous contract" and Castlereagh "a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense". Still the Holy Alliance became the teeth of the Quadruple Alliance, its action arm and the counterpart of the military organizations of today like NATO in their professed role. The Quadruple Alliance was conceptually an original idea in the notion of a continuing mechanism but estimates of it differed. Castlereagh wrote of it, that its immediate object is to "inspire the states of Europe with a sense of the dangers which they have surmounted by their union, of the hazards they will incur by a relaxation of vigilance to make them feel that the existing concert is their only perfect security against the revolutionary embers more or less existing in every state of Europe". This seems to be a reactionary view compared to that of Metternich's mentor Gentz that "there has succeeded a principle of general union, uniting all states collectively with a federative bond . . . so Europe seems really to form a grand political family united under the auspices of a high tribunal of its own creation". The latter appears to embody the idea of European unity which was to be realized a century and half later in the Treaty of Rome 1956. The acid test came with their application in which there was open breach between Britain and the others. This occurred in the conferences which were convened pursuant to the objects of the Quadruple Alliance at Aixla Chapelle 1818, Troppau and Laibach 1820, Verona 1822 to deal with developments in Europe. These were mainly in Spain, Italy, Portugal and concerned the deposition of regimes by popular uprisings and efforts of the concert to restore them in the name of peace and stability. Castlereagh opposed intervention in Spain and Portugal against the newly established regimes but Metternich was able to suppress the movements in Piedmont and Naples. The breaking point came at Verona over French intervention in Spain but by then Castlereagh was dead and Canning had taken over. Canning dealt a death blow to the concert and widened the

breach with the others by his stand over Spain and recognition of the Spanish American states of Argentina, Colombia and Mexico which occasioned the Monroe doctrine and his famous announcement of redressing the balance. Meantime over Greece, Britain was violently at odds and important interests were at stake.

Under Canning the contrast with Castlereagh was in style rather than policy. Possibly faced with the same problems Castlereagh may have acted like him. In style instead of dour, secretive diplomacy there was now panache and publicity. It was the difference between a neurotic and an extrovert but the motives were the same of protecting and promoting British interests. In Latin America he found a new world for British commercial enterprise, realizing an old Elizabethan dream. The situation in Greece touched a raw nerve which was the so-called Eastern Question. The history of the latter has been exaggerated by historians who see it as an obsession of British policy throughout the 19th century and link it with British concern for the Indian empire. Actually these considerations came much later, probably with Curzon who was obsessed with Russian expansion in Central Asia and the threat to India. In any case it was not earlier than the second half of the 19th century. The notion that it began earlier arose from references to it by Pitt the younger but this was regarding Russian threats in the Mediterranean via the Ottoman empire. This originated in the progressive weakening of the Ottoman empire and the imposition on it of Kutchuk Kainardji 1776. This was essentially a balance of power question in Europe regarding its interests in the Mediterranean and the position of the Central powers. Basic to British policy was the promotion of division between the three, alternating between support of Austria and Prussia. Thus in Marlborough's time Britain favoured supporting Austria against the Ottoman. The situation in Greece posed these vital questions far more than any pseudo classical notions of phil-hellenism. Byron's involvement was the fulfilment of a romantic death wish but it gave the rebellion an aura of idealism. It is ironic that he should have died of an illness like Rupert Brooke dying of a fever in Gallipoli when perhaps what both dearly loved would have been a death like that of Hector. Canning's problem was to check the Russians but for this he had to restrain the ferocity of the Turks in their slaughter of Greeks. There was also the ardour of the French posing the same problem as in 1853 in the Crimea and Canning had to forestall the latter. The

solution of Navarino was typical of big power tactics of bullying an ally into submission so as to deny the advantage to a rival. This was to be repeated many times in the post-1945 world in denying or delaying decolonization on the pretext of Communism in order to block another power.

Canning too regrettably left the scene in 1827 and actually Navarino was the work of Wellington. He left British diplomacy at a crucial stage. The concert experiment of Britain acting from within Europe had failed. From now it would revert to its traditional role of outsider operating on balance of power. The concert would not be revived again till Locarno in 1926 but that too was abortive. Ultimately the concert idea had to be abandoned as a failure and in 1956 a new concept of a Community has taken its place. Britain's role on both occasions was similar. It did not destroy the concert but did not give enough support for it to succeed. Perhaps the task was too difficult. Also Britain failed deplorably to produce any European statesmen. Its only products were colonials like Roseberry, Salisbury and Churchill who if at all took Britain further and further away. The unusual longevity of the last cast a baneful shadow over Britain's European policy specially after 1945. Britain did not lack men of calibre and Lloyd George and Ramsay MacDonald had it in them but invariably the Gold Standard and the Union Jack stood in the way and the Labour party did not show itself to be more fraternal than the Tories. The period after 1830 can be divided into two phases, namely, from 1830 to 1876, when Britain continued its involvement in Europe, but as an outsider from a balance of power standpoint though somewhat truculently, and 1876 to 1900 when it abandoned Europe for empire.

The first phase was dominated until 1865 by the policy and personality of Lord Palmerston who was the Foreign Secretary for the greater part and later Prime Minister and was thus the counterpart of Metternich. This period in fact is referred to as the Palmerstonian era or the Palmerstonian peace as a measure of his impact which was thus the equivalent of the Metternich system. Palmerston has become a legendary figure and the personification to posterity of several attributes. Some of them were as an apostle of freedom, an aggressive John Bull, the upholder of British national pride, a jingoist, a bully, a swaggerer and a hectoring blusterer. This Protean and somewhat

unendearing image was fostered by his rakish and flamboyant personality. The latter however was deceptive and concealed one of the finest professionals in British diplomacy. If he made a lasting contribution and this has not been seriously questioned, it was due to professional competency and genuine skill as much as to a truculent personality. This aspect of Palmerston has not received the due appreciation of posterity. During his incumbency he was faced with major changes in the international scene and the emergence of forces which were a severe challenge to British foreign policy. This was in fact the age of the 1848 revolutions which overthrew the leaky edifice of Vienna and made way for a new brand of politics and leadership. The latter were by no means a fulfilment of revolutionary aspirations, being instead retrogressive in the traditions of the French revolution which despite its avowed objective of overthrowing despotism, merely replaced it with Bonapartism. Post-1848 Europe was the age of Realpolitik, the exponents of which were leaders of sterner stuff such as Cavour, Garibaldi, Bismarck, Louis Napoleon who in place of the vacillating mixture of repression and liberalism of earlier times, had bold ideas of redrawing the political geography of Europe which they pursued with single-minded determination. They were like the Renaissance monarchs of the 16th century who were determined personalities intent on carving out kingdoms and stamping their personalities. The difference is that while these were acts of self glorification, the statesmen of Realpolitik claimed popular will and nationalism for their policies although in cases like the Hapsburg empire they repressed both. It was the destiny of Palmerston to preside over both the greatness and the decline of Britain on the continent. He came on the crest of the wave of its post-Vienna prestige and saw it flounder on the rocks of Realpolitik.

Some of the factors with which he had to contend with and which shaped his policy may be briefly reviewed. In Europe a balance of power crisis was in the offing. The attempts at collective security through the concert had failed due to its collision with the Holy Alliance and the British stand against the latter and the principle of intervention. As a result Europe had reverted to its traditional two camps between the Western group of France and Spain and the Central powers which was the Holy Alliance and now held together by the Treaty of Munchengratz between Austria and Russia. Britain's diplomacy was to hold the balance between the two by keeping each side divided

and cultivating Prussia in the Eastern bloc and France on the West. In practice this policy misfired because of the chronic rivalry between France and Britain on all fronts and persistent bickering between them, particularly in Spain and the Middle East. With the Central powers the problem was to restrain Russian ambitions in the Ottoman empire which had no lack of pretext to interfere in Turkish affairs. First it was on behalf of the Greeks, then for the Sultan against Egypt, then for championship of the orthodox church and Britain was on edge meeting every threat. The attempted balance was thus a tenuous one because of the rivalry between the two groups and of the members within the groups. Collective action in the circumstances would have been a feat and it is to Palmerston's credit that he achieved this over the independence of Belgium in 1839 and Egypt in 1841, in the latter case reversing the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, just as Wellington had tried to neutralize the Treaty of Adrianople in 1828. Until 1848 Palmerston maintained a fair grip on the situation but the aftermath of the revolutions brought into being the Realpolitik order against which his methods were nugatory. The measure of British diplomatic bankruptcy at this time was the involvement in the Crimean War. As Prime Minister, Palmerston's encounter with the new political order in Europe was with Louis Napoleon and Cavour and it did not bring him much credit. With the first his approval of Napoleon incurred for him the disapproval of the monarch and his support of French intervention on behalf of Italy further won for him the distrust of Austria. Cavour welcomed his support but Britain got little credit for its contribution to the Risorgimento. These encounters exposed Palmerston's bluff as the trend was towards ruthless determination in politics which culminated in the achievements of the Iron Chancellor. Palmerston's death in 1865 was timely as it both symbolized and coincided with the eclipse of British diplomacy from the European scene. Palmerston's rebuff over Schleswig Holstein was indeed the portent of this.

Apart from the underlying balance of power preoccupation which was the traditional tenet of Britain's continental diplomacy, Palmerston's policy was marked by an ideological sympathy which he professed for freedom movements and pursuit of material ends through trade and expansion. His Statue of Liberty type image towards freedom movements in Europe was not supported by his actions, because he had no sympathy for Kossuth and condoned

Russian intervention in Hungary. His support of Italian unity was really to forestall French intervention and weaken Austria. It appeared instead to be effusions of Anglo Saxon jingoism and national pride in keeping with statements attributed to him to the effect that Britain must count for something in the transactions of the world or that it is not fitting that a country occupying such a proud position as England should be a passive and mute spectator of everything that is going on around. The lengths to which he went on behalf of Don Pacifico were an extreme case of this. However, in the counter revolution which followed 1848, Palmerstonian diplomacy suffered a series of blows which effectively knocked it out of the continent. These were the military achievements of Schwarzenberg and his rebuke to Palmerston to keep out of Italian affairs, Russian intervention in Hungary in lieu of Prussia's offer of help which Austria declined, the occupation of Schleswig Holstein by Prussian troops in total disregard of Palmerston's support of Denmark's claims, the progressive assertion of Prussia and Austria's efforts as at the agreement of Olmutz 1850 to block it.

Palmerston's discomfiture would have pleased a section of British opinion and his adversaries, resentful of his hectoring style and bullying tone. The former was notably the radical group in Parliament and outside led by Cobden and Bright who joined issue with him on the objects and conduct of his foreign policy. This was not only an expression of their Chartist coloured revolutionary views which regarded him as a reactionary at home. It was equally on ideological grounds over the issue of free trade as the spokesmen of the famous Manchester school. Their contention was that the Palmerston policy of flag waving and gunboats diverted attention from, and was prejudicial to, the real interests of Britain which needed a cheap diplomacy of promotion of goods. Such sentiments would have a familiar ring even today to readers of third world newspapers where similar opinions would be found, mistrustful of the establishment. This reflects the familiar battle between popular diplomacy which is a kind of noble savage view of it, as the promotion of trade by innocents abroad and establishment diplomacy as a stiff upper lipped affair between a Mephistophilean intrigue and a Strauss waltz. There is even a tinge of class in this view because of the aristocratic elitist aura of diplomacy in the popular mind. This is not confined to the sensitive Socialistic atmosphere of third world countries because it was an

explicit theme of the Berill report in Britain. It was a narrow economist's view of foreign policy as arcane acts of evil doers who disrupt the natural good in life somewhat like John the Baptist's view of his times. Palmerston with his rakish reputation and foppery suited the image of a Herod perfectly.

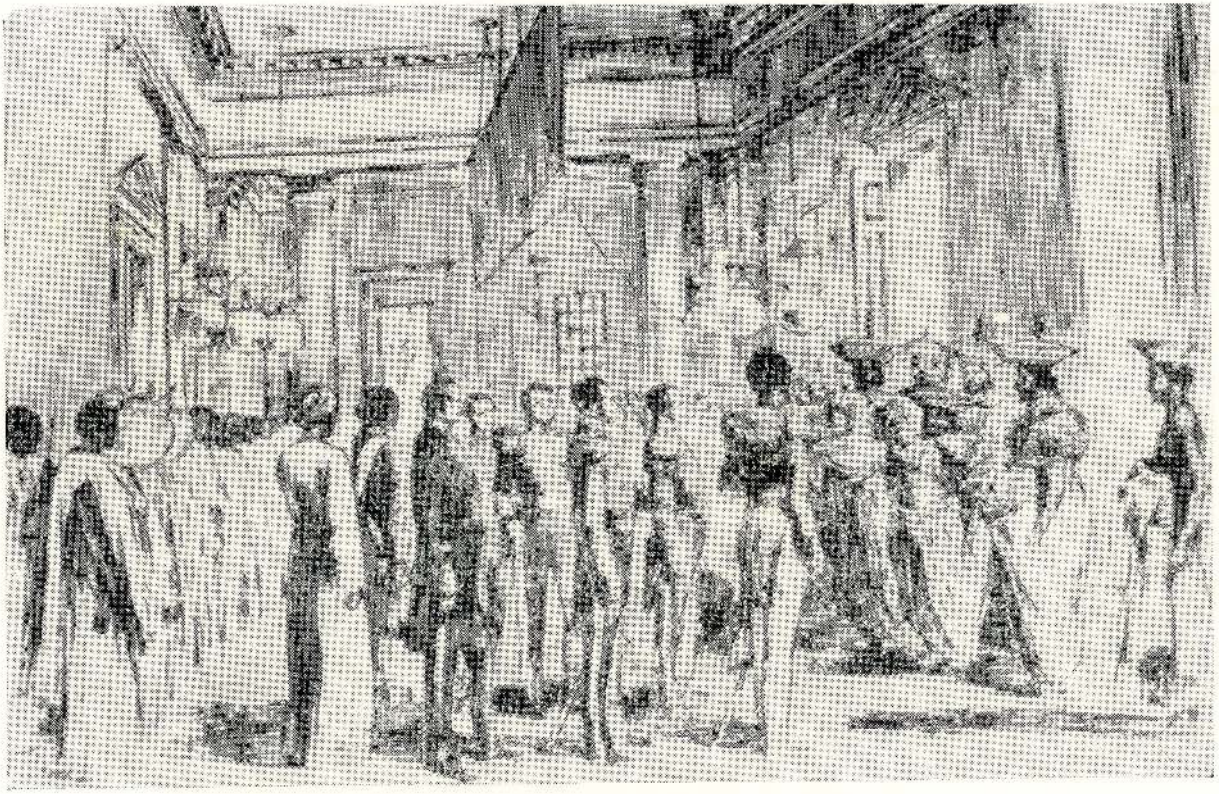
Still this was an exaggerated view which took no account of his genuine efforts to promote British commercial interests. His concern about internal navigation in Europe for which the Vienna Treaty had made provision, the continuing interest in Latin America which Canning had opened as a new world for British trade, his aggressive postures in the Middle East to block France and secure it as a market, the imperialist ventures towards China and the Far East which foreshadowed the latter carving of the Manchu empire, all reflected the unmistakable impact of trade considerations on foreign policy. As the opium war demonstrated, these were punitive ventures and a far cry from the peaceful trading intentions of the previous century. A similar situation was developing in India where during his time the empire assumed its final shape with the annexation of the Punjab, the lapse policy of Dalhousie, the Indian mutiny and its sequel which was the abolition of the company. Napoleon's expedition to Egypt and later Louis Philippe's interest in the Middle East were a reminder not only of French persistence in that quarter but also the relevancy of that area to the Indian empire. Disraeli's subsequent action was a culmination of this appreciation. At this time it also seemed as if there was a Russian threat to India. However, this was exaggerated by the blustering Ellenborough trying no doubt to keep step with Palmerston and by the local proconsuls who between them caused the disaster of 1840. Yet India was still not the jewel in the orb which it was to be in Viceregal times because colonial activities and policies were still diffuse and divided between missionary enterprise, trade expansion, colonization in the background of a negative attitude towards colonies and what to do with them.

As Foreign Secretary, Palmerston had outstanding professional competency. This fact has been obscured by his flamboyant John Bull reputation. With him began the professional streamlining of the system which Cannnig had initiated. Palmerston set a great example by his skill in drafting despatches. In his measures for reorganization he carried over into that sphere the trend for reform of

institutions of that period to which Peel gave the lead. The Foreign Office of that time like those in many third world countries today was a one-man show of the Secretary and a few dozen clerks where the work devolved on the former. The size of the staff remained static, bearing no apparent relation to the expansion of activities and turnover of business. Quality left much to be desired both at home and abroad. In the first, geographical areas were in charge of senior clerks. Overseas posts were held by young bloods for whom diplomacy was a social attainment, an admission into elitist circles, and as pay was poor this meant appointees with financial rather than cerebral qualifications. This did not exclude the inborn diplomat, an example of whom was Malmesbury who conducted negotiations on Ceylon with great skill. Palmerston appointed good men to key places, one of them being Stratford Canning whose reputation for bellicosity is quite undeserved and played his difficult part well. The Crimean blunder was not his doing. The large measure of Palmerston's success was due to competent briefing by these agents. His term of office coincided with the technological breakthrough when the laying of submarine cables and transport improvements made meaningful communications possible. Until then laissez faire was unavoidable and the problems of earlier times could probably be attributed to just this remoteness when colonies would not know when their countries were at war. The effect of the Ems telegram was a measure of the impact of the new technology on diplomacy.

Not the least of Palmerston's problems was his relationship with the monarchy. His personality was not the type which would appeal to a self-opinionated Queen or an over-cautious Albert, accustomed to the persuasive charm of Melbourne. In this respect Palmerston was like Gladstone the other bete noire of the Queen. However, while the first was domineering, the other was didactic, both of which styles were distasteful to the monarch. The differences were over policy but more over style and the endorsement of Louis Napoleon and Don Pacifico incident were the last straw which brought about his end as Foreign Secretary.

The Palmerstonian era is associated with the only breach of the European peace as far as Britain was concerned during the whole of the 19th century after Waterloo. This peace was a remarkable achievement of British diplomacy during that century which spoke highly for its Foreign Secretaries. The breach was the Crimean war



A NEW GOVERNOR

The Chiefs of the Kandyan Provinces are presented to the new Governor at Queen's Pavilion, Kandy on his assumption of office.

From Illustrated London News.

for which Palmerston was not responsible and could possibly have averted it but he saw it to an end. Yet he was connected with it in another sense in that it concerned the Eastern Question with which his name is inextricably associated. Palmerston was the first major exponent of the policy of the preservation of the Ottoman empire which was the core of that question. This meant protection of the Porte from his recalcitrant subjects like Mehemet Ali, from Balkan nationalism, from aggression by Russia either as a champion of the latter or directly in its drive to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, from the blandishments of France whose gallantry dated back to the Capitulations of the 16th century. Britain's interest was mainly from the standpoint of balance of power in Europe where the partition of that empire like that of Poland would have tilted the scales for the Central powers. The other major consideration was the security of India to which it was thought that the Ottoman territories held the key. This was the basis of Britain's distrust of French and Russian policy towards Turkey because it feared that their ultimate objective was India. Actually for that time this was an exaggerated fear because Russia was busy fomenting dissension in the Balkans, and France, beset with political instability at home and its imperialist adventures in North Africa, to think of an Indian empire. The Eastern question of this period was really a balance of power problem concerning France and the Central powers and the safeguarding of Britain's maritime interests in the Mediterranean. An external threat to India arose if at all in the late 19th century following Russian expansion in Central Asia. Even this was probably the Russophobic Chauvinism of Viceroys and militarists such as Lytton, Curzon and Kitchener in patriotic zeal for their Empress.

The origin of the Crimean war ostensibly was the quarrel between France and Russia over patronage of the Holy places and the claim of Russia to be protector of the Christians in the Ottoman empire. In reality this was the third round in the power rivalry between them for influence in the Ottoman empire with maritime interests in the Near East in view for France and entry into the Mediterranean and the Dardanelles for Russia. Britain's historic role had been to block them both by a mixture of unilateral restraint of the individual powers and collective action to secure acceptance of a common solution. This was achieved quite successfully in 1829 over Greece and 1841 in the five power Straits Convention just as it was applied on the

Belgian question in the Treaty of London of 1839. These were some of the notable achievements of Palmerstonian diplomacy and represented a commendable resuscitation of the European Concert after its earlier collapse at the hands partly of Canning. When the Crimea situation arose this restraining hand was not there and the parties concerned rushed headlong into unilateral action. Turkey by declaring war, Russia by crossing the Pruth followed by the naval victory over Turkey at Sinope and France by alerting its Mediterranean fleet, creating thereby an irrevocable situation for Britain. On the earlier occasions, it will be recalled, Britain's approach had been to diffuse the situation by punitive restraint on Turkey at Navarino and later against Ibrahim. In this case as in 1841 British decision was prompted by the action of the French and intended to forestall the latter. It was a case of brinkmanship going out of hand owing to misreading because conceivably an emphatic indication to the Czar of British intentions might have restrained him. The Crimean blunder was thus the blundering into war rather than the fiasco of the war itself.

The war was a logistical more than a military failure. The soldiery acquitted themselves with characteristic courage fighting Napoleonic-type battles. The High Command such as existed in those pre-Cardwell times were totally unequal to the logistics of a part amphibious, task force type operation as they were to be 70 years later at Gallipoli. This is a valid parallel in other respects as well. Its Commander Raglan was a Waterloo hero and Hamilton from the Boer war. The bovine Cardigan was the equivalent of Redvers Buller of Ladysmith fame. Raglan knew as much of what was going on as Hamilton of the course of the landings. Both were soldiers' wars of endurance, suffering and tragic sacrifice by the fighting men. It is fitting that the real hero of the Crimean war was Florence Nightingale. The terms of the Peace Settlement did not redeem the dismal military performance. The Straits Convention could have been revised by negotiation. To neither Russia nor France was it a crushing rebuff because the mercurial Napoleon would shortly after seek greener pastures in Italy. One adverseresult was that it upset the balance *inter se* among the Central powers by pushing Prussia, which had kept out, into the forefront. The effects of this were to be felt in the sixties. The only real beneficiary was thus Prussia and to that extent

the Crimean War was a terminal event for British diplomacy on the continent. When it reappeared in 1876 it was to accept the diktat of Bismarck who was by then master.

The period after the Crimean war was an unbroken peace for Britain until 1914. This meant that except for the Crimean affair it enjoyed a century of peace after Waterloo. This refutes the notion of the compulsive necessity of war and demonstrated the potential of diplomacy in controlling the tendency towards it. This did not mean that the world was at peace. On the contrary, on both sides to the left and to the right, like at Balaclava, cannons volleyed and thundered not as at Balaclava against 600 but against the largest forces committed to battle until then and unbelievable slaughter. Thus while Europe and America were ablaze, Britain was fiddling with empire. In America there was the risk of involvement to help the confederate country cousins of the British ruling classes. In Europe there was no such risk but careful neutrality which Bismarck carefully stage managed. Thus Britain was a spectator while the history of Europe and of the world was transformed with the dramatic transformation of Prussia into a premier power. This was achieved by a new dimension in warfare when over half a million were in the field drilled and directed with the precision of a machine. This was a triumph of Prussian militarism which was in war, what the Prussian genius was in science or philosophy, the ruthless application of discipline and organization. Europe was not unaccustomed to great military encounters from Cannae and Chalons to Austerlitz and Jena but the surrender of an Emperor, the encirclement of a mighty army, the siege of Paris were monumental events which filled the world with awe. They were not different to the mighty battles which were raging in America, demonstrating likewise, rare fighting qualities and military genius and announcing the emergence of a titan in the world scene. In the hindsight of the first World War one perhaps would regard the Franco-Prussian war as the writing on the wall, the harbinger of destruction for the world when the latter should have taken timely action. The sentiment of the time in Britain was far from this because Prussia was to Britain historically what Brutus had been to Caesar—Caesar's angel. It was genetically the Saxon element in the Anglo-Saxon mix to which Britain was linked by family and historic ties from Hanoverian to Saxe Coburg and later the marriage of Victoria's eldest daughter to the Crown Prince. In fact Prussia had been the

historic ally of Britain throughout against the traditional enemy which was France. Logically therefore British sentiment should have been on the side of Prussia. The wider implication of Prussian militarism was slow to dawn on the senses which in any case were numbed by the blitzkreig victories of Moltke's war machine and had the same shock effect as the fall of France in 1940. Except for unspoken admiration for the defence of Paris and sundry contributions, Britain was a passive witness while in a sense its own doom was being encompassed somewhat like the Spanish civil war being a dress rehearsal of the second World War. Diplomatically and militarily it shut the door of the continent to Britain, obliging it as a consolation prize to immerse itself in war games in the empire. There were only two major exceptions. These were the Berlin Congress of 1876 and the Berlin conference for the partition of Africa of 1885.

The celebrated Berlin conference of 1878 was yet the sequel to another eruption of the Eastern Question. This was the fourth such crisis for the century and the gravest. The previous three had been over Greek independence, the war between the Sultan and Mehemet and the Crimean War. It was still primarily a Balkan Question concerned with the Balkan nationalities but with Disraeli's purchase of the Suez Canal shares it had become more of an Indian issue of intimate interest to Britain's Indian empire where the Queen had just been declared Empress to boot. It thus acquired the symbolism of a clash between three mighty empires in the traditions of such historic encounters of the past representing in this case three of the oldest and greatest imperial lines. The latest manifestation was also in some respects a repeat of the Crimean problem with its familiar components—the well-'known ingredients of this simmering witches' cauldron—which were the aggressive posture of readiness of Russia straining at the leash to invade, the stubborn and defiant intransigence of Turkey and persistent defaulting of reform undertakings, the eagerness of the Central powers to capitalize on the situation, each one getting his pound of flesh, Britain's anxiety to block these ambitions by its propping up policy which was increasingly losing credibility, and also to restrain its rival, France, in its determination not to be left out or to take the initiative itself. The local scenario for all this was the smouldering revolt of the Balkan nationalities, openly incited by Russia in the latter's desire to form them into a political cartography which would promote its own ambitions in that quarter.

The crisis was triggered off in 1876 when Turkey unleashed the Bashi Bazouks on Bulgaria to quell an uprising against Turkish misrule. They carried out their task with characteristic zeal, committing horrendous atrocities which made international headlines. Disraeli was misled by his Ambassador Eliott into making light of these stories until he found himself in dire isolation when Gladstone aided by media launched his ferocious bag and baggage campaign which literally took Britain by storm. Never before or after has a public reacted in this manner to atrocities elsewhere. Not later when Armenians were massacred by the millions or over the atrocities in the Belgian Congo or in the seventies when Cambodians were decimated, was it repeated. Perhaps the colossal numbers involved in the holocausts of the 20th century have blunted the human conscience into routine acceptance of such phenomena. However, in 1876 the murder of a few thousands sent a shock wave of horror on which Gladstone capitalized with his ringing tones ending in the great crescendo like in a Beethoven symphony "their bimbashis and their yuzbakshis, bag and baggage from the land they have desolated" and profaned". The situation was compounded for the moment by the Constantinople conference which Salisbury attended where the Sultan accepted a reform programme. However, it was sabotaged by Midhat Pasha, one of the first of the young Turks who as a result precipitated the Russo-Turkish war. The heroic defence of Plevna caused a volte face in British opinion which became Russophobe and almost forced the country in a wave of jingoism to a war to which the Queen herself was not averse. It seemed imminent and justified by the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano which was forced upon Turkey and were a blatant and unacceptable assertion of Russian influence in the Balkans. This was achieved through the creation of a Greater Bulgaria under Russian patronage which dominated the region, with a few sops like Bosnia Herzegovina to Austria and marginal territories to Turkey. With such gains Russia clearly over-reached itself and Disraeli was able to convince Bismarck of this fact and persuade him to convene the Congress of Berlin which met in June 1878.

This Congress is an accepted landmark in the political and diplomatic evolution of Europe. It marked the end of the Baroque diplomacy of the 18th and 19th centuries of parcelling out of territories between states, distribution of spoils and handing out of sops as a basis for peace settlements. It was the final act in the Concert of

Europe which was envisaged as a system for the settlement of international disputes and threats to peace by collective means. It was a fitting climax to the glittering age of diplomacy when it became a public orchestration, a kind of ball for the aristocracy and nobility, behind which a handful of masterful personalities from Metternich to Andrassy and crowned heads conspired with each other for the advancement of their power and prestige, in ways which they hoped would be consistent with peace. The Concert was presumably intended as a form of international democracy to engage states in deciding on their collective future but it became in practice a cloak for camarilla diplomacy through pressures and secret understandings of groups and combination such as the Holy Alliance, the Drei Kaiser bund, culminating in the divisions into armed camps. The Berlin Congress was the parting of the ways. As a social event alone, apart from its symbolism, it was noteworthy for the assembly of personages who attended it, including the then Prime Minister and two future Prime Ministers of Britain, namely, Salisbury and Balfour, Bismarck the master of ceremonies, Hohenlohe, in short the makers of future world history. The achievement of the conference was an anti-climax in the characteristic manner of such meetings where the act of meeting matters more than the results and the outcome was predictable. The object was to disgorge Russia of its gains and redress the balance which had been so immoderately upset by the latter. This was accomplished by the fragmentation of the greater Bulgaria with considerations and gratifications all round with Cyprus for Britain as its peace with honour. Estimates of the Treaty have varied according to assessments of its terms but its practical and psychological impact was the affirmation of a Deutschland uber alles diplomatic situation in Europe and the diplomacy of the next four decades was a scramble to undo this fact. The Berlin conference of 1885 was a further confirmation of the position. The implication of the Berlin Congress for Britain was that it enabled it to beat an honourable retreat from Europe, leaving it in the competent hands of Bismarck. It inaugurated a quarter century of imperialism when that became a major preoccupation of foreign policy and the proclamation of Victoria as Empress of India right at this time is no mere coincidence. It was a closing of the ranks on Britain's part when it beat a strategic withdrawal to the empire to make amends for setbacks in Europe and by the same token to redress the power balance through the medium of imperial power and prestige and, if necessary, protection to form as it

were, a separate continent in its own right. Details of the Berlin Conference on Africa are not relevant here. It was the outcome of the discoveries by English explorers primarily in the so-called Dark Continent where as far as history was concerned there had been light long before it dawned in Europe. However, the European political atmosphere of the time soon converted it into a political scramble for territorial gains in Africa as economic resources and symbols of prestige. It was a case of one power not wanting to be outdone rather than serious economic or national stakes on their part. The Berlin Conference which met in 1884 November was stage managed by Bismarck and Salisbury and attempted to regulate the scramble and establish norms. It enabled both to benefit substantially and it is naive to think that Bismarck's sole interest was in keeping other powers preoccupied with it to have a free hand in Europe. Actually the outcome contributed no little to later developments because German gains in Africa were to embitter its relations with Britain no less than German meddling in the Near East. The importance of these two conferences was the fundamental change of direction which they caused in British foreign policy.

The British empire now became a cardinal concern of British foreign policy and the mainspring of its actions to a greater degree than before. This partly reflected the economic depression situation of the seventies which was due mainly to industrial competition from the continent. But it was also due to the mood of imperialism which had come into being in Britain as a prevailing ethos and an outlook on life and Britain's role. It was, to be sure, an impact on Britain of continental intellectual modes, of Hegelianism and authoritarian creeds, of Darwinian biology applied to human history and pseudo race theories. It was all part of a growing cult of the white man, his evangelical and civilizing role. These developments will be considered elsewhere under British colonial history but their relevance at this stage is their bearing on Britain's position vis-a-vis the continent. The last quarter century was marked by disquieting developments for Britain in the way of growing rivalries with other European powers in the colonial sphere, the expansion of these rivals to become threats to its Indian and African empire and the rebounding of these overseas events on relationships in the continent in a way which tended to isolate Britain. It is not that Britain wanted splendid isolation but that it went by default on the continent because of its preoccupation

with empire and its estranging effect on relations with the other powers concerned. The latter were mainly Russia, France and Germany. Ostensibly, as classic rivals, the first two seemed to be its most serious rivals but this proved to be a case of putting the telescope to the blind eye, because somewhat brutally and suddenly it was brought home to Britain that Germany had become a serious threat to its interests, surpassing the others. This has seemed a paradoxical development to many in view of the family ties between the two peoples, similarities of character which if at all made them natural allies against the other two. This was a misconception under which even Adolf Hitler was to labour. This has become a sore point in the interpretation of foreign policy of this period, namely, whether estrangement with Germany was engineered by an anti-German clique or whether it was a logical reaction to the Kaiser's policy or whether it was the family quarrel between Edward and his nephew carried too far, the modern equivalent of the wrath of Achilles as the cause of the Trojan war.

Pre-1914 aims and policies of Germany have been the subject of intensive study by German and other historians in the light of archives and one has a more sober idea of the position now than before. It can be seen that many of the earlier notions are myths and war propaganda with no firm basis. These include the notion of a conscious German military build up against Britain and plans for a war to divest it of the empire. There are further the issue of the Tirpitz naval programme and the view that he led a war party which was opposed by Bethman Holweg. To this is added the famous Berlin-Baghdad project of the Kaiser as a design to subvert the British empire in India. It is now known that Britain initially supported it and subscribed capital and saw it as a means of blocking Russia in the Middle East. Besides, far from being colonial rivals Germany supported Britain in Egypt and Portuguese Africa. In the former, Britain counted on German support to counteract France. There is no evidence therefore to support the view of German hostility to Britain or a conscious deliberate plan to undermine the British empire or challenge its naval supremacy. On the contrary, there was sympathy for German aspirations and a desire in British circles to co-operate with it to counter-balance France and Russia. At the same time certain currents were also drawing them apart. It was altogether a tense and troubled situation due to the cross currents of political, military and economic rivalry between the powers at this time. The

break down of the concert had caused countries to pursue their own devices with no regard for repercussions or efforts to harmonize as were attempted previously. There was a dangerous laissez faire among European states. The situation was aggravated by the addition of USA and Japan to the world stage. It is interesting to note that the purpose of the famous Mittel Europa idea of the Kaiser was the same as that of De Gaulle at a later day to organize an united Europe to hold the balance between USA and Russia. The worrying factor about Germany was the nature of its much talked about Weltpolitik which seemed to imply that it was a direct naval and commercial challenge to the British empire. Germany was deeply conscious of its population, size, resources and capacity and not prepared to play second fiddle. The place in the sun ambition was no fancy but a real drive after Bismarck unified it. The image of revival of the heritage of the Holy Roman empire probably inspired nationalist pan German circles. These trends made it a natural rival and threat to Britain. There was the feeling in Germany that to progress, it had either to be with Britain or fight it. This gave rise to an ambivalent attitude towards Britain which tended to play fast and loose, to test its reaction, to keep it guessing. This could also have been a reaction to the British policy of encirclement by its alliances with France in 1904 and Russia 1906. Official British thinking is well reflected in the famous Eyre Crowe memorandum assessing German policies and suggesting a policy for Britain. It was summed up as follows "So long as Germany's action does not overstep the line of legitimate protection of exising rights she can always count upon the sympathy and goodwill and even moral support of England. Further, it would be neither just nor politic to ignore the claims to a healthy expansion which a vigorous and growing country like Germany has a natural right to assert in the field of legitimate endeavour. It cannot be good policy for Britain to thwart such a process of development, where it does not conflict directly either with British interests or with those of other nations to which Britain is bound by solemn treaty obligations. If Germany, with the limits imposed by these conditions, finds the means peacefully and honourably to increase her trade and shipping, to gain coaling stations, or other harbours to secure concessions for the employment of German capital or industries, she could never find England in her way. Nor is it for British governments to oppose Germany's building as large a fleet as she may consider necessary or desirable for the defence of her national interests.

It is not untrue to say that there was no real grudge or antipathy between them, comparable for instance to the prejudices against Russia in Britain. Instead there was uncertainty which was aggravated by the volatile disposition of the Kaiser, his studied tactlessness, his inflammatory utterances and specific actions like the Kruger telegram, the seizure of Kiao Chau. These of course were insufficient to generate a climate of war but caused unhealthy tensions. In the meantime Britain had embarked on its policy of alliances ostensibly to emerge out of isolation but which psychologically justified German fears of encirclement. They were converted into something amounting to a military containment by Grey's ill-advised naval and military consultations which led to actual joint strategy for a war against Germany. They discouraged German hopes of reaching an agreement with Britain by creating the impression that Britain had committed itself against Germany. The Kaiser's action over Agadir and Algeciras must be seen in this light as aggressive and threatening reactions to the imaginary encirclement. His actions had the opposite effect of strengthening it.

The popular belief is that from 1900 to 1914 events led irreversibly to war, a headlong plunge to Armageddon as the saying goes. This was scarcely true. It was to be sure a time of stress and tension and brazen brinkmanship by the incorrigible, puerile Kaiser but hardly any deliberate plans for a war. There were of course contingency preparations on both sides, like the German Schlieffen plan and the military consultations between Britain and France and later Russia. Ultimately the outbreak of war was like an unconscious drift into limbo. The powers at this time were like a team of swimmers in a treacherous sea who had forded and survived many dangers, when suddenly one fell into a whirlpool and systematically dragged the others into it. It was a repeat of the Crimean blunder. There was much less desire for war than there had been on previous occasions, such as in 1870, over the Ems Telegram or the jingoism of 1878 or the Russophobia before the Crimean war. As late as 1913 Haldane visited Berlin and found good feelings towards Britain. It is true that the Balkan pot was on the boil over the wars with Greece but that was a permanent phenomenon throughout the 19th century which should not have invited too much notice. Scarcely anyone expected a world war over the assassination in Sarajevo, a local punitive action perhaps but not more. Why then did the war happen? A short answer if one is

possible was the degree of polarization between the groups and the total eclipse of the concert, in short the irreparably broken bridges which prevented the last-minute rescue operations, the reaching out for sanity. Finally, if its origins were like that of the Crimean war, how explain the horrendous difference in scale and character? Again the short answer is that in the meantime the machine gun had been invented and had revolutionized defence unknown to the Boer war Generals into whose senile care the mighty armies of the West were entrusted.

Only a bare outline should suffice of British post-war foreign policy until the second World War. These events are recent history and would be known to the general public of today. One can distinguish two phases, namely, that of the peace settlement until 1931 and the breakdown ending with the war in 1939. Britain played a dominant role in the settlement because of the towering stature of Lloyd George and his natural gift for negotiation and charisma. Also, Britain had the prestige of a victorious power which had emerged in relatively good shape, unlike France, a good part of which had been devastated in human and physical terms. Britain had suffered militarily—its professional army wiped out in 1914 and 15 and the new army decimated at Somme and Flanders but its industry was sound and its rehabilitation had been successful. Thus Britain could act with strength internationally at this crucial moment in the fashioning of a new world. This contrasted with the relatively poor standing of the others. Wilson was idealistic, but unsure, a college Professor turned President, but very naive about the realities of the world. Italy was demoralized, France vengeful, unable to think constructively and Germany, a bleeding carcase. Russia fighting for its life against the revengeful forces of the White Russian revanche with the collusion of the Western powers. There were three major aspects to the settlement, namely, treatment of the defeated powers, the redrawing of the map of the world and future arrangements for peace.

The first problem centred round the French desire for vengeance to humiliate Germany and squeeze it until the pips squeak. This was done by occupation of the Rhineland as ransom thus impeding its recuperative capacity furthermore, financial reparations and relentless pressure. The sum fixed as reparations was so outrageous as to evoke a protest from Keynes, the British treasury man himself. Lloyd

George had added to this the figure for the payment of war pensions. This issue dragged on and was later resolved by the adoption of the more sensible Dawes plan. About the new map the problem was the old 19th century habit of compensation and demand for consideration. It had a new designation, namely, trusteeship which was the old white man's burden idea among relatively undeveloped territories which today would be called developing countries. These were territories in Africa and Oceania suitably remote to be flayed without mercy by the new undertakers. One of them was German South West Africa which has still defied attempts at rescue. The other was the Arab world bedevilled by the famous Balfour Declaration and now facing Arab nationalism stirred up by the British themselves as war strategy but also negated simultaneously by the Sykes Picot agreement which were for spheres of influence. Ultimately parcelling out under the cloak of trusteeship and division of sphere became the keynote of the settlement in the outer world whereas in contrast in the European world, the principle of nationalism was followed, resulting in the creation of a number of independent states particularly in East Europe which also served the purpose of buffer states and containment. Future peace arrangements were the most difficult of all and on this the powers began on a lofty note with the Wilson proposal for a League of Nations, a Parliament of nations, meaning of course, only the Western nations, the rest being, it was thought, unaccustomed to such luxuries. Unfortunately its very sponsor renegede and Britain had to bear the burden of seeing it through and making it a reality. For this Ramsay MacDonald must take the credit who was no less than Lloyd George in his international impact. The League of Nations however, apart from its structural limitations was too far fetched as a solution for the immediate problem which was re-insurance and security for France and Europe. France was insistent on this and the outcome was Locarno 1926 which reverted to mutual security as a basis for peace as distinct from the ivory tower of an international Parliament. Locarno was in that sense retrogressive but realistic, a throwback indeed to the Concert but its success like for the latter called for eternal vigil and seasonal monitoring as well as the political will of the members. By the end of the decade the settlement arrangements had been completed and all seemed well when the blow fell in the great American depression and the financial crisis in Europe. That was the turning point from which began the collapse of the system. It was the setting for the rise of the dictators.

When Hitler and Mussolini first arose they were regarded as manifestations of nationalism to reverse the unfair diktat of Versailles and there was sympathy for them, even admiration. In Britain, for instance, one knows the story of the Mitford sisters and pro-German feelings in aristocratic circles. Mosley was the classic convert. Churchill who later took pride as the Cassandra who alerted the world had a very different tune at that early time. He positively condoned and complimented Japan over Manchuria and Mussolini over Abyssinia, his point about the latter being that this was a barbarian community over which no true Britisher should worry about. It was to him a civilizing mission like his own adventures in the River War. Apart from these misconceptions there were other inhibiting factors. This was firstly a horror of war and hence of preparing for it. This was a conviction that there would not be another war. This was fostered by the peace movement, the highlight of which was the Kelogg Briand declaration, the aspirations and hope in the League of Nations which cast a smokescreen. There was an inability to face up to the possibility of having to fight to preserve what was gained. This was well expressed by Lord Strang "In the inter-war years no clear policy was framed. The new problems of a changed and changing world tended to be interpreted in terms of old conceptions. Our position in the world had altered for the worse and we did not seem to recognize this in our actions. We continued too long to believe the horrors of the war of 1914-18 would have convinced all civilized powers that they must not have another war. We behaved as though we could play an effective part in international affairs as a kind of mediator or umpire without providing ourselves with the necessary arms and without entering into firm commitments whereas the truth was that for lack of international solidarity in the face of the common menace we were in mortal peril".

The problem in short was the lack of a Concert. All the lessons of the 19th century were forgotten again. The lurking ever-present danger same as before was the insidious drift to war which no one wanted, including perhaps Hitler, though one cannot be sure of this. The situation was quite similar to the last quarter of the 19th when Britain faced a similar threat in the somewhat reckless adventurism of Prussia. Bismarck had used war as an instrument of unification in the same way that Hitler experimented with threats and assurances of satiation. The problem then as it was in the thirties

was wishful thinking about German intentions giving them the benefit of the doubt, the recurring myth about an Anglo-German combination against the others and Britain's isolation in Europe. As far as Britain was concerned the turning point was the Mac Donald-Baldwin administration of 1931-35 which was a disaster in foreign policy. Lord Simon knew little and cared less, the envoys Drummond in Rome and Phipps in Berlin were unconvincing and there was no clear policy. The choice was between bolstering collective security through the League or multilaterally by the Concert, the latter by diplomatic pressure and military show. The Labour Party vociferously pressed for the first and warmly supported sanctions against Italy. However, one by one these possibilities receded and Britain seemed helpless. The League of Nations collapsed over the invasion by Japan of Manchuria and the 1935 invasion of Abyssinia by Italy. Britain valiantly supported League action and economic sanctions but there was the unfortunate volte face of the Hoare-Laval pact which amounted to a betrayal in the eyes of the world. Collective security as attempted from Locarno to the abortive Stresa front had thus come to a sad end and in 1935 it was in shambles. As in 1914 Europe was falling apart, each going its own way and a collision course seemed unavoidable. At that time Germany was pursuing Weltpolitik, Russia its Balkan and Central Asian dreams, Austro Hungary desperately clinging to its polyglot empire, France bemused with visions of empire and Britain anxious not to be left out and to preserve itself and the empire. In the mid thirties there was a parallel situation. Russia was out of reach, distrusted because of its avowed designs of international Communism which fostered the notion of Germany as the bulwark against it: France was isolated and weak with chronic political instability and Maginot mindedness, Britain hesitant between Labour pacifism and uninspired leadership, competent but not decisive. The test case was Abyssinia which opened the door to the dictators, the hunting license, so to say, which exposed the inability of the international system to cope with flagrant aggression. The Spanish civil war was really the slide into war because it was an official dress rehearsal of the second World War with the identical dramatis personae. With the change-over to Baldwin and later Neville Chamberlain the point of no return had been past. The best that Britain could do was to play for time and this was accomplished successfully by Chamberlain with his peace with honour. When war came it was no surprise and Britain

entered it much better prepared than in 1914. This was thanks primarily to Lord Swinton at the Air Ministry, Robert Watson Watt's discovery of radar, the scientific planning under Tizard.

The slide to war in 1939 was thus due not only to the reckless brinkmanship of Hitler but more to the absence of restraining international machinery or diplomatic forces. The latter meant the eclipse of the Concert. This pre-1939 situation has a moral for contemporary times. Today too there is international machinery much more viable than at any time before but its effectiveness has still to be proved for peace keeping. At the same time there is no international concert and instead polarization between groups. The reason is partly the global widening of the canvas whereas before 1939 it was confined to Europe. Polarization by itself is not undesirable provided there are bridges of communication and appreciation. One such bridge is non-alignment which in such a context can have a role of great importance, given fidelity to what it professes.

British colonial policy during this period will be considered elsewhere but as a corollary to the foregoing review of foreign policy it would be appropriate to attempt a brief survey of the growth of the empire in the 19th century. The latter was the real heyday of empire when it expanded in two continents, namely, Asia and Africa. Historians refer to this phase as the second and the third empires, the distinction being that the second was the completion of the empire in Asia and the other of expansion in Africa. The two overlap however, because the territories in China were added at the end of the 19th century coinciding with the African empire. The general sequence of empire was that the first British empire consisted of the colonies in North America and the Caribbean and the possessions of the East India Company in Asia. The first empire ended with the loss of the American colonies, leaving Canada and the territories in Asia. In the second empire the emphasis was in expansion and consolidation in Asia which, beginning from the end of the 19th century, gathered momentum in the first half of the next. The expansion and growth of the empire in Asia was in three directions. These are South Asia centreing round India, South East A ia and the Far East and Oceania. At the start of the century the East India Company had acquired vast territories in South India after defeating Tipu of Mysore and in Bengal and was poised to strike into the opulent and

historic heartland of Central and Western India. This was achieved by Wellesley and Hastings who by their victories over the Mahratha confederation gained control of those territories. In 1845 the Punjab which alone had held out as an independent kingdom under the able Ranjit Singh was annexed in the bloody Sikh wars. Concurrently under Dalhousie's notorious lapse policy a number of states were incorporated. Paradoxically, the mutiny of 1857 which was the first centenary of British rule, also marked its completion. The only practical effect of the mutiny was the abolition of the company. In 1876 it was proclaimed as an empire, inaugurating a period of great administrative achievement under some of its most famous Viceroys such as Lytton, Ripon, Curzon. In 1880 the Indian Congress was established, launching a counter movement for Indian independence. Under the leadership of Gandhi and other outstanding leaders of unexampled dedication the movement gathered momentum between 1910 and 1930, incited further by provocative events like the Amritsar massacre becoming one of the most powerful and unique movements of its kind in history. Britain tried to compromise with promises, concessions like the Morley Minto reforms, diversionary tactics like communal representation, decentralization as in the Montague Chelmsford commisson, mixed with repression and wholesale imprisonment, but they were of no avail. In the thirties it developed a militant form through civil disobedience which ended in violence. When the war began the sub-continent was seething with disaffection and frustration. The acquisition of Sri Lanka known then as Ceylon was a corollary to India. Interest at first was in its harbour of Trincomalee in the context of rivalry with France and during the Revolutionary war the maritime provinces were occupied. However, owing to the French threat within India and without following Napoleon's Egyptian expedition, Britain pressed for it and gained possession under the Treaty of Amiens in 1802. From the outset it was administered as a separate Crown colony. Another sequel more than corollary was British involvement in Burma. This arose mainly over the Burmese border province of Arakan from where rebels would find refuge in British territory causing friction with the Burmese authorities. Several missions and stationing of an agent at the court of Ava failed to resolve it, leading to the first Burmese war and the Treaty of Yandabo of 1826, ceding lower Burma to Britain. This was the first step in the long and tortuous saga of relations between Britain and the successive rulers of Burma, notably Mindon and Thibaw, which ended with the

"WHEN ANGELS WEPT"

The Governors did not escape satirical comment from the English press in the country. One of the more prominent questions in the mid 19th century was the question of the British Government and a Christian Governor supporting Buddhism, which they were legally and morally bound to do by the Kandyan Convention. The English Missionaries specially felt the Government should dissociate itself from Buddhism. Here, a Governor, who was for honouring the legal obligation is shown contemptuously in a span cloth worshipping a Buddhist monk.

From Appuhami.

annexation of Burma in 1886. Mindon was the counterpart of Mongkut and appreciated the problems of dealing with British imperialism and the latter for its part reciprocated with the choice of right agents. However after Lytton in the flush of imperialism the attitude changed, the example being the shoe question which effectively cut off the court from dealings with the agent. The death of Mindon and the retrogression to the bloody deeds of the past under Thibaw and his murderous queen Supalayat opened the way for British intervention.

In South East Asia the acquisition by Francis Light of Penang in 1786 and of Singapore by Raffles in 1819 laid the foundations of an empire which was to spread its tentacles over the whole of the peninsula during the 19th century. The interest in it was initially with a view to have a repair base and an intermediate stop in relation to the thriving country trade with China of the company. This trade was smuggling opium from India into China and selling Indian goods elsewhere to obtain the specie for the purchase of Chinese goods. Several places such as Balambangan near the Philippines were sampled, and even Penang, but it was the genius and energy of Raffles who found the answer which the results justified in Singapore. Singapore and Penang formed the initial Straits settlement under the control of India which expanded in the course of time into an umbrella over the whole peninsula. It became a classic of indirect rule showing the administrative genius of the British in which an efficient system of indirect rule was built ostensibly under the authority of the local Sultans. This was effected through the network of residents, like in the princely states of India, with the difference that a federal system was introduced to co-ordinate the administration of a number of these states. In due course the federative machinery was extended to provide for participation of the rulers. By this means the British progressively assumed responsibility for the administration, ensuring efficiency, enforcement of law and order, economic and social development but under the facade of the traditional structure of royalty which respected and retained the trappings of the latter. Actually the Dutch had assayed this same technique but unsuccessfully. The colonial system in Malaya is of special interest to Sri Lanka in that many of its Governors served there peviously or after Sri Lanka, the best known of whom was Hugh Clifford. That experience need not necessarily have equipped them for the Island as the latter was a case

of direct rule free of intermediaries. The system as it stood before the second World War consisted of the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang and the Unfederated Malay States.

In the Far East, Britain was a pioneer which penetrated China by force in two successive wars of 1840 which imposed opium on China and the 1860 war which burnt the Peking palace, thereby living up to the Chinese estimate of the West as barbarians. The object of these wars was to force European trade on China which had been conducted until then clandestinely by shady elements on both sides but which the Manchu government wished to suppress. The practical results of these wars was the cession of Hong Kong to China, the opening of a number of ports like Canton and Shanghai to foreign traders and the grant of a number of humiliating concessions and privileges, which gave foreigners a free run of the country including subjection to their own laws and opened the land to an orgy of exploitation. This culminated in the scramble for China at the end of the century which coincided with the partition of Africa when likewise predator powers converged from all sides, intent on carving out spheres of influence and annexation of territories. Japan eyed Korea, Manchuria and the Liaotung peninsula and they became a bone of contention between Japan and Russia, which led to the war between them and the humiliation of Russia. Unlike in Africa the objective of the powers was the establishment of spheres of influence for trading purposes rather than outright annexation, the reason being the insistence by countries like USA "on open door and most favoured", so as not to discriminate commercially. Thus the difference in the pattern of penetration in these two regions was the American presence in China. Still some countries had their pound of flesh, including Britain which seized Weihaiwei and made the Yangtse river its sphere of influence, and Germany which took Kiachou and concessions in the Shantung peninsula. Britain's position in China was thus essentially a commercial predominance which was sustained through its possession of Hong Kong port concessions and pursuit of open door. It was bolstered politically by the Anglo-Japanese treaty which in a sense launched Japan on its spectacular career. The scramble in the Far East extended to the south where Britain acquired some territories as its share consisting of North Borneo, the South Solomon, Tonga and Gilbert Islands.

The partition of Africa which was solemnly launched by Leopold of Belgium and Bismarck was effected by a combination of commercial enterprise, private initiative, individual pluck, political and diplomatic pressure, evangelism, scientific exploration and brute force. The result was that at the end of the 19th century the continent of Africa became like a duplication of the map of Europe. All the powers except Russia had their share of the spoils with France in North and West Africa, Germany in South West and East Africa, Belgium and Portugal in Central and Southern Africa, and Britain with the lion's share in all directions West, East, North and South. The preponderance and extensive distribution of British acquisitions was attributable to the pioneer activities of its three chartered companies and their energetic directors, namely, the British East Africa Company under Mackinnon, the Royal Niger Company under Goldie and the British South Africa Company of Cecil Rhodes. With them were associated the dedication of a number of administrators, notably Lugard in West Africa, Kirk and Johnstone in East Africa. The British empire in Africa which was in size the largest was a mixture of commercial exploitation, political imperialism, power politics and intrepid exploration. British aspirations centered on two grandiose visions and were directed accordingly, namely, the Cape to Cairo railway and the Northward drive from the South, both of which were symbolized in the personality of Cecil Rhodes. Their pursuit by and large determined the pattern of British imperialism in Africa and shaped its outcome. Details of these undertakings are outside our scope but historically they led to the South African war of 1899 which was the sequel to the Southern drive and the involvement in Egypt and the Sudan which was related to the drive from East Africa and southwards from Egypt for control of the sources of the Nile, the discovery of which was a British achievement. Apart from being Pan African dreams aimed at the overlordship of the British in Africa their practical objective was to drive corridors between the other territorial possessions, particularly of Germany, France and Belgium. They were intended to block the others by gaining logistical control.

These events are well known because of their dramatic quality and the impact on contemporary times. They were in a sense the climax of empire after which its fortunes declined. In Southern Africa the problem was the stubborn determination of the Boers to preserve

their archaic form of life, free of encroachment by foreign settlers. For this purpose they trekked northward establishing their two states of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The discovery of gold in the Transvaal brought European prospectors and inevitable intervention of the British government, leading to their annexation. The resultant Boer War was a shock to British arms and the final victory was dearly bought. The outcome was the independence of the Republic of South Africa to practice its apartheid way of life and its brand of racistic hegemony. The situation in Egypt arose from Britain's financial involvement in its affairs along with the French and led to the British occupation of the Sudan, the outcome of which was the Gordon episode which made headlines and the later reaffirmation of British power in the Sudan. This coincided with a similar affirmation of British claims over the French in the Marchand encounter. Thus North and South and in between, Britain held commanding positions from which it bestrode the continent.

The establishment and consolidation of these vast empires in Asia and Africa produced peripheral ripple like repercussions all round. The latter related to security, demarcation of frontiers and protection against the designs of rivals. These gave rise to problems not less urgent than the administration of the empire. They became major issues of foreign and colonial policy. In the Indian empire it was a question of security against alleged machinations of its near and powerful neighbour Russia. Security was a matter of establishing a buffer zone, a *cordon sanitaire* between the frontiers of the empires. This caused the recurring problem in Afghanistan which occasioned expeditions and serious incidents and the expedition of Younghusband to Tibet. The background to all these ventures was to eliminate hostile influences from these areas, preferably by the installation of friendly, meaning puppet rulers. British learnt them from experience what some powers have still not appreciated, that independence is a better guarantee than puppet regimes for the protection of interests. In the Far East, interests were safeguarded by possession of a line of naval bases which were the corollary to sea power extending on the same principle as the maritime empire of the Portuguese from Trincomalee to Singapore, Penang, Hong Kong and Canton. These were the gateways to the Far East which were guarded by the British navy and they were also the life-line of empire, linking the mother country with the Antipodes.

The white dominions as they were called form a separate chapter in British colonial history. They consisted of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa and were a class apart from the others in their origins and character. The outstanding feature as the term implies was their white complexion as they were colonized by immigrants from Europe and were extensions of the mother country. In all these cases the settlers superimposed themselves on the original inhabitants who were the aborigines in Australia, the Maoris in New Zealand, the African peoples in South Africa and the French Canadians in Canada. They also differed from the others in that their colonial status was short lived as they were deemed fit for responsible government over a century before the others. By the middle of the 19th century they became self governing—Australia in 1850, New Zealand in 1856 and Canada in 1867, all except South Africa which had to face a long and chequered career to that goal. The turning point were the events in Canada where the problem of the French Canadian inhabitants occasioned the Durham Commission and report which was a landmark in colonial thinking. Its recommendations were embodied in the Canada Act of 1840 which was a bold attempt to promote empire through self government. Since then their history was a steady evolution to the Dominion Status of the twentieth century and later the Commonwealth. Another feature of their evolution was the federal character which reflected on their plural beginnings with settlements arising concurrently and coalescing later as autonomous units. These antecedents have influenced their development ever since. Their individualized existence ended after 1945 when they joined the decolonized territories of the empire to form the Commonwealth.

At the end of the 19th century, when Queen Victoria died, the empire had reached the maximum size it was ever to attain. Whether this was also the peak of power is arguable. It is not easy to determine the heyday of empire because of differences in criteria. As far as the British empire was concerned its prospects and future did not seem so assured and bright. Indeed at that very moment it was on the threshold of the South African disaster. The Black week of December 1899 shook it as much as the Indian mutiny was a shock to British India. In fact 1880 had been a singularly inauspicious time for the empire, the equivalent of what 1848 had been to Europe. That was the time of simultaneous disasters at Maiwand in Afghanistan, Isandhlwana in Zululand, the death of Gordon in Khartoum, Majuba

in South Africa, the sacking of the Kabul residency, the founding of the Indian Congress. It weathered these storms in a way which seemed to justify the myth of an empire on which the sun never sets. After the trauma of the Boer war the settlement seemed to enhance its reputation as much as the support which it received from the empire for that war, the episode of Breaker Morant nothwithstanding. Although the prestige of Britain was at a low ebb in Europe at this time, its global image made up for this, a highlight being the Anglo-Japanese treaty of 1902. The Edwardian age was a flowering of British diplomacy when it regained its prestige on the continent. It was a personal triumph for the playboy monarch. Three years after his death, occurred the holocaust of the first World War which was truly the end of empire. There is much to be said therefore for Barbara Tuchman's characterization of the funeral of Edward VII as "on history's clock it was sunset and the sun of the old world was setting in a dying blaze of splendour never to be seen again.."

After the war Europe became again the centre of the stage as the prospect of universalization was aborted by US retreat from the League. This left Britain with the primary responsibility for the peace settlement and though initially its efforts bore fruit with the Geneva Protocol and the Locarno treaty, they foundered on the depression. In the thirties Britain was overtaken by events which reduced the League and collective security to shambles. Meanwhile the war had shaken the empire and as its aftermath there were stirrings for freedom among some of its peoples. The most notable was India which launched a fierce struggle for independence. The Dominions too which had rallied round and made great sacrifice like those of the Anzacs at Gallipoli, the Canadians at Ypres and Arras and the South Africans at Delville wood were thinking on different lines towards equality, independence, economic autarky, including protection. The post-war imperial conferences developed this theme which was later embodied in the Statute of Westminster of 1936 where equality and independence were affirmed qualified only by allegiance to the Crown. This was not extended to the other territories but in some, concessions were made towards representative councils or legislature. The principle of having representatives nominated or elected in an advisory capacity was accepted from early times but it was not followed up consistently and became more a tactic, rather measures towards the specific goal of independence.

This caused frustration and a rebellious spirit particularly in India where a terrorist movement came into being. Thus, when the second World War broke out in 1939, the empire particularly in Asia was approaching the crossroads. Ironically it was Japan whose victory over Russia in 1905 had initially stimulated feelings of freedom in Asia which now clinched the process by its military achievements.

The age of imperialism had a strange afterglow which has imprinted it on the mind of later generations more indelibly than its events and policies. This was the cinema of empire of the late twenties and thirties which was a dramatized pictorial representation of the ethos of imperialism. The latter centred round certain archtypal themes which were variations of the gospel as preached by its high priest Kipling in the Recessional in words such as—

> "If drunk with sight of power, we loose
> Wild tongues that have not thee in awe
> Such boastings as the gentiles use
> Or lesser breeds without the law
> Lord God of Hosts be with us yet
> Lest we forget—lest we forget."

In the "White man's burden" he coined the phrase which was to serve as the watchword and justification of Anglo-Saxon imperialism and the bugle call mobilizing its sons and daughters for sacrifice overseas, in these ringing terms—

> "Take up the white man's burden, send forth the best ye breed
> Go bind your sons to exile to serve your captives need
> And when your goal is nearest, the end for others sought
> Watch sloth and heathen folly bring all your hopes to nought."

These themes were epic in character forming a saga of heroism, patriotism, gallantry, dedication, military prowess, training, discipline, sacrifice, duty, above all—the classic attributes of romanticized imperialism. The films were invariably dramatizations of popular novels on imperialism, historical episodes, military exploits, folklore and colonial administration. They were the creations of great Hollywood and British directors such as Warner Brothers and Alexander Korda and brought into being a generation of stars who became legendary, apart from immortalizing the roles in which they were cast. The best known of them who would evoke nostaligic and heroic memories

even among the present generation include Errol Flynn, Ronald Colman, Gary Cooper, Ralph Richardson, Clive Brooks, David Niven, C. Aubrey Smith, Spenser Tracy, Basil Rathbone, Douglas Fairbanks, Cary Grant as the lead roles. They were even type cast in these roles, some of the most memorable of which were Errol Flynn as Captain Vickers in "Charge of the Light Brigade", Gary Cooper in "Lives of a Bengal Lancer", Ralph Richardson and Aubrey Smith in the "Four Feathers", Spenser Tracy in "Stanley and Livingstone", Basil Rathbone in "Sun Never Sets". They were distinct from the competing attractions of the historical extravaganza of that time of De Mille for their single-minded focus on the imperialist themes of idealistic devotion, stiff upper lip, chivalry, heroism above and beyond the call of duty, selflessness, a certain spiritual aura ennobling such deeds, equating empire with Christian values. They represented different facets of the theme of empire like symphonic variations on Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance' .

The most famous of the military epics was the "Four Feathers" which was made five times, the best known being the Korda version of 1940 with Ralph Richardson as Durrance and Aubrey Smith as the Crimean veteran. Its theme was the sacro sanctity of the British military tradition, comradeship, loyalty and sacrifice against the setting of the Sudan campaign of 1899. The moral however was the link between empire and the British character rooted as it was in loyalty to the colours and public school values. Faversham's individual bravery was not good enough because the criterion was loyalty to the flag. To the same category belongs "Charge of the Light Brigade", a classic of romanticized militarism and history if ever there was one. It was again a dramatization of military and public school virtues as personified by Captain Vickers in a portrayal which was perhaps the finest in Errol Flynn's swashbuckling career but in the background of Russian intrigue in India, the Indian mutiny and Cawnpore massacre culminating in the celebrated Balaclava charge peerlessly executed and the like of which was not to be seen again until the sequences of Bonduchek in Waterloo. "Lives of a Bengal Lancer" and "The Drum" were two North West Frontier classics but on the same theme of sacrifice for the empire which was depicted by Gary Cooper in the first. Both had identical plots which were the machinations of native princes against the Raj but "The Drum" perhaps exploited the casting of the boy wonder Sabu as the loyal prince. Both were a so excellent

for their military sequences. Gunga Din in the same category has been described as a romp, a kind of Falstaffian handling of militarism at the plebian level. It is a cross between P. C. Wren and Kipling, the three sergeants being Mulvaney, Otheris and Learoid but without the public school and the aristocratic snobbery of Brandon Abbas and Aunt Patricia. The three brothers and three sergeants have comradeship but for the first it is public school values of Beau Geste but the sergeants the roistering fun of a good frontier brawl keeping the natives under control. It is interesting that these films are invariably hard on the natives. The educated ones as in "Under two flags", "Drum" or "Bengal Lancers" are villains whose crime in the last two were opposition to the Raj. The good natives are the loyal noble savages like Sabu or the water carrier Gunga Din whose ambition was to blow the bugle but in the latter Kipling sugars the pill with his famous "you are a better man than I am". Viewed as military spectacles these are supreme cinema, the superiority of which could be seen for instance by the contrast of the Tony Richardson "Light Brigade" many years later and the Warner Bros. version. The first failed for attempting too much fidelity to history. It missed the point of the imperialistic film as romantic heroics vicarious identification with the supreme hero. India was the favourite location of these films because of the Kipling image and even later after the end of empire a few were attempted like North West Frontier, Bhowani Junction but for all their spectacle they were a spent force and Kenneth More, a far cry indeed from Captain Vickers.

The film of empire in India had its counterpart in Africa but these were of a different order. Their theme was administrative instead of militarist on the district officer and his aura as a white god, the epitome of which was "Sanders of the river". Not even Gunga Din or Sabu went to the same lengths in extolling the white master in the way Bosambo did in his paean about Sanders—

"Sandi the strong, Sandi the wise
Righter of wrongs, hater of lies
Laughed as he fought, worked as he played
As he has taught let it be made".

In Africa the emphasis was on the civilising mission which was not quite plausible in India and should probably have been the other way round. The African hero was therefore the law and order man, the

evangelist. It had no military tradition except the Boer war which no film makers touched and even later the choice was the Zulu war in Stanley Baker's "Zulu" and Peter O'Toole's "Zulu Dawn". "Sun Never Sets" was a variation where Basil Rathbone as the district officer thwarted a foreign plot. Stanley and Livingstone purported to be history but glorified two folk heroes. The empire film in Africa had to compete with the fantasy of Rider Haggard and Tarzan of the Apes whereas in India except for Clive of India the field was clear for the military epic. Another category of imperial cinema was the patriotic film examples of which were Victoria the Great, Cavalcade and on a military theme Tell England. The latter set in Gallipoli could have been inspired by Rupert Brooke and could have influenced the recent Australian version which was the reverse in spirit. There were other variations like the espionage films based on John Buchan of foreign intrigues against empire, those about agents like "Last outpost" and the patriotic films of the second world war unsurpassed as understatements of courage.

If the memory of empire is still fresh in the mind of the present generation it is less because of its writers, poets, folk heroes and statesmen, than the cinema of empire and the values which it projected. Ironically it came at a time when the empire itself was slipping from the grasp of colonial powers. The appeal of this cinema was not as political propaganda but for their dramatization of imperialistic values and their artistic qualities as romantic adventure and escapism portrayed with masculinity and conviction. Even the racist tones and Kiplingsque condescension were missed in the prankish fun of 'Gunga Din' and the military zest of "Charge of the Light Brigade". In the decolonized context of today such films may be unacceptable and considered derogatory. However, as insights into the mood of those times, when virtually the entire non-European world was ruled by these myths of empire, they are a living testament unsurpassed as cinema. They are indispensable to an understanding of the nature of empire and its agents who saw themselves in their mind's eye as the counterparts of these heroes whether district officers or soldiers.

CHAPTER IV

BACKGROUND AND PERSONALITIES

As the chief executives of British rule in the Island and hence instruments for the implementation of policy, one could imagine that British governors formed a kind of faceless, impersonal service, intent only on discharging their duties with clinical efficiency. About their high standards of duty, dedication, zeal there can be no question but as to whether this implied an uniformity of personalities this was not the case at all. Instead the British governors of Sri Lanka afford a rich diversity of personalities and characters such as one would not associate with a faceless public service and a bureaucracy. Part of the explanation is that the majority of the Governors were not members of a career service and were personal nominees from different walks of life. Hence it happened that they were representative of a wide range of professions and experience which made for anything but an uniformity of character. The public service as such was rather slow in coming into being in Britain and until well into the 19th century when the principle of recruitment through an open competitive examination was accepted, even administrative posts such as clerks, writers, secretaries were given to private nominees. This was naturally much more true of exalted beings like Governors who were invariably the frank political choice of the powers that be. A glaring instance in Sri Lanka was the appointment of Sir William Gregory which was due to the good offices of Lady Waldegrave who spoke on his behalf to the Colonial Secretary Granville. Thus governorships were granted like modern ambassadorships for services rendered, for family connections, to mend private fortunes, to defuse potential rivals or trouble makers. These circumstances could result indeed in chequered and flamboyant appointees as the case of Lord North the son of a British Prime Minister who was the first British governor of Sri Lanka

would illustrate. Mercifully he was a relatively isolated case in a record of governorships which was marked by orthodoxy and respectability. Beneath differences of temperament there was yet a consistent standard of probity and decorum and dignity.

In this regard the British governor was conceptually distinctive, compared to his predecessors in Sri Lanka or counterparts in other colonial systems. With a few exceptions and despite political considerations, they were chosen for their experience of public affairs and tried capabilities in the field of administration and organization. From this standpoint a military background in the field or at headquarters was not irrelevant and in certain colonial situations was an asset. This attitude also reflected the specific colonial perspectives of Britain in the 19th century in contrast to that of its forebears in the history of imperial rule. The British governor was unlike a Roman proconsul who was invariably an influential Senator or military hero as the example of Lucullus would show, who was appointed to make his private fortune at the expense of the luckless subjects who were fleeced without mercy and crushed without pity if they protested. He was also a contrast to the lesser praetors who were usually successful but rough soldiers like Pontius Pilate for instance the notorious procurator of Judea who were entrusted with police operations in rough country or trouble spots where their lack of scruples and insensitiveness would stand them in good stead. The British governor was also a study in contrast nearer home to his Portuguese and Dutch predecessors in Sri Lanka. The Portuguese Captain-General was a soldier reflecting the military character of the Portuguese operations in the Island which was a prolonged war for the preservation of their power initially and later its expansion. The accent was therefore on militarism and this is the field where their Governors like De Azavedo and De Sa excelled. The measure of their success was thus their military prowess. With the Dutch it was different as they were avowed merchants professing a policy of peaceful trade. Their Governors hence were ostensibly merchants intent after the opening phase of military operations against the Portuguese on the consolidation and promotion of their trade particularly vis-a-vis their main obstacle, the Kandyan ruler. This orientation did not exclude a military streak because the Dutch interpretation of trade invariably implied or led to aggressive postures which in the hands of forward ambitious Governors led to military operations. This happened in Sri Lanka under the

van Goens, father and son, and in any case there was an underlying strain in relations between the Dutch and the Kandyan king, which was prone to flare up at any moment and invested their rule with a semi-military flavour. Still Dutch governors found time for peaceful constructive tasks and made lasting contributions in the fields of law, administration which compare with those of their successors. Notable among them were Pyl, Imhoff and Simons. Both Portuguese and Dutch governors had a lurid side which was the personal cruelty of some and the sordid reputation of many for corruption. The brutality assumed classic proportions as in Noronha, De Azavedo, Petrus Vuyst which were not explainable purely as actions in the heat of war which is the usual justification. This was a form of brigandage and conquistador-like sadism which went beyond the needs of war or the violence of the times. This showed limitations of character and the type of persons chosen for these appointments. This could include private villainy in official affairs like the withholding of help to besieged Colombo by Homem Mascarenhas the Portuguese Viceroy. British governors were placed in different circumstances in that after the first three decades they did not have to contend with a war situation and hence their conduct was not tested. Still on the few occasions that there were local disturbances the reaction of the Governors concerned was not exemplary. The action of the freebooter armies of local planters which were recruited was not different to the lawless brigandage of Portuguese or Dutch soldiers in the field. In these cases no personal atrocities can be ascribed to the Governor except their personal limitations in handling delicate situations. On the whole therefore despite exceptions the standard of British governorship was exceptional and a great contrast to their predecessors.

The superior quality of British governorship was not due only to the peaceful circumstances. It was also the effect of their individual characters and the ethos which they represented. British governors were the arch types of a society at the height of its unparalelled achievements. They represented one of the largest and most successful empires in history, achieved through a combination of military prowess, bold statesmanship, daring and dash and amazing initiative. The Governors were part of the elitist ruling class who had created this empire, and brought it into being. This elitism in fact was more broad-based than the closed mercantile family elitism which had given rise to the Dutch commercial empire. In the British case it owed as much

to plebian heros like Clive, Nelson and Warren Hastings who rose from the ranks to greatness. There was thus simultaneous efforts by the rank and file and the elitist oligarchy of Britain. The Governors were not only associated with the elite but were in their own lives participants and active agents in the founding, building and administration of this empire. They were thus very much a part of the living empire and their careers were intertwined with its history. The background and personalities of the Governors, therefore, apart from the impact on the country, have an interest of its own in relation to the evolution and growth of the empire. Elitism was not a matter of birth or connection alone. It also implied a certain fitness and aptitudes. These did not automatically come through belonging to particular circles. There was also merit and proven ability. There was also an ethos, a certain way of life, which inculcated certain values. For the British governors these were their public school upbringing, military training and experience in many cases, qualities of discipline and loyalty to the flag, outstanding integrity and probity and selfless dedication to duty. These were not disciplines inculcated by membership of a service but in many cases inborn traits. These virtues were evident in the latter half of the 19th century which saw some of the best Governors of the Island. It was presumably associated with the cult of empire of those times centering round the paternalistic idea which was a facet of the concept of the white man's burden. The latter with all its odious racistic side was not lacking in some positive effects in the elevating impact it had on some in developing the idea of trust and responsibility. Of course this could be the sanctimonious rationale for racism and economic exploitation but it did produce the notion of concern and sensitiveness which in Sri Lanka had great exemplars like Ward, Gregory and Gordon.

The political atmosphere of Britain at this time contributed no little to the moulding of the Governors. This was the age of the 1832 Reform Bill which opened new vistas for Parliamentary democracy and ushered in the heyday of Gladstonian liberalism. It was also the time of Wilberforce, the abolition of slavery, Lord Shaftesbury and humane legislation, Peel and the humanizing of the administration, English radicalism with its echoes of the French Revolution ready to take up the cause of injustice, the downtrodden wherever it may be, when British foreign policy seemed to be an espousal of freedom overseas. This was also the time of emancipation with the abolition

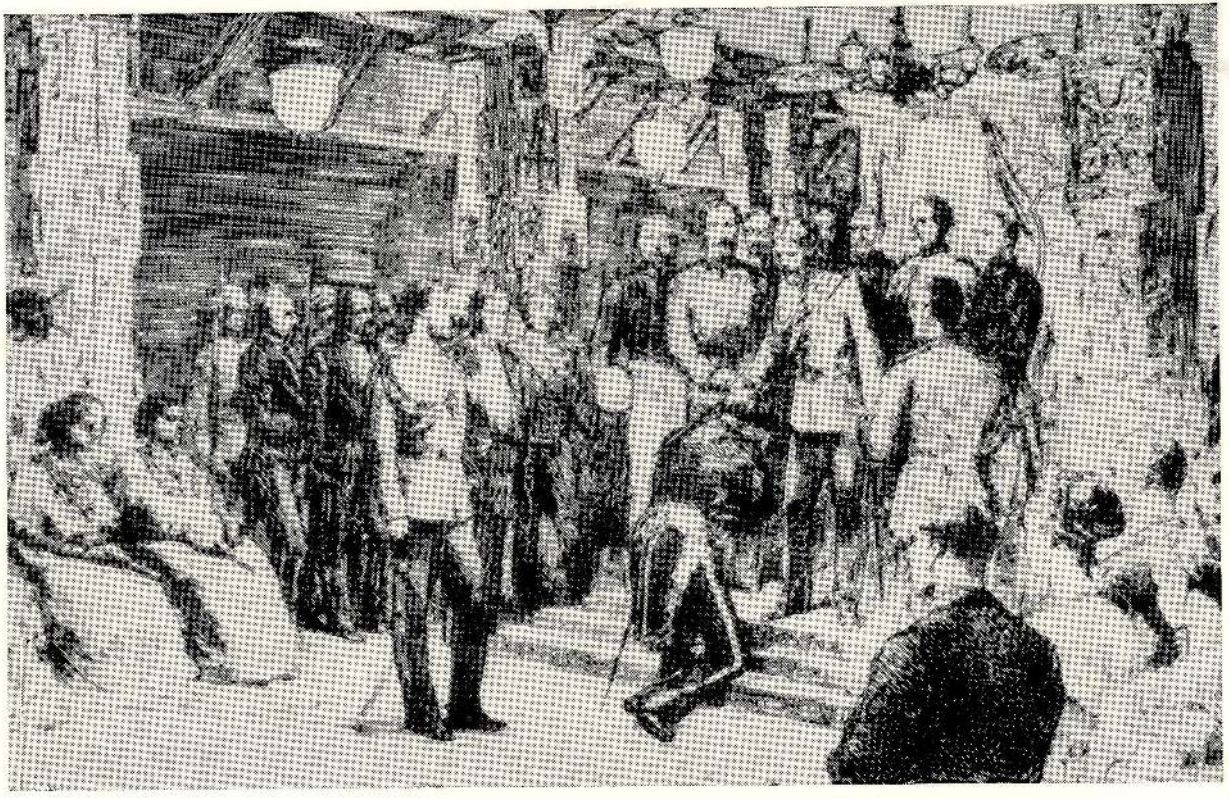
of the Test and Corporation Acts, Catholic emancipation, religious tolerance, when a Jew could become the Prime Minister of Britain. Along with Victorian stuffiness there were positive cultural and humanist values which, if at all, were stifled by the oligarchic elitism of the last decades when the aristocratic hegemony of Salisbury and Balfour tended to narrow the English spirit and rob it of its Shelleyan Ariel-like spirit of the early century. Britain was thus a highly creative, exuberantly democratic society under the leadership of an exceptional calibre which could not but condition the image and conduct of its official representatives overseas. At the same time it had the contradictory effect of metamorphosing their role in a dilemma which was inseparable from British colonialism. This was in representing a democratic system the Mother of Parliaments but at the same time as Governor in heading an absolutist system which was its negat on. The excuse of training for democracy and executing a trust was rather weak against the reality of the material advantage which was reaped. There was thus the inherent contradiction of emrire, the flawed relationship of Forster's "Passage to India" which was not apparent to the august upholders of empire. Thus British Governors were a split personality but the better ones submerged their doubts with a sense of mission. William Gregory could see a likeness between Sri Lanka and his own beloved Ireland.

No Governor could ever let the side down with musings about independence. They were officially enjoined to prohibit it. Still, there were other personality conflicts which could arise for some. This was the problem of identification to which many proconsuls seemed prone. Two cases in Sri Lanka in what has been an occupational hazard of colonialism were John D'Oyly and Hugh Clifford, the latter actually in respect of his beloved Malaya. It became a matter of becoming native, of merging the foreign identity, and realising the resultant alienation from roots the disruption without acceptance in the other. This was the dilemma of Clifford's hero, Maurice Curzon, the conflict which he ventilated in his Malayan stories. In D'Oyly it took the form of becoming the recluse. In both ways it was a kind of Conradian nemesis of a change if not disorientation of the white man's character on his encounter with the East. Clifford was difficult on independence for the Island but this was because in coming to the latter he had to forsake his beloved land. There was no overt racism

among the Governors though this was implicit in the philosophy of their rule. It was more a form of political apartheid of the two streams not mixing rather than Segregation.

Thus despite all the diversities of background and personality which we will now proceed to consider there were unifying elements rooted in the ethos of empire which gave uniformity. In the execution of imperial policy they were unflinching in dedication and tireless, setting a standard of service which was unparallelled. This gave solidarity to British rule wherever it was. This was accompanied by great latitude to the ruler, trust in his loyalty to interpret policy, and here the guarantee was the calibre of the Governor. To that extent the Governor was the linchpin of the system and its success depended on his fitness for the role and the ability to measure up to it. Diversity of character was probaby a strength as against the lack of imagination, the machine-like precision of the monolithic system. It was the contrast between the clockwork efficiency of Prussian militarism and the pragmatic approach of the British command. Diversity of background produced more rounded personalities and a wealth of experience to handle situations. This included in many cases great academic prowess, scholarship and intellectual calibre though this was not always an unmixed blessing. Intellects tended to fumble in the school of life.

From the inception of British rule in the Island in 1798 to its termination in 1948, there were altogether 29 British governors. This amounted approximately to a term of 5 years for each. However, they were a diverse company in respect of their temperaments and antecedents. Nor was there any self-evident or consistent basis for their selection at a given time. According to their respective backgrounds one can distinguish a number of categories. These were the soldiers, politicians, professional administrators, bureaucrats and political nominees. In terms of social origins they consisted of peers, members of upper class established families, middle class representatives and persons from the ranks. As between these groups the peers were generally politicians, the soldiers from the ranks and the administrators and bureaucrats corresponded to the upper and middle class. Of them the largest number which increased progressively was from the middle class. There was no pattern as such in the appointments but broadly speaking one observes three phases in the evolution



THE PRINCE OF WALES

The official visits of the members of the Royal Family to Ceylon were great social events. Here the Prince of Wales Knights Governor Sir William Gregory in the Audience Hall of the Kings of Kandy 1870.

From Illustrated London News.

in the character of its holders in Sri Lanka. Initially the preference was for military men until the first half of the century. In the second half the Governors were mainly political in their backgrounds. During the 20th century, bureaucrats and administrators predominated. This evolution corresponded to various phases in the development of the country as well as political trends in Britain. In the first few decades the military consideration was paramount as regards subjugation of the Kandyan kingdom and the consolidation of British power. This involved opening up of the country through communications to gain complete logistical control. The need thus was for military skills and infra-structural builders. The second half was the nation building phase when a new society had to be forged attuned to the rulers and this needed dimension and statesmanship such as would be afforded by political insight and experience. Hence Governors such as Ward and Gregory who excelled at their tasks were ideally chosen. In the twentieth century the problem shifted to a political plane with the growth of the movement for constitutional reform for which given the negative policy of the government a politician might have been a risk and hence it fell back on experts in the art of saying no and finding excuses to resist demands. In Clifford, Stanley, Stubbs the government found men after its own heart who if at all were excessive in their zeal. They were experts at political manipulation of elements so as to frustrate such movements and undermine them, one of their discoveries lifted probably from India being the use of communal divisions to foment infighting.

There were a few Governors who were spliced in between without belonging to any of these categories. Such a case was West Ridgeway who was Governor at the turn of the century and an outstanding soldier and diplomatist who was among the great nation-builder Governors like Gregory. North was a singularly inopportune and inauspicious choice as the first Governor who for the way he handled affairs was almost its last. He was neither soldier, politician or administrator and there was nothing he did which he did not bungle. He was unique as the only unrelieved disaster among the Governors. Torrington was a close second to him in folly and ineptitude. He marks the midcentury of British rule but by then the country was immune even from his depredations. Chalmers was a mandarin with the saving grace of supreme scholarship but his was a case of cerebral

ossification through long association with the Treasury accompanied by personal grief as in the case of Lord Hobart of Madras at the end of the 18th century.

In the mechanics of British colonial rule the personal side of the Governor was a matter of incalculable importance. To be sure he was an instrument of policy enjoined to compliance with the directives of his remote master the, Secretary of State, and what there was of a Colonial office in those times. Still the distance was great and there were many problems which called for immediate decisions. The onus was therefore on his judgement, good sense and resourcefulness. Even if orders came, their very application caused problems. Ultimately it was the man on the spot who counted, it was his view and handling which mattered and prevailed. So long as he avoided complete disaster he could get off with most things. To that extent he was almost absolute so long as he knew his limits. The Governor also had the task of coping with the local community. In an ostensibly democratic setup committed to freedom with a vigilant legal system to watch ones rights, this was not easy at all compared to a Roman praetor who would not hesitate to use his legions in the event of trouble with no public opinion or writ to worry about. During the latter part of British rule the Governors had their hands full, contending with the freedom movement led by vociferous rabble rousers. Thus the character of the man on the spot was the key and his reaction and handling reflected in turn his own outlook and upbringing. This is why an understanding of their personalities is essential for an appreciation of British rule in the Island. The Governor besides saw himself as a dedicated servant of the Crown, ready if necessary to die for king and country. He was in the words of Rupert Brooke a dust whom England bore, made aware, washed by the rivers. blessed by suns at home, ready if the call came to impregnate the earth of his foreign home with the richer dust which will be forever England. None of the Governors except John Anderson was called upon thus but that was the standard of their service.

The soldier Governors proper of Sri Lanka who belong to the first phase were Thomas Maitland 1805-11, Robert Brownrigg 1811-20, Sir Edward Paget 1822, Sir Edward Barnes 1824-31, and later Sir Colin Campbell 1841-47. Of them the last four may be called Wellington's men as they all served under him. The connection

between this fact and their appointment to Sri Lanka was that part of this service was with him in India where Wellington himself won his spurs. There is an interesting link between the Wellington story and Sri Lanka and not merely this circumstance. His great antagonist Napoleon Bonaparte was enamoured of the Island as a great naval fortress and coveted it and it fell to Wellington both in fighting Tipu, and demolishing the Mahrathas to block this ambition. Later when Bonaparte launched his Egyptian, expedition Wellington spent a few days in Trincomalee preparing an expeditionary, force against him from there. Ultimately it was he who overthrew Napoleon. Many years later the controversial Hudson Lowe who was responsible for Napoleon at St Helena became Commander-in-Chief in the Island. The four Wellington's men served with him in India and then the Peninsular wars, participating in some of the highlights of the latter. Paget had a particularly distinguished record in serving in the Egyptian operations and then with the famous Moore at Corunna. In the Peninsular war he participated in the dash by Wellington in 1809 from Coimbra to Oporto which he captured from Soult in a brilliant surprise attack which involved the crossing of the Douro. This victory cleared Portugal of the French, routed Soult who fled unceremoniously and enabled him to prepare for his invasion of Spain. Barnes was on the staff of Wellington in the Peninsula, and figured in key engagements as at Vittoria. He was also at Waterloo where he was wounded. The closest was Colin Campbell who, beginning as a comrade in arms in India fighting in the Mahratha campaigns, became his ADC at Waterloo. Wellington first met Campbell at the great fortress of Scindia, Ahmednuggar in 1803 when he was besieging it. Campbell attracted his attention when he scaled the walls, was knocked down, rose again and scaling it, was one of the first men over the walls. Wellington enquired after his name and made him a Brigade Major on the spot. At Waterloo, Campbell was constantly by his side and at the great moment when Napoleon as a last throw had flung his imperial guard on the British entrenched on the ridge and the thin red line had discharged their volleys with murderous effect on the charging cuirassiers, Wellington had exposed himself fearlessly and Campbell had remonstrated with him. Wellington was understandably excited as the farm La Haye Saint the prop of his centre had fallen and yet there was no certain indication of Blucher and everything depended on his squares and the firepower of infantry against the greatest cavalry

the world had witnessed. Apart from the specific campaigns of Wellington, the soldier Governors had participated in the major wars of the time. Maitland was in the War of American Independence and later fought both Hyder Ali and Suffren in India. Brownrigg was assosciated with the staff of the unfortunate Duke of York whose disastrous campaigns in the Netherlands were an inauspicious start for Britain in the Revolutionary Wars. Their military careers thus cover the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The knowledge of India acquired in the process would have been a qualification for the Governorship of Sri Lanka.

The need for military experience, particularly in India, as a qualification for Governorship was self-evident in the context of the relationship with Kandy and the strategic link of the Island with the sub-continent for the security of which it was deemed to be vital. In fact, initially it was treated adminstratively as part of India but with North it was separated for good. The security problem remained for some time in the face of recurrent threats from the French, the Kandyan wars and their aftermath of the serious 1818 rebellion. The smouldering embers of that lingered for much longer and flared up again in the emeute of 1848 which was really an eruption of old resentments of priests and peasantry. Thus till the end of the first half the accent was on consolidation and laying the foundations of British power. This was the work of the militarists for which they were particularly suited. Maitland was a Scottish peer of very old stock and a soldier almost from birth. He raised his own regiment and saw active service in India. This was followed by a career in Parliament and business during which he became a member of the Board of Control of the British East India Company. This experience at a time when the relations of Sri Lanka with the Company were a sore point clinched his fitness for the post of Governor to which he was appointed in 1805. Maitland's task was to clean the Augean stables after the mismanagement of the North regime. This he did with the discipline and determination of a martinet. He is remembered chiefly for the iron will with which he browbeat the Army, the Judiciary and even the Colonial office. He appears to have been a frugal man and a contrast to the Sybaritic life style of his predecessor whose memory it was his object at every turn to live down.

Brownrigg came as Governor almost straight from the battle-field where his previous post had been that of Quarter Master to the terrible Walcheren expedition of 1809 when thousands of British troops including veterans of Corunna were stricken with fever and disease in the pestilential swamps of Walcheren. This coincided with Wellington's own narrow escape from defeat at Talavera all of which caused a political crisis leading to the fall of the Portland Government and the historic duel between Castlereagh and Canning The appointment had obvious military implications for which he was able and ready. It did not take him long to make short work of the Kandyan kingdom, ably assisted by D'Oyly and the equally willing Kandyan chiefs. He was Irish and started his military career as an ensign and served at first in the West Indies. Later he was in the military operations in the Netherlands which brought disaster to the Duke of York. It could not be said therefore that Brownrigg's military career was glorious. As Governor, Brownrigg was pompous and fussy, intent only on adding the feather of a Kandyan conquest to his plumes. This was not difficult, given D'Oyly and the King's enemies with whose help the latter was soon trapped. It must be said that no victim collaborated so willingly in the preparation of the trap. For his part Brownrigg received the Baronetcy and the Kandyan court of arms which was the customary apotheosis to the military success of a proconsul. Brownrigg loved pomp and pageantry, moving in elaborate processions to the tune of bells like the "March of the Sirdar". Much has been said about his lavish hospitality and conviviality. He certainly had cause to celebrate during his Governorship with the conquest of Kandy and the suppression of the 1818 rebellion. Lady Brownrigg has been described as a kind hostess and a mother figure who interested herself in extra mural pursuits, thereby inaugurating the colonial tradition in which the first lady was to become the ex-officio patron of charitable activity in the Island. Paget, like the six-day Queen was a six-months Governor. His record in Sri Lanka or later was undistinguished but next to Ridgeway he was the most illustrious soldier to become Governor in the Island. Son of the Earl of Uxbridge who was himself a Waterloo hero, Paget was associated with almost every major operation of the wars. He was at Cape St Vincent, on the Egypt expedition, with Moore at Corunna, contributing it is said to its success which in a sense saved Spain, at

Walcheren and in the Peninsular. He was captured in 1812 by three French skirmishers near Ciudad Rodrigo at a time when before the great victory of Vittoria, Wellington was in retreat.

Sir Edward Barnes was the hero Governor of these times for his prowess as a road builder, planter. He was idolized by his associate Skinner, the engineer being one of his ardent fans. Barnes had the soldierly touch, the ability like that of Slim, Montgomery to move with the rank and file and get their loyalty. This was supported by a lavish hospitality and an open house policy. Partaking of his table was one of the pleasures to which his officers looked forward. Barnes like Brownrigg began as a ranker and spent his early years engaged in a series of operations until in the Peninsular campaigns he had the recognition of Wellington and became a brigade commander in a number of key engagements. This career, like of the other Wellington men, culminated at Waterloo. Barnes was an excellent horseman and made his mark as a cavalry leader. This partiality continued in Sri Lanka where horsemanship was to him an index of ability and the way to his favour as Skinner experienced. The achievement of Barnes which will be considered later was the opening up of the country by road and through plantations. The objective was logistical more than economic but he laid the foundations for the latter. On the personal side his fondness for the good life led him to heights of extravagance. Not only did he keep a good house but he studded the country with several such houses including Barnes Hall in Nuwara Eliya, the villa in Mount Lavinia. In his life style he seemed to be vying with North but this was more the case of an old husband trying to amuse a young wife with fancy dress balls, theatrical efforts and the other means by which the colonial elite disported themselves in those spacious days. Barnes also had the limitations of this kind of paternalism. The very idea of freedom for the natives was outrageous to him and he vehemently opposed the idea of the Colebrooke Commission and of course its recommendations which even for the 20th century were daring. A statue of him was erected to honour his memory at the entrance to Queen's House and stands to this day. Today he seems to us an old style paternalist unable to see beyond the horizons of his time but yet for that age the best. He certainly made a great impression at that time on compatriots, Ceylonese, visitors alike and seemed to have won the confidence of the indigenous inhabitants.

Colin Campbell who came from Scottish fighting stock also started life as a ranker and spent his early years in the West Indies and India. He had distinguished namesakes, one being the hero of the Indian Mutiny who relieved Delhi and Cawnpore and the other, the commander of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava. Colin Campbell took office at the height of the coffee rush and his main contribution as Governor was to adjust the administration and the economy to cope with these developments. One of his preoccupations was the reform of the Civil Service in the light of Stanley's recommendations with a view to improving its calibre. Colin Campbell's term was not notably eventful or creative. Perhaps the role of Governorship had no scope for his particular experience. He was 64 years when he came to Sri Lanka after several years at Antigua which hardly prepared him for a post such as Sri Lanka. He was at best a prelude of calm to the upsets which would occur under his successor Torrington.

Between him and Barnes there were two Governors whose backgrounds do not fit them into these categories. They were Sir Robert Wilmot Horton 1831 and Stewart Mackenzie 1837-41 both of whom seem to stand outside the main pattern. Horton was the son of a Baronet and a politician by profession who entered Parliament in 1818. When he came as Governor in 1831 he had made a name for himself in Britain as Parliamentary Secretary for Colonial Affairs under Portland and Grey. In that capacity he became famous and much talked about as the pioneer advocate of overseas emigration in Britain. This was the period in Britain when in the aftermath of the war the country was in the throes of grave economic and social problems caused by the impact of the Industrial Revolution. A major problem was rural and urban poverty, congestion in the hastily built industrial complexes, appalling working conditions, of exploitation of women and children which were rousing the conscience of the nation. The misery of the industrial towns with their pollution and squalor was matched by the wretchedness prevailing in the rural parts of Britain, notably in Ireland, the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland. Already, since the previous centuries, the inhabitants had been resorting to emigration to the salubrious havens of Canada and Australia but it needed organized support. Concurrently economists and social workers were also studying the problem in wider terms under the influence of the prevailing social philosophies, notably of Malthus, which made a deep impact on thinking on such questions. Horton

in particular seemed to have been obsessed with the Malthusian implications for Britain and alarmed by the spectre of population explosion and resultant mass poverty. This was also a period of disenchantment with the Poor Law and its underlying cynicism which were repugnant to the spirit of evangelism and humanitarianism which was sweeping Britain and shaping its colonial policies. Horton was clearly imbued with these ideas and he saw in emigration a massive answer to the problem both of poverty and unemployment. As Parliamentary Under-Secretary he energetically canvassed these ideas. His labours in this regard were embodied in the emigration reports which he published in 1826 and 1827. They are a testament to his enthusiasm for the cause and his philosophy. The latter was simply that large-scale emigration would be a short answer to the twin problems of unemployment and poverty in Britain while at the same time be a means of peopling the vast uninhabited spaces of the recently acquired empire. That would enable the development of the latter and provide capacity for defrayment of costs. On meeting the costs of emigration he was less positive, wavering between granting of government loans for later repayment or assistance through parishes. One of his concrete proposals was for a government loan of £1,140,000 for the moving of 19,000 families repayable later through the fruits of their labour. The weakness of Horton's proposals for all their genuine solicitude was an insufficient attention to their financing. Also, the emphasis in his schemes was on the exodus of emigrants without a corresponding concern for the problems of community organization at the other end, apart from productive activities and arrangements for repayment. These limitations earned for him the derision and hostility of later advocates of emigration such as Buller and the great Gibbon Wakefield and the unfair stigmatization of his labours as a 'shovelling out of paupers'. It is true that in the light of the later ideas of Wakefield with their careful plans for financing and community development, Horton's pioneer ideas would seem naive and over simplifications. However, he deserves credit for his initiatives and dedication instead of being dismissed by some as a bore. Perhaps his appointment to Sri Lanka was a golden handshake to rid the government of an embarassment.

In Sri Lanka he had no scope to give rein to his pet subject as the kind of emigration which was taking place at that time did not call for the shovelling of paupers but of capital. One of his respon-

sibilities as Governor was the implementation of the Colebrooke recommendations but in respect of the proposal for unofficial members in the Legislative Council Horton showed an illiberal spirit which was untrue to his calling as a Liberal. He was insistently categorical about the unfitness of locals to hold office. The only sign of a liberal spirit was his encouragement of the "Colombo Journal" presumably as a forum for public opinion. Regrettably Horton did not live up to his liberal promise and the few memories are some inconsequential trifles about his wife catching the fancy of Byron a doubtful qualification at best and some jingle which the Governor composed in reply to a dinner invitation. This is not much of a legacy by a man who was a trail blazer and a politician of promise.

A statement has been attributed to Ferguson, the influential newspaper tycoon in Sri Lanka for several decades, that Horton, Mackenzie, Ward and Gregory were among the best Governors. It is odd that he should have included the first two or placed them on the same footing as the other unless that for Mackenzie it was because Ferguson came out as his private secretary. These two in fact are the exceptions to this generalization otherwise true that politicians made the best Governors. There is substance in this view which the careers of several such Governors demonstrated that a Parliamentary background engendered a liberality of spirit and empathy than proconsular office enforcing authority over lesser breeds. It did not in any sense mean that they were ready for a sell out of the empire. That was inconceivable whether for politician, soldier or proconsul. That was the common thread underlying diversity of background or upbringing. The very idea was treason, lese majeste and all the fine talk of freedom and education for it was just so much Fabian tactics, a strategy of postponing the evil day if possible sine die. As recently as the sixties a UDI leader in Rhodesia had said that he did not expect majority rule to come in his lifetime. That attitude typified the colonial gospel. Short of that the Governors were the best ever, unswerving in their commitment to their paternalist doctrines of knowing and doing what was best for the subject peoples, fortunate in their view to come under their benign care. This was really secular evangelism, the equivalent of spiritual redemption by the spread of Christianity.

Mackenzie stood for both, namely, spiritual evangelism under the cloak of secular authority. His problem was an inability to reconcile the two. He was the only Governor to experience this inward conflict

of being the official custodian of the Buddhist establishment and feeling a prick of conscience about it. Mackenzie was the grandson of a Scottish peer and his blue blood was reinforced by union with a chieftainess of the purest blood as testified by the very bard himself of highland chivalry no less than Walter Scott who was a family friend. After a four year spell in Parliament he appears to have found it too costly and thought of colonial avenues to replenish funds. His only qualification for the role seemed to be a familiarity with classical Latin and the ability to quote them on tap and enliven Council proceedings with proof of erudition. The Governor lost no time cashing in on the prevailing coffee boom and invested in over 2,000 acres of coffee in the company of other notables from the army, civil service even clergy. Coffee was thus a lucrative public as well as private sector activity. The acquisition of private wealth despite his position as Governor did not seem to bother his High Church conscience as much as his responsibility for the administration of the Buddhist establishment in terms of the Kandyan Convention. His objections on this score placed the government in a dilemma which contributed to the later disturbances of 1848. His wife appears to have attracted attention not only as the widow of the one time East India fleet Commander Admiral Hood but also her Oriental indulgences such as smoking the hookah. Mackenzie did not take too well to the local weather and collapsed on a tour, of sunstroke. This occasioned his premature departure to die two years later. It is difficult to think of him by any stretch of imagination as one of the great among the Governors. His mentality was wrong and quite illiberal for an enthusiast of Roman poetry and his integrity suspect. His unpopularity among planters and his own kind is not a surprise for his sanctimonious pretensions were belied by his conduct.

Torrington 1847-50 who succeeded Campbell was an unpleasant if critical incident in British rule. He had no claims for this post, no experience except what he had gathered in the royal bed chamber and that he was a cousin of the Prime Minister Russell. It was a typical political fix up of those times not unlike Gregory's appointment except that it was disastrously untimely as far as Sri Lanka was concerned. The latter was heading for a crisis with a financial problem on its hands which frustrated the planters and the resort by the government to iniquitous tax measures which were bizarre, infuriated the populace. The central provinces particularly at this time were in

turmoil with opening of the plantations, expropriation of indigenous inhabitants, influx of low country elements like carpet baggers to exploit the situation to their advantage. The situation was ripe for violence and called for exceptional tact which the greenhorn Governor did not have, particularly because he was henpecked by his overbearing omniscient Colonial Secretary Emerson Tennent who claimed to have all the answers. The result was the so-called 1848 uprising and the harsh repressive measures of the government with the government giving in to the six gun justice of the planters notably Captain Watson ever ready to practise their bayonets on innocent peasantry. The uprising has been elevated by nationalists into a national uprising with Purang Appu as the heroic martyr. The genius of Sri Lanka's great master of the cinema has invested it with epic dimensions in his film of that name. Torrington acknowledged that he was a brave man but whether a conscious patriot or national leader is for historians to resolve. He poses the same dilemma as Pedris whose martyrdom has given them an aura. Torrington was recalled but not before Sri Lanka made history as these events were the subject of a Commission of investigation which brought the lions of that time Gladstone and Disraeli round the same table. For Tennent he was given the same sentence as the other encyclopaedist before him namely Bonaparte of exile to St Helena but never went. The infighting between the officials notably Tennent and Wodehouse anticipate ministerial scenes of a later day in the Island. The moral is not the unsuitability of political appointments per se but of the wrong type of appointee. It must be said that never again was the royal bedchamber a recruiting ground.

From Ward in 1855 to the end of the term of office of West Ridgeway in 1906 was a period of fifty years which may be described as the golden age of the Governors of Sri Lanka when the latter had their greatest exemplars. The others in between were stop gaps, a pause in the momentum of the great ones. The latter were Ward, Gregory, Gordon, Robinson and West Ridgeway and of them the first three were politicians, Robinson an administrator and West Ridgeway a soldier. One must be clear about the standards by which they can be deemed to be great. Some historians have subscribed to the view that the aim of colonial policy "was the welfare and civilization of the inhabitants and the development of representative institutions where they could be safely created". If this was true these Governors

certainly lived up to these objectives. In fact however they were more in that they were impelled by the highest motivations of conscience, sense of duty and of commitment. They combined great personal ability with unflinching devotion and established a standard of service unique in colonial relations. Given the restricted circumscribed scope of that relationship its one sided character, they still elicited the best out of it. One remembers them therefore for giving the best of themselves and striving for what they thought was in the best interest of the country. Their very role and accreditation as servants of the Crown precluded them from transcending it and hence if they fell short in their horizons that was a valid limitation. It is just that they were not cast for that role.

The Governors of this half century were a combination of these political figures, professional administrators and bureaucrats. The distinction between the last two is that the first were career officers who had served in overseas posts and been trained for their office through wide experience of the diverse problems of empire. Bureaucrats in contrast were the home birds whose career had been a single track specialization in a particular field or office before exaltation to Governorship. Typical of them were Macarthy who was in Sri Lanka for nine years as Colonial Secretary before appointment as Governor, being the only such case of elevation in situ and Chalmers who was a Treasury mandarin from 1882 till 1911 and seemed unlikely to go elsewhere when the prospects of Oriental scholarship lured him to the Island. These two groups also contained Governors of outstanding ability on a par with their political counterparts. An index of this was that some of them had either served previously or were later appointed to the so-called self governing territories which had already acquired or were close to dominion status. This was the curious dichotomy or the split personality of the British empire of the 19th century in that it operated at two parallel levels between the white dominions which could not be given their freedom soon enough and Crown colonies deemed inherently deficient and hence denied that luxury sine die. Between the two it was as much "never the twain shall meet" as between East and West of Kipling. To be moved from one plane to the other for a Governor was certainly high recognition. Thus Robinson ended as the High Commissioner of the Cape

at the most critical phase of its history than which there could not have been a greater tribute to ability. This estimate was not shared by his sovereign.

Ward is regarded as the greatest among the Governors but this may be an over-rated verdict. He was middle class in origin and his father appears to have won the recognition of Pitt and of literary circles for his book. The appointment of the young Ward by Canning as attache to the Embassy in Denmark while in his teens is considered to be some belated political reward to the family. His appointment as Ambassador at the age of 26 when others were just coming out of cadetship confirms this. Still, the fact that he wrote a book on Mexico, which was standard reading shows him to be no ordinary attache. He soon left diplomacy for politics, entering Parliament as a Liberal, but left that also to accept proconsulship in the Ionian islands, then a trouble spot.

His handling of the situation gave him a reputation for severity. As Governor of Sri Lanka from 1855 he flung himself to his duties with unflagging zeal, this object being to provide the Island its requirements for accelerated development. The country in fact was at the take off point when plantations and roads had opened its resources and effective follow up action was needed. However, headway had been held up by the parsimony of unimaginative Governors, revenue deficits and the crass indifference of the Colonial office with its sink or swim policies. Ward's governorship was thus a whirlwind campaign to carry out these objectives. In a programme which engaged almost every key sector, his monument was undoubtedly the founding of the Railway on which successive Governors had been fumbling. He also blazed new trails in entering the field of irrigation and introducing a welfare dimension to his work. Ward was essentially a thorough-going administrator rooted firmly in the conviction that self government was no substitute for good government and hence he had no truck with representative ideas. He persisted with the nomination of unofficials, affirming with illiberal zeal the colonial dogma that the ruling power should hold the balance between competing interests. On a comparative view there is room to think that Ward has been over-rated. He was primarily a technocrat with great drive and ability and meticulous in his desire to get things done. He gave positive leadership to the administration to shed inhibitions and assume its responsibilities to the full. What he lacked was vision

and ability like West Ridgeway to see that administration was not the be all and end all. He was narrow and over-zealous, lacking in the warmth and humanity of Gregory.

Sir William Gregory is the best known of the Governors and the greatest human story among them. This fame is due not only to his most conspicuous legacy which is the Colombo Museum and the statue in front with its striking location in the heart of Cinnamon Gardens and its peerless appearance but also to his autobiography and his wife who was a celebrity. Gregory was the one authentic encounter of the Island at that level with the best of mid-Victorian culture of which he was a classic exemplar. As archtype of a culture he is the counterpart of Leonard Woolf, the latter of Fabian Socialism and post-war Bloomsbury and Gregory of the age of Tennyson and Trollope. What Boyd was at the end of the 18th century at the Kandyan court, a whiff of Augustan England, Gregory was of Victorian Britain. Writers have seen in him a typical Trollopean hero and as a classmate of Trollope he could have been the model. The similarity was in his traits as the young man of high birth and promise who yet never lived up to it, the ups and downs of fortune, the combination of genius and profligacy, the dandy, the high living and admission into exclusive circles, a career and a destiny which fell short of its potential, all of which are its hallmarks. It is an irony that the friend of Peel and of Disraeli and the rising star of the Conservatives should have fizzled out as a colonial Governor. The explanation may be less in the flawed personality and subjection to vicissitudes of the Trollopean hero than in the Irish politics of the time where his Irish sympathies and divergence from the party line may have found disfavour. His early career pointed the way to a great future. He was well equipped for the purpose with private means, looks and intellect. His great grandfather had been a Nabob of the class of Clive and Hastings, who had made his fortune in India in a similar manner. Installed in Ireland in the broad acres of the country seat of Coole his progeny had ruled over Ireland in different capacities and in the same tradition young Gregory was offered the Irish Lordship of the Treasury by Peel but declined it. Gregory was a bright lad at school, excelling in the classics but a failure at the University where he did better at the turf which became his recurring passion from thereon, the original sin of Victorian morality and some think his undoing. He entered Parliament in 1842 as the member for Dublin City after an election where

one supporter impersonated 13 times. In Parliament he was in his element, impressing everyone with his debonair charm, his engaging manner and winning the confidence alike of Prime Ministers, senior politicians, powerful hostesses, even Opposition leaders like Daniel O'Conell. who took a great fancy to him. Peel also took a similar liking and Disraeli at whose house he was a frequent visitor. He was a frequent guest of three most famous hostessses in London, at that time Lady Ashburton, Lady Londonderry and Lady Jersey, where he moved and dined with the eminent men of the day. The way seemed open for a great destiny, not excluding Prime Ministership in the aftermath of Peel's repeal of the Corn Laws which grievously hit Tory leadership and sent Gladstone and Disraeli to the wilderness. Such expectations did not materialize, for reasons which are not clear. However, there is evidence that all was not well for some time and events were moving inexorably towards a parting of the ways. His debonair charm appears to have concealed an element of a split personality which is unwittingly disclosed in an entry in a private diary. This is about his election to an exclusive club which he describes in the following terms "a kind of expiring effort to lift old tottering decrepit dandyism to a pedestal. It is worth belonging to, if only to watch the last death struggle of these priests of that foolish false god before which simple and honest Englishmen so long submitted to bow down". This shows that he was at heart something of a social and political rebel, contemptuous of the prevailing social hypocrisy. A similar disenchantment is manifest in his political attitudes which reveal a clear divergence on the Irish question and foreign affairs. His conscience was worrying him over the party line on Ireland with which he was identified. His heart was clearly with the Irish peasant, the tenant living under the shadow of eviction and veering unmistakably towards Home Rule. Even over Catholic emancipation he had been unusually forthright. In foreign affairs he was opposed to the official and traditional line on the Eastern Question of supporting the Porte at the expense of the Balkan nationals. This was clearly under the influence of his bosom friend, Henry Layard, British Ambassador later at Constantinople who was to be fired later for his indiscretions on the subject. These trends in his thinking reveal a Gladstonian sincerity in his approach to public affairs which contrasted with the chaliatanry of his friend and colleague Disraeli. A rupture thus seemed inevitable and it was presumably in these circumstances that

he turned to Lady Waldegrave to arrange matters with Granville. Sri Lanka appears to have been the darling object of his life for some time, for reasons which are not made explicit. Interest in it had been created initially from the reports of Frank, the son of Lord Jersey who had been an *aide-de-camp* to Colin Campbell in Sri Lanka. Since then his fascination for it had grown. A contributor to this might have been Henry Layard who was originally proceeding to Sri Lanka as a tea planter and stopped en route at Mesopotamia where he stumbled on ancient Assur. Gregory was besides a solid Victorian with spacious ideas about the world and Britain's place in it. Perhaps Ceylon was an echo of some classical allusion which lingered in his mind from the Odyssey about the dreamy islands of lotus eaters or sirens said to lure men to their doom. In the European mind Sri Lanka in those days was wrapped in a halo of classical mythology. Whatever the motivation 1872 found him arrive safely in Sri Lanka.

Gregorys's career as Governor and contribution was similar to that of Ward. He excelled likewise in transport, irrigation, expansion of government responsibility, social welfare. A signal achievement in this respect was the creation of a North and Central Province with Anuradhapura as its capital and the measures undertaken for its rehabilitation to restore its former glory. This was a manifestation of his instinct for ancient civilization in which he had already made a name as the trustee of the British Museum. This reflected presumably the influence of his lifelong friendship with Layard, the discoverer of Nineveh, with whom he was in constant communication. This interest led him to blaze a new trail in Sri Lanka with the construction of the Colombo Museum and the accompanying steps for the study of inscriptions and preservation of its ancient literature. Another monument to his name was the Colombo breakwater on which he had been officially discouraged by the Colonial office before coming. It was typical of him that he should have ignored such advice and acted on conviction though here it was also based on a bad personal experience trying to land in Galle. Like Ward he was a tireless traveller, as a result of which his first wife came to grief and possibly his Governorship. He had always been at heart a lonely man and his crowded social life was probably a means of filling up a void. When coming to Sri Lanka and aware no doubt of the loneliness of Oriental despotism, he had invested in a wife, a widow of ample means to sustain the costly life of a Governor. Her death was a blow which sapped his will to

remain as Governor. This was yet another of those fateful decisions which shaped his career because the British government and local circles were urging him to remain. His decision was a step into the wilderness. He had another lease of happiness however with his marriage to Isabella Augusta Perse but that is a story in its own right related elsewhere. That this solemn-looking diminutive girl with the demure expression, hair parted in the middle of a Bronte sister, should have not only found happiness with a man thirty-five years her senior but become the greatest Irishwoman of her day is in one sense the culmination of the Gregory saga. In the latter respect she had a parallel fifty years later in the career of Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, likewise a country girl of aristocratic lineage who rose to become the first woman Prime Minister of the world. The only difference was their medium, as for Augusta Perse it was the stage and the letter and for Sirimavo Bandaranaike the political platform and the word. Each claimed to articulate the aspirations of their people. Augusta was sought after by the literary giants of the day like Shaw and Yeats while Sirimavo Bandaranaike became an international figure in the company of the leaders of an emergent world. Gregory returned three times to the Island, the second time accompanied by Augusta. He was always warmly feted. An interesting episode in the latter part was his championship of the Egyptian nationalist leader Arabi Pasha who was exiled to Sri Lanka in 1882 and became a local hero there. Gregory was greatly impressed by his case and with his wife and Wilfred Scawen Blunt canvassed on his behalf in English political circles using his influence with Gladstone. The sentence of exile instead of death which was usually the penalty for rebellion was probably due to this pressure. Gregory met him in Sri Lanka, was very impressed with his cultured manly bearing and later agitated for his release. In this he was helped by Augusta who wrote a political tract on Arabi which was one of her first literary endeavours. When Gregory died after twelve years of marriage, Augusta was to ascend the heights of fame.

Gregory may be considered as one of the greatest if not the greatest of the Governors for the new dimension in his outlook and activities. He was the only true exemplar of English liberalism then at its apogee which Sri Lanka ever had. He was a truer Gladstonian with his sensitiveness to suffering and his sympathy for the aspirations of other peoples whether Irish, Egyptian or Sri Lankan than Gordon who

claimed to be a friend of the great man and was anything but that in his political views on Sri Lanka. Gregory's approach to culture was not that of the Civil servant who found in a study of the customs and habits of the natives a diversion from the soulless monotony of Kachcheri life and a means of demonstrating cultural superiority. In Gregory's case as an art lover and one of the earliest museologists and friend of Layard it was based on genuine respect for an ancient society, the majestic remains of which he would have witnessed in their fallen glory on his tours of the N.C.P. He was perhaps the only Governor who attempted to gain an insight into the authentic culture of the people instead of viewing them like the others as pawns in a power game and treating the Governorship with bureacratic impersonality as an opportunity to do a good job with promotion to a better station in view. At another plane this was a contrast to the attitude of Leonard Woolf and his Bloomsbury friends who despite their professed sympathy for the natives were essentially critiques of the elitist establishment and overdrew their plight to colour their thesis. Their love of natives was probably a literary mode if some of the execrable comments attributed to Virginia Woolf about overseas visitors are any guide. Gregory did not exceed the limits of his colonial mandate but the warmth of his personality and intentions shone through. There may be truth in Augusta's remark that this concern was because he saw a similarity between Sri Lanka and his beloved Ireland.

Sir Arthur Gordon who was Governor from 1883 to 1890 was a political appointee who was similar to Gregory in his antecedents except for being the son of Lord Aberdeen a Prime Minister to which he owed the office. Like Gregory he moved with politicians and was a particular friend of Gladstone with whom he corresponded frequently. His upbringing too was political as secretary to his father. A major difference is that he was a distinguished proconsul already when he came to Sri Lanka. He had been in the West Indies and Western Pacific winning praise for his work and his appointment to the prestigious Governorship of a white community as Governor-General of New Zealand was certainly a signal recognition of his calibre. He compares in this respect with Hercules Robinson for a prestigious proconsular record prior to Governorship of the Island. These two and other cases would show that during this period there was a noticeable elevation in the calibre of the appointees to Sri Lanka. This may be a sign of the growing importance of the Island, its popularity, the

urgency of its problems or some priority ascribed to it. This was a sustained trend with a few entractes until the first decades of the 20th century when coinciding ironically with the Liberal administrations of Britain and the first echoes of Labour politicians it gave way to mandarins. The explanation was their bureacratic efficiency and reputation as hatchet men where untroubled by conscience or idealistic stirrings which were the besetting sin of the Gregorys they would safeguard the interests of the Raj without compunction. Gordon's contribution as Governor was to steer it through the coffee and accompanying financial crash and yet maintain a level of development. At a personal level he did not fare so well because his dim views about the planters and the Legislative Council did not endear him to either. His views on representative government were true to type and his liberal antecedents made no difference. The conduct of Gordon gives the impression of a self-opinionated type, an echo in Sri Lanka of Curzonian Viceroyalty.

Sir Hercules Robinson 1865-1872 belongs to the category of administrator Governors who like members of the later Colonial Service were overseas administrators by profession. He was Irish by birth and started life in the army but retired and did local administration in Ireland. He began his overseas career in the West Indies where he held a succession of appointments after which he was Governor of Hong Kong at the crucial time of the second and rather disreputable China War which brutally forced open the latter to British trade through various concessions, one of which was the cession of Kowloon which Robinson handled. This achievement may have earned for him a reputation of a trouble shooter, which qualified him for his later appointments to South Africa. His Governorship of Sri Lanka was not notable for any original or outstanding contributions. He continued the work inaugurated by Ward with energy and zest. Initially he had to face a minor squall in the Legislative Council when the military budget was defeated which had been imposed as a charge on the government at the expense of development activity. This incident was characteristic of the Gilbertian flavour of the colonial legislature where European and Burgher unofficials tried to play at being Pyms and Hampdens and the American colonists. Robinson made short work of the Council, almost silencing the unofficials. He came down heavily on these freedom fighters in his strictures on their submissions to the Secretary of State. During his term in Sri Lanka

he was no hero or great nation builder. His fame if at all as a colonial administrator was a product of later assignments after the Governorship of Sri Lanka. These were the prestigious posts of Governorship of New South Wales followed by New Zealand, culminating in the High Commissionership of South Africa succeeding no less than the famous Bartle Frere. The latter was one of the notorious founders of the British Empire in Africa, his particular contribution being the destruction of the Zulu nation. However, for his ineptitude in effecting it he was recalled. In the meantime South Africa was in turmoil with the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley, the vaulting ambitions of Cecil Rhodes to extend the British Empire throughout the world starting from Africa, the influx of rough Uitlanders into the Orange Free State and Transvaal, spreading lawlessness and rapine in their wake. The British responded by progressive annexations to contain the situation, the effect of which was to exasperate the harassed Boers driven already from pillar to post. They could have done this to the Zulus with impunity relying on their fire power and columns but not so with the Boers, who were the greatest born fighters ever and masters of tactics suited to their terrain. The situation culminated in the ignominous Majuba Hill engagement when a British column was dislodged in disgrace from the crest of a hill. The disaster rocked Gladstone and lighted the fuse that would set British Africa ablaze from Cape to Cairo. It was into this incipient conflagration that Robinson walked in as Governor of the Cape. He handled affairs well at the outset, holding the balance between Kruger the fiery Boer leader and Rhodes the ruthless empire builder, conciliating both. However his outlook was too circumscribed, preferring to take things as they came instead of the imaginative, far-sighted statesmanship which such an explosive situation required. This was probably the legacy of the pinchbeck attitudes ingrained in him, ruling over small colonies like Sri Lanka in the past where caution and parsimony was the keynote. He was persuaded to return in 1890 when the situation had exploded again in the Jameson raid but by now it had gone beyond his capacity to cope with. Besides, he had incurred the displeasure of the Queen, of Chamberlain, of Kruger and returned under a cloud. Thus Robinson's fame in Sri Lanka was a case of reflected glory from his later career when he certainly became a world figure though not a very successful one. His record in Sri Lanka is on a par with that of others of his stamp like Gordon and Ward.

Sir Joseph West Ridgeway was the other world figure who became Governor and introduced an international touch to the Island. He is best known to posterity for giving his name to one of Sri Lanka's greatest Prime Ministers. This was a gesture of homage to the Raj by a doting Maha Mudaliyar who had already dubbed himself as the Queen's sword bearer. Ridgeway was one of the few Governors with experience of international diplomacy. He was of middle class origin and started his career in the Indian army from which he was transferred to civilian duty in Central India. He was then appointed Political Agent and later Political Secretary to Lord Roberts and accompanied him on his historic march to Kandahar to retrieve the military disaster at Maiwand. With this event Ridgeway found himself in the midst of a simmering crisis in relations between Britain and Russia in Central Asia. This concerned at that stage the delimitation of the boundaries between Russia and Afghanistan in Central Asia but the underlying issue was the British fear of Russian expansion as a threat to British India. The key to the situation was Afghanistan. After the disastrous Afghan War of 1840, Britain had followed a policy of masterly activity avoiding involvement in Afghan affairs to the mortification and disappointment of its rulers who veered to Russia for help. The latter too was indifferent but its policy changed after the Crimean War when it pursued a policy of steady expansion in Central Asia absorbing the four Khanates of Samarkand, Bokhara, Khiva and Khokand lying South East. Tashkent too was added and a new province called Russian Turkestan was formed in 1867 under Kaufmann as Governor. Russian expansion in Central Asia was justified by the imperial government as a local neccessity to police lawless tribes and develop territories following the breakdown of their old and decadent Sultanate regimes. It was also a form of diplomatic pressure on Britain in a sensitive area to elicit concessions in Europe in the aftermath of the Crimean War when Russian ambitions in the Balkans were if at all intensified. The situation boiled down to the urgency of reaching agreement on the frontier limits of North Afghanistan which was in dangerous proximity to Russian territory.

British policy towards Afghanistan had changed in the meantime under Disraeli whose flamboyant Viceroy Lytton was reverting to a forward attitude. When Abdur Rahman who had been in exile in Russia returned as Shah in 1879, the Viceroy was prepared to treat with him and support him as a buffer state. The success of this policy

hinged on the outcome of the boundary negotiations. At this moment there were a series of shocks. Russia indicated clearly that it had designs on Merv, even publishing maps in support, and in response to the protests of the Gladstone government, proposed the establishment of a joint Delimitation Commission to decide on the boundaries of the disputed area of Northern Afghanistan including Pendjeh. The Commission was nominated consisting of Sir Peter Lumsden on the British side and General Zelenoi as the head of the Russian delegation and meetings were scheduled for Saraks in October 1884. That was as far as it went as the Russian side delayed on various grounds until it was climatically impossible to undertake surveying. Events came to a head with the expulsion of Afghan troops from Pendjeh by the Russians and Britain replied by voting military expenditure and calling the reserves. War seemed in the air but Russia was ready to negotiate. This was the inflammable situation in which Ridgeway was called upon to play a part. He was in Merv at the time of Pendjeh but he had foreseen a crisis and made preparations accordingly. He was in command of a mounted unit and when the crisis occurred he ferried it across successfully to join Lumsden who was in Herat. His success was due to his foresight, tact and good relations which he had established with Turkoman tribes. By now Abdur Rahman who was in touch with the British Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, had revealed that he was less demanding in his territorial claims than was at first anticipated. His relatively modest demands offered a basis for a peaceful settlement of the border with Russia. This was only achieved after several years of negotiation with the Imperial government and Ridgeway visited St Petersburg in this connection in 1886. The situation remained unsettled and it was only with the shift of Russian interest to the Far East which led to the collision with Japan that calm returned to this area. Thus Ridgeway had the aura of a military hero and diplomat when he came as Governor.

However, it was not for his past alone that he can be classed as one of the greatest Governors. He was unique for his enlightened attitude on the recognition and employment of Ceylonese in the public service. He did not show a trace of racial feeling in his dealings with people or and condecension in his public speaking in which he revelled. This was unusual for an Englishman of middle class origin and a military background who were generally inclined to militant colonialism. His experience in India and Central Asia gaining the

confidence of local peoples must have stood him in good stead in his colonial career. West Ridgeway's greatness lies in his view of the colonial relationship as a partnership in which cultures and skills could mingle. This was a contrast to the classic notion that it was a civilizing mission to give natives the blessings of civilization. An explanation for this could be his Indian background where in Central India he would have seen its great cultural past. Ridgeway was the last of the higher breed of Governors who were enlightened and idealistic in their vision. The later Governors were narrow in their outlook, their preoccupation being primarily with the retention of power for as long as possible in the face of a growing clamour for so-called constitutional reform. To this end they resorted to tactics such as exploitation of communal divisions and caste and manipulation of personalities so as to place British rule in an arbiter like position which would support their very thesis of the indispensability of that rule to hold the balance. There was a marked deterioration in the tone of their rule and their estimate of the local people became increasingly ungracious in step with their methods of ruling through division. This apparent change in spirit could be attributed to their antecedents in that by a coincidence or not most of them had an African background and their outlook was probably coloured by the African experience. The latter was true of McCallum, Manning, Stanley, Graeme Thomson, all of whom had served in African posts and Manning in particular was married to a South African. At this time the British Empire was acquiring an African complexion as this continent became a focal point of imperial interests. This was the the consequence of the partition of Africa by Western powers in which the British acquisition was possibly the largest and its preservation in the face of hostility from European rivals was an overshadowing objective of its foreign and colonial policy. Africa in fact replaced Indi in precedence partly because of the gathering independence movement in the latter and the fear of the imminent loss of that prized possession.

The African empire further introduced a new orientation to the ethos of colonialism. It differed from the Asian empire not only in its immense size and compactness but that unlike the latter which embraced some of the oldest and greatest civilizations known to man, Africa had been comparatively uneven in its historical evolution. Powerful kingdoms and empires had flourished at different times in

various parts of Africa, such as the Aksumite kingdom of Ethiopia which was the contemporary of Byzantium, the Ashanti in West Africa, the Zulu state of the 18th century and the cycle of commercial societies in Central Africa, south of the Sahara, all of which made nonsense of the famous myth of darkest Africa. The latter actually referred to large parts of the country which were characterized by tribal systems and relatively primitive social and economic development in the background of the ravages of slavery and inter tribal conflict. The conquest of Africa by Western powers was accompanied at first by wholesale atrocities and indiscriminate plunder of the continent after which particularly in British territories efforts were undertaken for their economic exploitation primarily in the imperial interest. This gave rise to a new era of administration in Africa which was comparable to its counterpart in Asia and was inspired outwardly by similar objectives. This was the notion of trusteeship or the white man's burden which was typified in Africa by the early missionary pioneers like Livingstone and Robert Moffat and the classic district officer who was the main channel of the administration. The latter became a kind of hero who was invested by popular cinema and literature with the aura of a white God held in reverence by the natives. This was of course popular folklore but with a kernel of truth in that it was a system of indirect rule in which the colonial administrator was an intermediary between the imperial government and the indigenous societies which coexisted. The administrator neccessarily had to assume the image of a father figure, as a kind of benign witch doctor dispensing the blessings of the "big white chief". This trusteeship concept contrasted with the trend towards centralization of the administration in India where under the later Viceroys like Curzon it became streamlined and sophisticated with the accent on the cult of efficiency. This was in proportion to the pressure of the demand for independence and was intended to forestall the latter and defuse on the pretext that this was a bourgeoisie movement running counter to the interests of the rank and file whose welfare it was the duty of the imperial government to safeguard The trusteeship idea presupposed the inability of peoples for one reason or another to govern themselves and hence justified the indefinite continuance of colonial rule as a form of welfare. Transferred to other environs this African orientation could have a retrogressive, even unhealthy effect on administration in fostering racist ideas or notions of cerebral

inferiority of the subjects. The anthropological studies of this time such as Frazer's massive expose of tribal practices gave an impetus to such notions. Thus the colonial administrators of the 20th century were retrogressive in their outlook, compared to their liberal minded predecessors of Victorian times, reflecting the influence of the African experience and as a reaction to the movement for independence. The latter elicited successive pronouncements, declarations of intent from the imperial government about grant of representative institutions and ultimate independence but in practice its policy was one of consolidation in a protracted rearguard action to cling to power. Earlier administrators seemed more indulgent and large hearted but their successors came down heavily by their strategy of killing by concessions. 20th century administrators were also a new breed and represented the elitist colonial service which was recruited as a parallel to the Home Service, specially trained in colonial government. At the top level they were the pick of public school and University and at other levels also public school types nurtured in the philosophy of Arnold of Rugby and Ruskin which were the corollary to trusteeship doctrines of the Recessional. The administration became like a martial fraternity dedicated to promotion of Queen and country as a solemn patriotic duty as well as a self fulfilment. There was something of the quality of military fraternities like the Ottoman Janissaries in the way in which these sons of empire were trained and brain washed from childhood through inculcation of manly values, training in vigorous sports, self discipline and Spartan self control in readiness for their tasks in the lonely outposts. In the colonial service were professional administrators, intellects for the most part, with the capacity to counter attack and uphold the empire against threats. Their task was a much more difficult one than of the old soldiers and outcast politicians who could indulge themselves in spacious living and mix freely with obliging natives. The natives too were a new breed with the smell of independence acting like the scent of blood to a predator and hence there ensued a battle royal between the freedom fighters and the grim custodians of empire. If they submitted ultimately it was not because of outright defeat but that the superstructure of empire had caved in under the onslaught of the Japanese. That experience deprived the empire of credibility and a graceful exit was the only recourse. The focus of interest in the Island now shifted from internal development which had been the keynote of the late

19th century to the movement for constitutional reform. This gathered momentum under Governor Manning in 1918 and the preoccupation of the Governor was to contend with it. In this, successive Governors showed great resourcefulness and ingenuity, being invariably a match for their equally gifted and adroit antagonist. Out of this evenly matched contest, in some respects so academic and stylized, a certain process developed which took the country on a certain course.

Colonial policy during this period was further influenced by developments in contemporary Britain. The end of the 19th century was the high tide of imperialism, under the dynamic leadership of Joseph Chamberlain who tried to infuse solidarity to the empire to safeguard it from security threats and economic inroads of rivals. In fact he identified the empire with his own political future in that he deliberately chose the office of Colonial Secretary which was viewed until then as no more than a stepping stone. Chamberlain was of the same stamp as Rhodes as one of the visionaries of empire who arose at this time. His particular vision was his belief that the way to achieve this objective of imperial unity was through Protection. Such a conclusion was logical to the imperialist ideology of the previous quarter century when the expansion and preservation of the empire in the face of acute international competition was the over-riding concern of British foreign policy. In Chamberlain's hands it became a dominant issue of British politics representing the anti-thesis of the Manchester School which he preached with missionary zeal, accompanied by an aggressive posture in imperial policy, one of the consequences of which was the Jameson raid. His campaign, however, miscarried and failed to elicit the desired response, resulting in his own political eclipse shortly after. Possibly Chamberlain had missed the bus as imperialism was no longer in fashion. At the start of the new century Britain had freed itself of anxieties and commitments incurred during its so-called splendid isolation. This was achieved through the reconquest of the Sudan, its sequel the Fashoda incident, the peace settlement in South Africa, the relaxation of tension in Central Asia with the shift of Russian activities to the Far East to its collision course with Japan, the stabilization of relations with Afghanistan and consequently of the situation on the North West Frontier. Indeed the chickens had come home to roost and Britain was now being called upon to face the political repercussions on its continental interests of its colonial spree. The latter had been initially in the nature of a

reaction against the prevailing climate in Europe which in the meantime had assumed a menacing character, and a challenge to Britain. It centred round the ambitions of Kaiser's Germany and its apparent attitude of rivalry towards Britain. These continental preoccupations understandably overshadowed Britain's colonial interests and the resettlement of the latter had been timely as it enabled Britain to cope successfully with the challenge in Europe. In fact it can be said that the turn of the century was a watershed in the evolution of the empire. It marked as if it were the return of Britain to its base to home ground after two centuries of roving amidst the luscious pastures of empire, gathering vast acquisitions and booty. It was the return of Ulysses to Ithaca where Penelope had been languishing in anxious longing over the future. Britain in the meantime like Ithaca had undergone profound changes. The political and socio-economic system which had sustained Britain through those centuries of empire building was coming to the crossroads with the rise of Lloyd George and the new Liberalism, the conflict with the House of Lords representing the last ditch stand of privilege and birth against political and social change and the first signs of Labour and of organized trade unionism. These were the cumulative effects of the sweeping legislation of the 19th century, successive Reform Bills extending political enfranchisement, distribution of wealth, social change and the revolutionary impact of science on the outlook of man. These changes themselves were occurring in a disintegrating scene when the foundations of the old Europe would be blown up in the world war with cataclysmic effects on the world at large.

Entering the 20th century it needed exceptional clairvoyance which no statesman ever had to anticipate these events but in the colonial sphere, certain trends appeared which prefigured the future. Among the "white" dominions all of which were independent by now, there was an incipient movement towards association. Such ideas were tentatively discussed at meetings of enthusiasts held in 1887 and 1907 with the imperial government remaining aloof which opened the way conceptually to the formation of the post-war Commonwealth. In contrast the trend in the colonies was retrogressive where contrary to the mid-Victorian promise of an education for Parliamentary democracy as a preparation for independence, the imperial government was finding excuses to delay, procrastinate and even subvert that trend. The colonies too, with understandable impatience, were insistent,

resorting even to militant courses and the imperial government retaliated with a mixture of palliative and repressive measures. The latter tended to leave the colonies to the tender mercies of the mandarins, from Oxbridge intellects skilled in constitutional metaphysics and to blunt soldiers impatient of native aspirations. It is one of the ironies of colonial history that the culture of the new age in Britain with its Socialistic humanism and economics, the Bloomsbury concern for the underdog, working class ideology, the rise of the British Labour Party scarcely had their repercussions in the colonial sphere and in Sri Lanka was confined to the musings of Leonard Woolf and much later the adventures of Bracegirdle. There was an insulation from the world at large under the shelter of bourgeoisie affluence and benevolent despotism. Only a Forster could see the inherent contradictions and give them immortal shape but his was a lone voice unknown perhaps to the politicians who preferred the comforting counsel of "Mother India". To be fair there were circumstantial factors which affected the course of events. The 20th century was dominated by two world wars which both distorted and accelerated the freedom movement. On the one hand it emphasized the need for empire from a strategic and economic standpoint such as bases and raw materials and oblige the imperial government to be authoritarian, even repressive, if necessary. On the other hand the experience of these wars progressively undermined the credibility of empire until it exploded in the face of the powers concerned in the victorious onslaught of Japan both in the Russo-Japanese War and the later Pacific war. In this chequered and turbulent background the course of freedom could not be even.

The mandarin phase in British Sri Lanka lasted from 1907 till the grant of independence in 1948. It was the last chapter of British rule and from the viewpoint of its Governors not the best. Compared to the second half of the 19th century they were narrow and single track, lacking the dimension and personality of their earlier counterparts. There was none among them except possibly for Clifford to compare with Gregory or Ridgeway. They were just faithful servants of H.M.G. or H. M. V., deadpan executors of the Colonial office. There were 10 Governors during this period of 40 years of whom 2, McCallum and Manning were soldiers, 3, Chalmers, Anderson and Thomson were bureaucrats, 5, Clifford, Stanley, Stubbs, Caldecott and Moore were colonial administrators. Without being invidious the greatest

dimensionally among them was Clifford for his towering personality, his versatility and despite his negative views on fitness for independence, a basic rapport which he had with Asian peoples.

This phase began with the Governorship of Sir Henry McCallum, 1907-13 whose personality in some ways typified the policy associated with it. He was the son of a professional soldier and became himself a professional soldier. He was trained as a Royal Engineer and distinguished himself both in his studies and in service overseas. At this stage colonialism went hand in hand with engineering as it had reached the developmental phase when technical knowledge was essential. This was a change from the military phase when security was a paramount factor and soldiers with some appreciation of engineering of whom Barnes was the best example were chosen as Governors. A good illustration of this nexus between colonial administration and engineering was the character of French colonialism where some of its greatest proconsuls like Lyautey were professional soldiers with an engineering background. In fact, Marshall Joffre who was Commander in Chief of the allied armies in the West on the outbreak of the first World War was a military engineer who had distinguished himself in North Africa. McCallum had served in Singapore and Malaya and later held two senior appointments in Africa as Governor of Lagos and subsequently of Natal. The latter, just after the South African War, showed that he was held in high esteem. This was not necessarily a qualification for Governorship of Sri Lanka.

During his Governorship, one of the main questions which McCallum had to deal with was the growing demand for constitutional reform. It was initiated by James Peiris and followed up by other associations who made various submissions. They all amounted to proposals for increased representation and were conspicuous for their modesty and tepidity. The aim of the authors seemed to be a place in the sun for themselves, the promotion of their class and caste rather than independence or the end of British rule. The latter seemed furthest from their minds. This was the classic opening phase in a movement for constitutional reform what may be described as the no taxation without representation stage for the object of participation rather than control. Admittedly the concession could plant the seed leading to that sequel. There was no hint of this in the Island as yet. The limited character of the demands justified the unsympathetic

reaction of McCallum who in his observations which were obviously drafted by the penmanship and according to the ideas of his Colonial Secretary Clifford, condemned them as unrepresentative of the true interests of the people as a whole, arguing that the real representatives were instead the colonial administration in conjunction with the local authorities. This was really an outflanking movement against the Western educated advocates of constitutional reform to show that they were an unrepresentative minority. This was the stock colonialist thesis to validate its presence but in this case it reflected the influence on Clifford's thinking of his experience of paternalistic rule in Malaya. Clifford was one of the founders of the system of indirect rule by British residents under cover of the Malayan Sultans on the lines of the princely states in India which was established in Malaya in the 20th century. There was however no similarity between Malaya and Sri Lanka in this regard at all as the latter was an unified state and the local authorities were administrative bodies which were meant as props to colonial rule. McCallum's views were accepted by the Colonial office along with his recommendations which were for the increase of the number of unofficials from six to ten and the addition to the officials of one place for the educated Ceylonese. The additional four unofficials included two Low-country Sinhalese. McCallum made capital of the situation by his nomination to these two places of Obeysekera and A. J. R. de Soysa who were chosen on his admission for their low mental calibre.

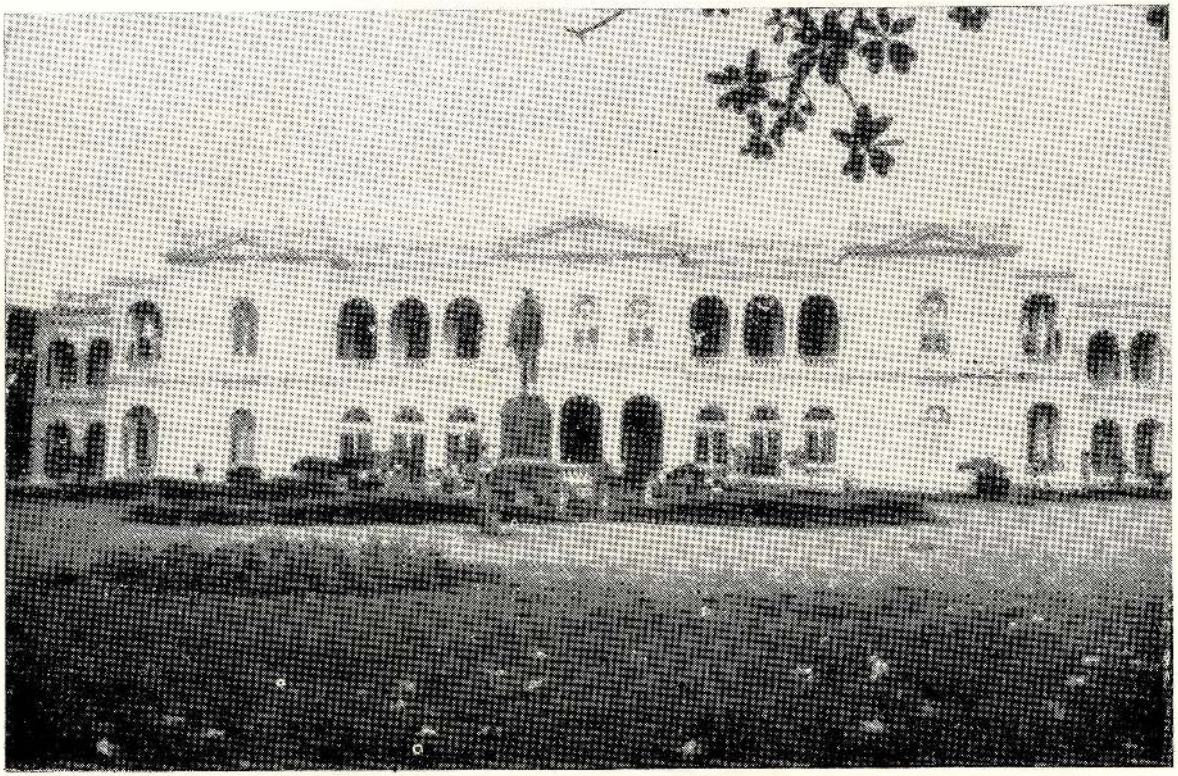
In handling this question, McCallum revealed unsavoury traits and limitations of character. He could have been generous as the demands itself were innocuous and even in implementing his own recommendations he showed bad faith. His approach was a cynical exploitation of the divisions among the advocates of reform, buttressed by his argument that they were unrepresentative. It is also not to his credit that he allowed himself to be led by Clifford to subscribe to a theory of paternalism which was not applicable to the Island. It is possible that he was overawed by Clifford's personality and was thus a weaker character. The impression of him which is conveyed in his photograph is not flattering to his character. In his portly, stocky figure with a big head and a prominent nose there is an air of pugnacity and brusqueness of a soldier. He had a reputation of excelling in the bar where he would regale his guests with boisterous songs and spicy wit. This corresponded to his image as an authoritarian no-nonsense

Governor who would have no truck with local aspirations but after a hard day's work could relax with the boys and fraternize with the natives. Underneath his bonhomie he had the rough mentality and perky cockiness of a sergeant-major who thought he knew how best to deal with aspirations of natives and keep them in their place. His record of achievement however as a Governor was impressive as he rendered useful services to the country. It was rather his earthy and salty character and uncut manners which, coming after the dignity of Ridgeway and the polish of Gordon, lowered the tone of the Governor.

Lord Chalmers, his successor and Graeme Thomson later, have the distinction of being among the greatest administrators of pre-war Britain. Each dominated and excelled in his own sphere, Chalmers the Treasury and Thomson, transport. Chalmers was a distinguished scholar to boot, being a rarity in those times as an Orientalist who could hold his own with the great scholar monks of that day. As a combination of civil servant and Orientalist he anticipated the great Berriedale Keith who excelled as a Vedic scholar and constitutional lawyer. Chalmers was of middle class origin and had a brilliant academic career marked by versatility switching from one subject to another with ease and shining in each. He seemed destined for a scintillating career in any field he chose. It was no surprise that he chose the civil service and in it the Treasury and very soon reached its highest rungs. A great future awaited him but fate willed that he should go to Sri Lanka not like the others to bliss and Serendipity but to his Waterloo. Within a short time he made his mark not only in impressing scholar monks with his erudition but by his initiative for the establishment of a University and the cause of education. This was to be expected from an Orientalist of his stature. He was unique as a Governor for this special rapport which he had with the indigenous culture of the people and it is interesting to contemplate how he would have shaped but for unforeseen events which aborted his career. In the annals of colonialism in Sri Lanka he belongs to the company of Leonard Woolf, Hugh Clifford and Emerson Tennent for their interest in the broader aspects of the Island. Yet they could not have been more different from each other, as Woolf was a rebel against the colonial ethos, Tennent a stout upholder of it and his encyclopaedic undertaking was typical of Victorian endeavours towards universal knowledge. Chalmers in contrast was a scholar aristocrat to whom scholarship was a kind of recreation in the manner of many of his

peers, like A. J. Balfour who was a scientific philosopher of very high calibre or Roseberry who was a historian or Winston Churchill already distinguishing himself as a literary genius.

Chalmers had the great misfortune of suffering a personal tragedy and an official crisis together. The first was the death in action of his two sons in May 1915, presumably in the horrible spring operations when gas was used for the first time in Ypres. The other were the communal clashes between Sinhalese and Muslims in the Island, known as the riots. This event was unusual as Sri Lanka was known for its communal harmony and whatever the bickering over constitutional reform there was not even bad blood, let alone bloodshed. These riots were of local origin and could with careful handling have been contained. However there were two factors which probably influenced the situation. One was the desire of the imperial government at all costs not to hurt Muslim susceptibilities in the context of Turkey's participation in the war as the ally of Germany and the resultant fear of a Muslim uprising in British India in favour of their co-religionists and until recently head of the Caliphate. Besides, a month before, the British had launched their first Gallipoli landing establishing Anzac bridgeheads after bloody fighting. At that moment there were desperate battles with the Turks under the inspired Kemal Pasha determined to push the invaders into the sea and the latter clinging limpet like to mountain face and narrow beaches. This was a tense moment therefore for the empire in the East which gave a different complexion to the riots. The other circumstance is that this period saw the rise of the reform movement when local leaders came to the forefront in the background of signs of a national resurgence. Their activities however were confined to a temperance movement and gentlemanly pronouncements seeking constitutional reform but these were suspected to have a hand in the riots. Chalmers allowed himself to be pushed by the Army Commander into martial law which led to an orgy of reprisals using Indian troops and under the direction of local planters who, like in 1848, revelled in the opportunity for unbridled sadism. Chalmers had to bear the blame for the wave of indignation which this caused and was relieved of his duties. Back in Britain he stepped into favour again with the political masters and was appointed a Peer and later Master of Peterhouse where he evidently became a popular figure. It is tempting to compare him with another Master of Peterhouse, Sir Ivor Jennings also an ex-Sri Lanka man. Jennings



THE COLOMBO MUSEUM

One of the finest works of British Colonial Architecture in Sri Lanka. Built by Governor William Gregory 1876. Gregory's statue in foreground.

Photograph Studio Mins.

was a Vice-Chancellor but conducted himself like a Governor as the confidante of D. S. Senanayake and constitutional lawyer who specialized in drafting constitutions for countries attaining independence. Although several of the latter were disowned, his monument in Sri Lanka was the University of Peradeniya which he founded. He completed what Chalmers had begun. Chalmers was to blame for mishandling the situation and causing bloodshed. His Treasury mind and Orientalist intellect was unable to cope with a situation of this kind. Still his personal tragedy could have contributed to his failure. This was not unnatural and there is a parallel to it in the case of Lord Hobart, the imperious Governor of Madras in the late 18th century who lost his wife and child and became intemperate in his dealings with John Shore, the Governor-General. Even the Olympian Curzon felt the death of his wife in 1906 very keenly and was thereafter in permanent gloom. Roseberry was never the same after the death of his wife prematurely. Men in power tend to be lonely and lean heavily on their families and the effect on Chalmers is a mitigating factor in any appraisal of him. He was a well meaning man of erudition and refinement and the culture born of true knowledge and it is Sri Lanka's misfortune that it could not get the best of him.

Sir John Anderson was an interlude who was sent like Clemency Canning after the Indian mutiny to soothe ruffled feelings and restore confidence. He was chosen because of his known affability, dignified bearing and uprightness. He accomplished his task of exposing injustice and redressing it but at the cost of his life. With Sir William Manning 1918-25, Sri Lanka entered the penultimate phase in the evolution towards independence. It is ironic as in the case of McCallum that Manning should have initiated it. The two were similar in their antecedents, being soldiers with field experience. Manning was taller in height though not in stature. Manning like Ridgeway was a veteran of the frontier wars of the late 19th and early 20th century in which the young Churchill won his spurs. Manning had fought in India, Africa, one encounter being with the "Mad Mullah" of Somaliland, Mohammed Abdallah Hassan who fought a protracted frontier war with the British from 1900-20 by his tactics of withdrawing into Italian territory when defeated. He was a stubborn elusive adversary who inflicted a serious defeat on the British before being defeated. From soldier he became proconsul and served as Governor of Jamaica where he had created a reputation for tact and kindness.

This is difficult to reconcile with the unfavourable impression which he had in Sri Lanka for being unsympathetic and anti-native. The Secretary of State at this time was Milner, an ex-proconsul who had acquired a sinister reputation not only because of his German ancestry but also his violent Chauvinism demonstrated in South Africa before the Boer War and later his involvement in the Ulster uprising. Milner and Manning were a well matched pair with their African backgrounds, who together scattered the ranks of the Ceylon National Congress then pressing for constitutional reform in the Island. The agitation within the Island had grown and emanated from several bodies, namely, Ceylon Reform League, Ceylon National Association and later Ceylon National Congress. The agitation in India which occasioned the Montague-Chelmsford reforms were also relevant. The reforms offered were an anti-climax as they enlarged the unofficial representation in the Legislature but strengthened the power of the Governor. This was characteristic and ruthlessly exploited by him with Machiavellian cunning and skill. The Sri Lanka leaders were not impressed, but these were courtly times when politics were like meetings of the Oxford Union and when Manning left, all combined gave him a fond farewell.

Sir Hugh Clifford who was Governor from 1925 to 27 was certainly the greatest among those of the 20th century. He was a towering personality with a massive head like the cranium of Cro Magnon man, piercing eyes, deep brows and a heavy gorilla-like walk. His presence was as intimidating as his intellect. His ancestry was equally impressive, his mother being a contributor to a journal of Dickens and her father an outstanding classicist and mathematician. His father was a distinguished Victorian soldier who had served almost everywhere in those chequered times including Africa, the Crimea and China. He could have been a character in an A. E. W. Mason novel of empire. His own ancestors went back to the 12th century, one of them being Clifford of the Cabal of Charles II. The family was distinctive being Catholic and Hugh Clifford was throughout a staunch adherent. Hugh Clifford grew up in West country, an ancient land of manors and churches and houses built like Gothic churches with chapels and shrines inside. These exercised a powerful effect on his imagination which predisposed him to his future life amidst court and kampong.

Clifford was set for a military career after his father but changed course to go to Malaya as cadet in the Perak residency where his father's cousin was Governor of the Straits Settlement.

That was the start of his connection with Malaya which was to absorb and consume his life. He made his mark in Pahang where he was to spend 16 years first as Political Agent and then as Resident in step with the progressive establishment of British rule over that state. Pahang was a sheltered, isolated, almost wild state, steeped in traditional culture but during his association with it and as a result he saw its exotic and simple life style transformed under the pressure of Western culture. This posed in his mind the issue and ethics of cultural intermixture, the question of one absorbing the other. This also was a personal crisis to him over the question of identity. Clifford entered a setting where the prevailing political attitude was expressed in the words of the Governor of the Straits Settlement as follows:"I doubt if Asiatics can ever really be taught to govern themselves. Good government seems not to be a plant congenial to the soil". The dominant idea was the superiority of colonial rule as a means of conferring the blessings of civilization on benighted natives. However, during his long and lonely sojourn in Pahang with scarcely a white man around, he came into intimate contact with its life style and perhaps developed a different view of life. He became what one would call a native lover, a kind of convert to local ways and traditions, so imbued with them that they tended to alienate him from his own identity. It amounted to the development of a dual personality which caused both a personal conflict and an official dichotomy. It was a question of reconciling his empathy for the native life style with the obligations and duties of his own official self which ran counter to it. Thus Clifford's tremendous personality and his brilliant career concealed an underlying personal conflict between an inner self drawn to an alien culture and his own roots solidly based in Western culture and his official self as the representative of an all-conquering empire. This was never resolved in his lifetime but it was probably the cause of his ultimate breakdown.

Clifford had two assignments in Sri Lanka, as Colonial Secretary under McCallum and Governor, both of which were probably separations from his beloved Malaya. As Colonial Secretary he was a negative influence and persuaded McCallum to take a hard line on the movement for constitutional reform. As Governor he seemed to

have relented and made submissions which highlighted the unsatisfactory results of the very proposals made by McCallum at his instigation. Possibly his years in Africa as Governor of the Gold Coast and later as the successor to no less than Lugard in Nigeria had sapped his magnificent physique and also changed his outlook. One of his last acts before leaving Sri Lanka was the announcement of the appointment of the Donoughmore Commission for which his recommendations were responsible. He returned to Malaya as Governor of the Straits Settlement for the final act of the drama of his life which was the breakdown of his health, signs of which had appeared even in Sri Lanka. This was the nemesis which he himself had prefigured as the end of his hero in his short story entitled "Our trusty and well-beloved" about Sir Philip Hanbury-Erskine who had risen to the heights before being struck down by the ghostly spectre of his past.

Sir Hugh Clifford left a testament of his inner self which finally claimed him in the number of books which he wrote with Malaya as the setting. These were really his own experiences. "In court and Kampong" was about his life in Pahang. These were also his private confessions, the unbaring of his inner conflicts and an exposition of his philosophy of duality. These were expressed as fiction, his typical hero being Maurice Curzon the foreigner who through long communion with alien races was drawn inexorably to their ways until he became in all but appearance part of them. This was precisely Clifford's own conflict which he described as follows in terms of Curzon "circumstance had combined to well nigh denationalise him, to make him turn from his own kind, herd with natives, and conceive for them such an affection and sympathy that he was accustomed to contrast his countrymen unfavourably with his Malayan friends. This be it said is not a wholesome attitude of mind for any European but it is curiously common among such white men as chance has thrown for long periods of time into close contact with Oriental races and whom nature has endowed with imaginations sufficiently keen to enable them to live into the life of the strange folk around them". Elsewhere he has described this dilemma as follows: "It has been said that a white man who has lived twelve consecutive months in complete isolation, among the people of an alien Asiatic race is never wholly sane again for the remainder of his days." Finally as Hanbury-Erskine he gave up his soul to the devil like Dr Faustus.

Clifford's books invite comparison with the works of Joseph Conrad not as a writer of the same calibre but for similarity of setting and themes. Clifford however was essentially a romantic writer with nostalgia of bygone pageantry and kings. His theme of native lover was a personal problem developed to appear as a common affliction. Conrad's theme however was the nature of the human personality and its susceptibility to evil or necessity to temporize with it in the course of life. Conrad's concern is the degeneration of the white man on exposure to the temptations and opportunities for corruption which were offered in the exotic parts to which they were lured as pirates, adventurers or traders by the circumstances of empire. They were not exotic tales of the Raj or adventure yarns but studies of human personality under stress of opportunity and challenge. He chose exotic parts as the setting because of his personal experience of them as a sailor and that their lurid backgrounds were an appropriate backdrop and scenario for his theme of temptation. Clifford's stories were melodramatic and superficial and not well written either with somewhat stylized prose. Their value are as insights both intimate and authentic into exotic life styles which the impact of alien cultures has destroyed. It would be useful also to compare him with Leonard Woolf as a compatriot and fellow bureaucrat imparting similar experiences. Clifford in comparision was a minstrel, a bard writing more of courts than of kampongs from the exalted pedestal of the court to which he was an Agent and later a Resident. Woolf was a ranker who, although he held responsible positions, was yet a provincial officer concerned with the routine of administration. Woolf saw it as a system of racial domination and economic exploitation which was repugnant to 20th century ideas of humanism. He embodied his insight and experience in a novel which is a classic encapsulation of the situation. Related with detachment he lets the tragedy to unfold itself and speak for itself. "Village in the Jungle" is thus a social document far removed in stand point and spirit from Clifford's exotic tales and imagination. Clifford never caught on to Sri Lanka as it lacked the opportunities of Malaya for nativization. Times had changed since the day of D'Oyly.

Clifford's successor Sir Herbert Stanley was a throwback to the age of the political Governors as he was associated with Liberal politicians and somewhat like Gordon to Gladstone served the latter's son when he was Governor-General of South Africa, as Private

Secretary. Later he became a proconsul himself with his appointment as Governor of Northern Rhodesia in 1924. He clinched his South African identity with his marriage to the daughter of a traditional South African family. As Governor of Sri Lanka, Stanley had the important responsibility of securing the smooth passage of the Donoughmore proposals. These were unique in at least one respect which was the grant of adult suffrage and the repudiation of communal representation as a basis for election. About the establishment of the so-called State Council which was the substance of the proposals this was more an administrative outlet rather than a major political concession and left the power of the Governor intact. It was a diversionary move which would keep the Legislature preoccupied and even divided over administrative matters and devoid of executive capacity as the Council of Ministers did not have collective responsibility. In effect the reins of power were still with the Governor and his three key Secretaries and the Legislature could only fulminate in frustration. This situation remained substantially unchanged until the grant of Independence in 1948 and the Governor was obliged to steer a careful wary course of not provoking a rebellion in the State Council while keeping at bay its rising demand for full Independence. Stanley handled the situation adroitly not only in gaining acceptance of the Donoughmore proposals but also of the Sri Lanka politicians of the time. It reflects well on his character that despite his South African orientation he did not show racial prejudice and was instead kind and friendly, winning the confidence of people. Of course, in those days before white supremacy was challenged, there was a veneer of graciousness like the courtliness of the Southern aristocracy during the times before "Gone with the Wind".

Graeme Thomson was the transport genius of the first World War who became a proconsul, distinguishing himself equally in that field. He was Colonial Secretary to Manning where he possibly influenced the latter in favour of the case for reform. He then served in Africa as Governor in British Guiana and later Nigeria succeeding Clifford. From there he was transferred to Sri Lanka as Governor. By now he was a sick man as the African experience had impaired his health and he suffered greatly. He had to face a crucial problem as the movement for constitutional reform had taken a sharp turn with the demand for a fundamental change. Thomson was not prepared to endorse a radical change but agreed to examine specific points.

Clearly neither he nor the British government could have entertained such demands with their experiment hardly put to the test. Thomson's position was not unsympathetic but the attitude one would have expected him to take. Still it was a helpful approach in contrast to the sneering disposition shown by his predecessors. His health deteriorated and he died at sea returning home for consultations. Unlike Manning or Clifford who faced the reform question he was not at heart a hard liner or one ill disposed to these aspirations. At the same time he was a good proconsul anxious to be in step with official thinking. This was not a propitious moment for change with the world depression and an imminent economic crisis in Britain. Times and personal circumstances did not favour Thomson and hence he could not give of his best.

The Donoughmore Constitution effected a radical change in the functions of the Governor. Until then he had been the main executive acting where necessary on the advice of the Legislature. Any major activity in the Island could only be initiated on his authority. However under the Donoughmore Constitution this authority was shared with the Executive Committees and the Ministers in charge who became responsible thereby for developmental work in their respective fields. As a result the function of the Governor became almost entirely political as his main responsibility was the operation of the constitution and the question of future reform. The last four Governors before Independence. namely, Thomson, Stubbs, Caldecott and Moore were all regular civil servants. They had similar educational and family backgrounds and their careers in the service had been on the same lines. Thomson was an eminent bureaucrat in Britain before proceeding to Africa where he held high office. Stubbs was Colonial Secretary in Sri Lanka and then served in Hong Kong and the West Indies before returning to the Island. Caldecott almost followed the footsteps of Clifford as a Malaya lover and Moore served in Sri Lanka and Africa before becoming Governor. All showed great ability although their outlook was not alike, Stubbs being somewhat an odd man out. It seems illogical that at this juncture when the function of Governors was entirely political, they should have been selected from Civil servants who were essentially administrators. There is room to think that politicians like Ward, Gregory and Gordon would have been more appropriate than before when they were called upon to perform administrative tasks. The explanation lies in the comparative political

backgrounds in Britain. The political Governors were the by product of 18th century party politics, particularly mid-Victorian when Ambassadorships and Governorships were awarded to party associates or could be fixed through contacts in the right circles. This was an old colonial tradition going back to the time when clerkships in the East India Company were arranged through influence. Of the Governors, Gregory was a friend of Disraeli, Ward of Canning and Gordon of Gladstone and Stanley of the latter's son. During the 20th century both the Colonial office and politics became more professional with the Liberals giving way to the Labour party thereby reducing the scope for family politics. The empire itself was now divided into the Dominions who were to become the British Commonwealth and the Crown colonies whose future seemed to be indefinite dependence. The first was an act of giving away and the other of holding on. The Colonial office felt not incorrectly that this task could be more safely entrusted to administrators than to politicians whose susceptibility to opportunism could backfire. Besides, after the shocks of the Boer War, the holocaust of the World War and the bitterness of the independence struggle in India, there was a certain revulsion against empire which expressed itself in a posture of defiance. It needed the chastening impact of the Pacific war to mollify this attitude though some like Churchill remained defiant and unrepentant.

Stubbs was the least forward looking of these Governors of the crucial third and fourth decades. He was the son of a famous father, Bishop Stubbs, whose monumental studies of medieval and constitutional history of Britain were a landmark in British history. He was a pioneer in introducing German methodology of the Ranke school to British historical research. The son was not of the same calibre but took a double first and duly entered the Civil service. His first experience of Sri Lanka was not auspicious as he was Colonial Secretary under Chalmers and shares the blame for bungling the riots. When he arrived in Sri Lanka as Governor the pot was on the boil as the Ministers were already up in arms seeking amendments to the Constitution in favour of complete independence. The Secretary of State was not prepared to entertain what he regarded as premature demands and Stubbs endorsed this position. He went further in entertaining communal representations in a retrogressive approach which undid the achievement of the Donoughmore Constitution. The British had already laid the dragon seed in the early measures of

constitutional reform which had frankly compartmentalized the nation into finely differentiated groups and now the latter was pursuing it. These evil spectres were to haunt the nation ever after. Understandably Stubbs forfeited the confidence of D. S. Senanayake and the Sinhalese Ministers.

Caldecott, his successor, was a contrast. His Governorship of seven years was the longest for an incumbent. Like Stubbs he was the son of a clergyman and his career ran dangerously close to that of Clifford, in that he served in Malaya for 20 years and became a Malayaphil, writing and reminiscing on the experience ever after. It is interesting that Sri Lanka with all its lure and exotic image never produced a Ceylonphil among its Governors or Civil servants. The closest who ever came to that were Leonard Woolf and John Still, author of the "Jungle Tide". To Woolf the experience was a creative stimulation while John Still was essentailly a jungle lover who saw history and romance in it. He had some intellectual kinship with Woolf as to him also existence was a struggle against the malevolent and inexorable sway of the jungle in terms of its relentless tide its arcane powers. He saw it as an archaelogist viewing it from the ancient splendour of the Island as the ultimate victor to whom like Punchi Menike one should give up the ghost. Perhaps the truth was that the Island was a rather reluctant siren, too sophisticated to be seduced by any native lover and not easily captivated by exotic strangers. Its culture was far too intricate and profound to yield so easily like some village belle or a bathing beauty of some palm-fringed beach. It was figuratively no Lakme or Cho Cho San who would melt before some foreign uniform. Although Sri Lanka had an exotic image there was an aura of dignity of ageless wisdom. The Island therefore did not lend itself easily to pseudo romanticism and nostalgic verse and even Senior, one of its ardent admirers, could only evoke stock images of a golden sea and the crags of Lanka.

Caldecott was a kindly affable figure with his pronounced limp who became a popular favourite evoked partly by sympathy for his unenviable lot at the receiving end of a choleric Admiral who took over as a war time measure and imposed a military despotism. Only Sir Oliver could survive these blasts because of his own imperturbable calm. Caldecott took refuge in his Malayan memories and his literary exercises, writing a kind of wistful prose heavy with Victorian imagery. Before the war he rendered a service to Sri Lanka by his memorandum

to the Colonial office on the reform question which at least put paid to the fifty-fifty myth which the communalists had planted with the encouragement of Stubbs. Caldecott also demolished the executive system dismissingit as an unworkable cumbrous arrangement which only bred delay and infighting. Caldecott clearly emphasized the need for a new dispensation though his terms of reference did not allow him to give his own recommendations. However, his submissions certainly had their impact on the Soulbury Commissioners and to that extent influenced the future. For the final act Britain appointed Monck-Mason Moore who had served in Sri Lanka already, as Governor. He was an experienced administrator like the others but by now matters were almost out of his hands. The decision to appoint the Soulbury Commission had been taken and he could merely offer them his advice. Affairs went even further out of his hands with the change of government in Britain which opened the way to a new initiative. This was in favour of the immediate grant of independence but on a mutually acceptable basis. The details of that arrangement were left to the ingenuity of Sri Lanka's plenipotentiary, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke than whom there was no man in Sri Lanka more suited to that role except perhaps S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, and he accomplished it with unfailing aplomb, enabling the conferment of Independence much sooner than expected under the normal course. Other factors of course helped which were the decision on India and Burma and the deteriorating security situation in Asia in the context of which the strategic location of the Island would have been invaluable to Britain. The old imperialist instinct would have been to retain it all the more but under Atlee, Britain was shedding such ideas and the virtue of obtaining it by goodwill as a quid pro quo for Independence than under duress was appreciated. Thus was Independence launched under insurance cover of Defence Agreements but with the true substance conceded. Sir Henry Monck-Mason Moore remained as a courtesy as the first Governor-General but left in 1949 to be succeeded by Lord Soulbury. This raised the question as to who was the last British Governor Sir Henry or Lord Soulbury. This is also a constitutional question about the character of Sri Lanka's Independence whether genuine or not. Sri Lanka was a dominion owing allegiance to the Queen and the Governor-General was the representative of the latter. Ambassador appointments carried their credentials from the Queen. The SLFP government of 1970 thought otherwise and

adopted a republican constitution under a President. By then of course Sri Lanka had its own Governor-General in Sir Oliver and later Mr William Gopallawa.

CHAPTER V

BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY

The keynote of British colonial policy during the 19th century was the distinction which was drawn between the self governing colonies and the Crown colonies. The policies towards them were opposites and for practical purposes there were two empires. For the first it was progressive and accelerated Independence and in the other renewed consolidation and reluctance to part with them. It is interesting that pronouncements on colonial policy invariably glossed over this distinction and gave the impression that they were uniform in application. Even writers on this subject wax eloquent on the magnanimous grant of Independence converting the self governing colonies into Dominions in double quick time and deal with the other as an afterthought in an apologetic aside. Thus Charles Adderley the oft-quoted writer and spokesman on the subject stated that "The normal current of colonial history is the perpetual assertion of the right to self government". Elsewhere he said that "The acquisition of self government is not so much the gift of an enlightened policy as the natural tendency and necessity of the English colonies". The mid-Victorian period in fact has been hailed by historians as something like a millenium for the colonies when "The conception of a possession with all that it implied began to be displaced by a conception of partnership on the one hand and trusteeship on the other". This voluntary grant of freedom was regarded by Disraeli as the "genius of the Age" which presumably enhanced and vindicated British democracy as a mission to confer freedom on peoples. However, there are candid qualifications of this rosy vision which abruptly reveal the reality and the built-in contradiction. The same Adderley who wrote of self government as a normal trend hastily corrects himself over the Crown colonies when he states that "No one would ask for a representative

Assembly to superintend the few settlers round the coal mines of Labuan. A community chiefly consisting of the Cingalese for another example could hardly be first taken out of the custody of the Presidency of Madras and then entrusted with British citizenship". This was written in 1853 and is a sample of the contumacious ignorance which prevailed at that time. He also quotes a remark of Wellington referring slightingly to a proposal of a constitution for Malta. His Grace's comment was "I should as soon think of elections in an army or a Parliament on board ship". Thus all the effusive talk about expediting the grant of Independence of Victorian statesmen the idealism of a great partnership was strictly confined to one part of the empire while for the other it was rank autocracy redeemed from time to time by a gleam of liberalism This was not necessarily any deliberate hypocrisy as a subconscious mental compartmentalization and stock association of ideas of self governing colonies with potential independence and the others with Oriental despotism.

It is easy to ascribe this view to a racist distinction between the white races and the rest but this was not true because such ideas belong to the end of that century. Instead it was a reflection of the pride of achievement which marked early Victorian times. Indeed the period between 1840 and 1860 was the real heyday of Pax Brittanica when its industrial and trade supremacy was unchallenged, when its institutions were the envy of Europe still attempting to overthrow the shackles of the ancient regime, when one gloried in the name of being British and Palmerston was ready to go to war to uphold it. This was the culmination of the prestige acquired in the Napoleonic wars when its political supremacy was almost unchallenged in the world with America on the threshold of a civil war and a unified Germany still in the offing. Its only rivals were France which was plagued by recurrent political upsets and Russia and it was inevitable that Britain should have clashed with the latter in the Crimean War. At the same time Britain was looked upon as the statue of Liberty, the champion of the oppressed, even though a good section of its own people could have done with more liberty. There was thus a sense of exultation in being British and of pride in its institutions which gave rise to a form of cultural megalomania. The classic expression of this was the assertion of Macaulay declaring a shelf of English literature to be superior to all the wisdom of India. This was essentially a feeling of cultural superiority rather than racism.

The real and tenable basis of this distinction was that the self-governing colonies which were Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were literally products to a large extent of British overseas emigration which peopled and colonized them. There were exceptions in that Canada had a French population and New Zealand the indigenous Maoris and South Africa an overwhelming indigenous population but the European settlers soon asserted themselves and certainly contributed decisively to their nationhood. Thus Britain could justifiably regard these colonies as extensions of the homeland and the domain of its own nationals entitled therefore to the same privileges which they had enjoyed at home. In dealing with them the British government probably had in mind its experience of the American colonies regarding them as potential breakaway territories which therefore needed sensitive handling. Besides, emigration initially to these territories had been a state enterprise which the British government had both encouraged and subsidized with officially sponsored schemes. Later they were promoted by private initiative of pioneers such as Wakefield. Hence Britain had a vested interest in their well being and evolution.

There was also a tendency to justify the distinction on logistical grounds where the Crown colonies were regarded as defence props for the others. In fact Adderley referred to them derisively as "Stations merely occupied for war, depots of trade and subjects of inferior races are fitly so governed." In these terms Cape of Good Hope guarded the naval approaches to the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka was essential to the defence of India, Singapore was the gateway to the Far East, the West Indies protected the approaches to Canada and the Asian possessions as a whole guarded the life line of empire which were the sea lanes connecting Britain with Australia and New Zealand. This subsidiary though vital role invested them with a security significance which acted as a disincentive to the grant of self government. India as we shall see was a case apart which was neither a depot nor a self governing colony and it remained a major bone in the throat of British colonial policy which posed a serious moral and ideological dilemma which politicians were always at pains to explain. It was frankly an Eldorado and treated as such despite the patent objections and contradictions.

The argument of different races and traditions which was to be elaborated later as a case for withholding independence was no doubt

at this time also a consideration of policy. It was viciously admitted by Adderley in his reference to inferior races. The point was put across that these territories had a different history of institutions and traditions which did not lend easily to the British constitutional approach. This position did not lack substance initially but it became an argument for indefinite occupation. Bold spirits like Colebrooke in Sri Lanka and Bentinck in India attempted to cope with it but their example was not followed and instead, in the hands of autocratic proconsuls such as Barnes and Dalhousie, the doctrine of imperialism under a veneer of trusteeship was progressively enunciated. The idea of the education of the native was overdone because of the influence of proselytizing evangelism of the forties which was preached by missionaries and supported by the Colonial office. This too militated against the idea of an unity between the two parts of empire. With time in fact they drew apart and became truly two nations.

The British Empire of the 19th century began as the product of the Napoleonic wars as sanctioned by the Congress of Vienna. This empire was in three parts, namely, the British colonies of North America, Australia and Southern Africa: the Crown colonies which were the West Africa territories, the Caribbean Islands, Mauritius and Ceylon in the east, the commercial depots near the Straits of Malacca, Labuan, Hong Kong, the Falkland Islands, St. Helena, Heligoland, Gibraltar and Malta. Later Malacca in Malaya and Singapore were added: the Indian sub-continent which did not belong to the other two but was becoming the prized and most lucrative possession. Already following the overthrow of the formidable Mahratha confederation the process was in train which would bring this mighty sub-continent under British rule, granting to a small island ownership of the greatest repository of culture and history in the world. These possessions were by and large fait accompli of the wars. Ceylon had been ceded already under the Peace of Amiens of 1802. The West Indies possessions had been obtained in the vicissitudes of the Napoleonic wars. However, unlike the fruits of other treaties notably the Peace of Paris of 1763, they were acquired with a measure of goodwill. For this Castlereagh should take the credit in ceding territories to France and thus unlike in 1763 not incurring the bitterness of Vergennes and inviting the revanche policies of France. Thus Britain was able to enjoy these gains free of hostility from other powers. This added to the spirit of self confidence but also engendered complacency.

Post-war colonial policy was no doubt determined by the conditions prevailing in the territories. At the same time it was shaped to a great degree by the post-war situation inside Britain where as often happens it had won the war but had to face its aftermath. The latter took the form of massive unemployment and a grave economic crisis. This was the cumulative effect of the war and the industrial revolution in Britain where the constraints and pressure of the war had prevented Britain from organizing its infrastructure to absorb the latter resulting in the horror of inhuman working conditions, exploitation of labour and the appalling industrial towns which were a blot on the landscape and the conscience. This was the other side of the coin of Victorian prosperity. On the other hand the war had accelerated demand and production enabling great profits to be made but its end meant surplus goods, cutting down of protection, unemployment to which was added the soldiers who were demobilized thus creating an explosive problem indeed. Meanwhile agriculture had suffered from the inroads of industry, rural workers having left the land to work in it but the imposition of the corn laws increased the food prices at a time of unemployment and lowered wages with the cuts in industry. The economic distress in Britain was brought home to the government by the seething political unrest and the atmosphere of revolution. There was also an increase in population with Malthusian fears of it outstripping the food potential of the land. Want became widespread with high costs and low wages and poor rates became the order of the day. These were high and payment did not appeal to social thinkers so that the usefulness of this policy was in question. The country therefore needed immediate measures which would afford long-term relief.

One of them which seemed an obvious avenue with good prospects was emigration. The wide open spaces of Australia and Canada which were virtually uninhabited except for local inhabitants in the first and a bare 600,000 in Canada comprising French and British settlers offered limitless possibilities. Emigration had been banned during the war but after it a start was made when in 1819 Parliament financed the emigration of settlers to the Cape Colony and a select Committee on the Poor Law positively recommended emigration to the unoccupied land in the colonies as a solution to unemployment and for the development of those lands. A pioneer of the policy of emigration was Wilmot Horton, later Governor of Sri Lanka who, as

Parliamentary Under-Secretary, pressed his ideas with vigour and dedication, moving Parliament to make successive grants in 1823, 1825 and 1827. His idea which was later derided as shovelling out of paupers and rejected was that emigration would automatically solve the problems of redundant population and unemployment at home and development of the colonies enabling financing of emigration from the proceeds. However it became a form of dumping without provision for the settlement or well being of the emigrants, let alone assured means of repayment. He was followed by other advocates like Wakefield, Buller, Molesworth with a much better grasp of the implications. Of them Gibbon Wakefield was remarkable with his sensational career and "Letter from Sydney" composed in gaol which proposed the most comprehensive emigration scheme for that time, visualizing a package deal for financing, establishment of communities, land development, repayment and the creation of an emigration fund. The ventures which he conducted in South Australia and New Zealand was the proof of their efficacy. The government of Earl Grey in which Goderich and Howick were Secretary and Under-Secretary accepted these plans as the principles of an emigration policy. Very soon through state sponsored schemes, private enterprise and the personal initiative of enthusiasts like Lord Selkirk and organisations like the "Colonisation society", a comprehensive programme of emigration was launched which laid the foundations of the self-governing colonies.

A powerful influence on colonial policy were the twin evangelical and humanitarian movements. Their precise origins are obscure and although they shared common motivations, they were not identical in character. The main difference between them was that evangelism was religious in nature, concerned with conversion and the moral state of man, while the other was concerned with the well being and dignity of man as a human being, freedom from persecution and exploitation, in essence the prevention of man's inhumanity to man. Evangelism was an off shoot of the religious revival of late 18th century Britain, notably of the Methodist movement which was in turn a reaction against the establishment, mentality and complacent self assurance of the High Church on the one hand and the proliferation of non-conformists and dissenters due to the intolerance of the established church and the influence of materialist ideas. Its aim was the spiritual reformation of man by creating a fear of God and a sense of account-

ability to God within him and thereby preventing him from sin and error. Evangelism was a specific form of acting in terms of this doctrine towards others and spreading this gospel through preaching and conversion. This meant essentially education and spiritually oriented types of cultural activity. It also engendered a spirit of dedication and self-righteousness which ultimately turned into intolerance towards other creeds. There was much to admire in their lives of sacrifice and dedication in the face of hardships but they could also be obstructive in their impact on other cultures. They were to be the cause therefore of cultural conflicts and resentments in colonial territories. Evangelists and missionaries came into conflict with the civil authorities championing the oppressed and fighting injustice on the one hand and interfering with policy towards the traditional religions and cultures on the other. It was similar to the role of Catholic priests in the Portuguese and Spanish empires. Evangelism founded a large international organization consisting of a number of societies which conducted activities overseas. The best known of them were the Church Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Society for promoting Christian knowledge, Society for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts. Their overseas activities were directed primarily to the founding of schools as a medium of proselytization which was the counterpart of their policy of establishing Sunday Schools at home.

Humanitarianism was the secular counterpart of evangelism though it was also influenced by religious beliefs. Thus Wilberforce the abolitionist was an evangelist. The exact antecedents of humanitarianism are a mystery. Some think that it originated in the pre-revolutionary intellectual ferment in France under the Encyclopaedists. This was however an intellectual movement against privilege, the abuse of power, injustice, institutions, laws, the effect of which was to promote rationalism and atheism because of its belief in science. This trend was symbolized in the exaltation of the Goddess of Reason during the revolution. The age of reason in France therefore did not necessarily foster humanitarianism except indirectly in that in fighting injustice it focused attention on oppression in France. In Britain the age of reason was already foreshadowed by the Principia of Newton and the political theory and philosophy of Locke which gave an essentially mundane view of the world stripping it of its aura of divinity without detracting from the grandeur of the Almighty. However the notion

that man was but a particle in a small atom in the might of the universe made the Almighty somewhat remote from man's experience without invalidating the divinity. Locke's unglamorous interpretation of state and society did the rest in divesting it of medieval trappings. This was again an atheistic impact which did not enhance the image of man. Still the focus on man his dignity and rights in proportion to the downgrading of religion as the measure of all things certainly invested him with a new character in the eyes of society. Pope's classic dictum that the proper knowledge and study of mankind is man stimulated a heightened interest in his nature and in his lot which logically focused attention on humanitarian aspects. For some time echoes of this had appeared in Britain. Even Methodism was a movement for human dignity to assert his nature and save him from sloth, lust and debauchery. One of the earliest signs was the trial of Warren Hastings where a powerful Nabob was arraigned virtually for crimes against humanity. There was judicial murder, rapine, the abuse of power among the charges. The Lake poets and the Romanites were the first humanitarians in exposing the economic distress and the oppression of Britain at the dawn of the century as a result of the industrial transformation. The conscience of people was aroused by the unspeakable horrors of factory conditions, exploitation of women and children. Robert Owen was an atheist who took up cudgels with religion but he was a better Christian than those who professed it with his vision of a new industrial society free of exploitation. Robert Southey the poet was inspired by these ideas. The most notable expression of humanitarianism at this time was the campaign for the abolition of slavery. It was launched under the leadership of Wilberforce and through the Clapham sect of Revd. John Venn with the support of the powerful missionary societies. Its abolition in Britain was secured in 1807 but it needed the efforts of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton to extend it to the British empire in 1833.

The influence of evangelism and humanitarianism on colonial policy can also be attributed to the Colonial office personnel of the time. This is a little known aspect of colonial history which is not often examined. A third Secretary of State namely for war and colonies was established in 1801 but it was only in 1825 that separate machinery was established with the appointment of a Permanent Under-Secretary. After the war its incumbents had more time for colonial affairs and some of them like Huskisson were outstanding.

Lord Glenelg was Secretary from 1835-39 and his personality and term of office has been a subject of controversy. The reason for this according to Fowell, Buxton and James Stephen appears to have been his great humanity in dealing with racial problems and sincerity which ran counter to political thinking at that time. Glenelg in fact was active in the evangelical movement. Wilmot Horton was Parliamentary Under-Secretary from 1821-27 and his contributions to emigration have already been noted. The greatest Colonial office influence was James Stephens who dominated it as Permanent Under-Secretary from 1836-47. Beginning as Legal Adviser he soon became the Colonial office on whom others leaned. Stephens was a member of the Clapham sect and of the abolitionists. He admitted that he devoted time to the extinction of slavery. He also championed subject races in the empire against oppression by colonists. Two others in the Colonial office namely Spedding and Sir Henry Taylor had humanitarian views. All these four Glenelg, Stephens, Spedding and Taylor working together was thus a powerful combination for the cause which had a great impact on colonial policy.

In the economic sphere the feature of the new colonial policy was the movement towards free trade. It culminated in Peel's repeal of the Corn Laws in his great reform Ministry. This was a reaction against the loss of the American colonies which was essentially a revolt against the mercantilist monopoly underlying the old empire where colonies were subordinated to the interests of the mother state. The first steps towards this were taken by Huskisson in his term of office as President of the Board of Trade when he lowered customs duties and gave reciprocal shipping concessions. Adjustments according to local needs were allowed to various colonies in a general loosening up of the structure of tariffs in the empire. These anticipated the repeal of the Navigation Acts in 1849 which was followed by the adoption of separate tariffs by Australia and tariff agreements between Canada and USA. Indeed the old system had crumbled at a speed which Adam Smith had not foreseen when he first advised against it as wasteful of capital and injurious to production. However he had been apprehensive about total abandonment and its effects on the empire. These fears were in vain because free trade was both logical and a corollary to the position of commercial supremacy which Britain enjoyed at that time. Without serious rivals for empire there was no case for monopoly unlike in the 18th century when Britain

was engaged in a struggle for empire with the French, Dutch and the Spanish. Now statesmen went to the other extreme in gay abandon. There was even a reaction against the political empire and politicians like Cobden opposed the imperialist policies of Palmerston on these grounds that Britain's interests should be trade and not empire. There was a trace of a movement of revulsion towards colonies and a call to abandon them.

The assertion of the policy of free trade also reflected the pressure of the commercial and industrial circles who benefitting from the country's industrial lead wanted priority for expansion of trade. It was their pressure which led to the abolition of the trade monopoly of the East India Company. This was a parallel movement and a rival to emigration. The trade circles saw the latter as a continuation of the old empire where the object was the development of the colonies as economic satellites to Britain. Hence emigration was not welcome to them. Their interest lay in the Mediterranean which was opened up in the course of the wars, Latin America penetrated by Canning's policies, USA which was becoming a premier source of cotton, West Africa and beyond to the Far East where experience of Indian trade revealed a new world of trade and opportunity in China. The acquisition of Malacca and Singapore, the conquest of Lower Burma all opened the way to a new chapter of British maritime expansion. This was the setting which led inevitably to the brutal opening up of China by force, in 1840, and the subsequent iniquities of the penetration and dismemberment of China. There was thus a dramatic expansion of British trade taking advantage of its undisputed sea power, entering several new areas of the world and ushering in an age of Victorian prosperity.

The political and intellectual ferment in Britain in the first quarter of the century was not without its effect on colonial policy. The impact was both political and administrative. Politically it stemmed from the movement for Parliamentary reform and the accompanying agitation which led to the Reform Bill of 1832. This was equally a social revolt representing the desire of the middle classes for political recognition. It was a kind of no taxation without representation cry which was similar to the demands in the self governing colonies at this time. Some of these colonies had representative bodies which were yet in the anomalous position that the executive was not responsible to them and the latter was also a nominee and subject to the

home government. A movement was brewing for the grant of more responsibility to these bodies. The successful passage of the Reform Bill was thus an incentive to these colonial aspirations for political responsibility. The Liverpool administration which preceded the Reform Bill failed to achieve the latter but it prepared the way for it by its remarkable record of administration which transformed British society and institutions and overhauled them in the light of the new ideas of the time. This was essentially the work of Peel who reformed the Penal Code and local government and Huskisson who introduced fiscal reforms. They were inspired by the ideas of the enlightenment and the concepts of social justice, free trade, institutional reform which it inculcated. They prepared the ground for the great reform administrations of the Whigs of the future. They embodied up to a point the ideas of the prevailing radical philosophers, the Utilitarianism of Bentham, the economics of Ricardo. This was true in their view of law, justice, administration and the role of the state.

Within the first 20 years of the post-war period the main features of British colonial policy thus took shape in the forms examined above. These were principally emigration, free trade, political reform, overhauling of institutions, elimination of oppression, humanitarian and evangelical activities. These forces however did not operate evenly in all territories of the empire. Their admission and relevancy was in relation to the particular circumstances prevailing in the countries concerned. Broadly speaking it can be said that the application of these factors differed as between the two parts of the empire. Thus emigration and political growth were the keynote of the self-governing colonies while other factors such as evangelism, institutional change occurred on a large scale in the Crown colonies. Historians and writers have been at pains to explain the difference between the two empires to show perhaps that it was not an invidious distinction. The most ingenious is the attempt of Adderley who is certainly the least credible for his candid asides on racism, to describe them as Grecian referring to the kinsmen and the other as Roman. The point of this distinction is not clear at all as the Athenians hardly had a territorial empire worth speaking of except for its trading communities which were focal points of commerce while the Roman empire was vast and for the most part efficiently administered. The valid distinction as we have observed was that the self-governing colonies were literally ethnic extensions of the British and some continental

races except for local inhabitants who could in time be swamped or overridden in these countries. In Southern Africa the situation was different in that the local population far outnumbered the emigrants and posed major problems. There was a further historical reason which constituted the essential difference. Some of these Crown territories were highly populated and the living heirs to ancient and traditional societies some of which like those of India, Burma and Sri Lanka were great civilizations. The latter were living societies in direct continuity with their past which had been flourishing until the point of conquest though the protracted process of the latter, in many cases because of local resistance, had eroded them progressively. They were in that sense the very opposite of the self-governing territories which were sparsely populated and that too by tribal or simple societies which were no comparison to their counterparts. They were numerically very small communities in proportion to the massive size of these lands such as Canada or Australia or even Africa and could easily be swamped by emigration. Lower Canada was different in that its inhabitants were French Canadians but with British immigration into Upper Canada they too were soon outnumbered. These lands were therefore brand new British territories peopled for the most part by them in contrast to the Crown colonies where they were a clear minority both in terms of culture and numbers. As conquerors they would have felt a sense of inadequacy when confronted with the achievements and witnesses of their past somewhat like how the Romans would have felt conquering Greece. European culture at this time was yet very strong to be easily overborne unlike Rome which in the third century B C could scarcely resist being Hellenized.

It was self evident that in these circumstances these territories could hardly be left to govern themselves. Besides, there was an issue of cultural assertion of the conqueror. Many features of the indigenous culture were found unacceptable or repugnant to them, particularly in their evangelistic mood of self righteousness. This became a cultural conflict far more serious and culturally significant than the question of the conservation of tribal or aboriginal cultures and their intrinsic value. Tribal societies had in historical experience succumbed and given way to advancing and expanding cultures irrespective of their intrinsic character. Thus the Aztecs and the Incas wilted before the uncouth rough conquistadores who were culturally their inferior in many respects, notably in a sense of honour.

This question hardly arose in India or Sri Lanka where the past was so alive and vital to be almost a threat. The policy towards these countries had therefore to be necessarily an assertion, an indoctrination and brain washing, a process of cultural undermining and erosion, a superimposition of colonialist values over the local but to differentiate this from political absolutism it was disguised and justified as trusteeship. It became fashionable therefore to distinguish between self-government and trusteeship when referring to the two parts of the empire. In fairness it must be said that it was politically practicable for Britain to pursue a continuous programme of self-government in these colonies because they began on a tabula rasa not to mention in the hands of their own kith and kin. In the historic colonies on the other hand they were faced with highly organized societies where maintaining the status quo or developing was tantamount to abnegation totally of control, a course precluded to them for imperialist reasons. British colonial policy was thus an attempt to stamp its personality on these societies as a means of keeping them under its control and this meant a combination of diplomacy and force. In the self-governing colonies they could risk separation because of the underlying paternal link. Even so there were statesmen who opposed this political separation and advocated imperial ties in the name of solidarity and unity.

From the outset therefore policies towards the two parts had to diverge between a partnership with one and control over the other. However, when the contradictions became apparent, some concessions were made to the conscience and for appearance and a veneer of self-government was callowed, so circumscribed as to be abortive and a case of too little and too late. Still the fine distinction and two nation policy could not always be maintained and influences from one side overlapped on the other. A good example was in the late thirties when the political idealism in Britain led to the appointment of the Colebrooke Commission which made proposals far ahead of its time. In general the first half of the century when Britain was loosening its hold over the self-governing colonies saw some liberal tendencies take root even in the Crown colonies. In Sri Lanka for instance a free press was started, a public opinion established, the country opened for development but later there were retrogressive trends and a strictly paternal government was imposed under imperious Governors who were contemptuous of native abilities.

Thus the self-governing colonies and the Crown colonies followed virtually opposite directions in their history and evolution and hence they will be considered separately. Their parts ultimately converged only in the middle of the next century with the grant of independence to the Crown colonies. Their contrasting history can be summed up as intensified development and accelerated self-government in the self-governing colonies leading to Dominion Status almost in mid century and renewed executive authority of Britain in the background of measured development in the other. The self-governing colonies comprised Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and each had its separate pattern of evolution. However, with some difference in respect of South Africa, they all shared the common feature of moving steadily towards independence in the context of fast and almost spectacular economic advancement of the countries. All benefited from some windfall effecting progress which made them affluent, powerful societies and nations in a fraction of the time which was taken by their European counterparts. The overnight transformation of wastelands into the most powerful nations in the world is a phenomenon which has no parallel in world history and which more than any other factor has shaped the modern world. It is odd however that although ostensibly belonging to one family it was not until after the independence of the other did they meaningfully interest themselves in that other half which otherwise remained like outcasts almost unknown to their opulent family members. Even in this sense too the idea of a single empire was a contradiction. It was a very one-sided grouping of the "white" family with scant interest in the other. There was scarcely any link between them, even administrative, except for an occasional Governor like Robinson or Gordon crossing the great divide from one empire to the other. Otherwise even in administration there was apartheid running on different tracks and justified no doubt on the grounds of different training and experience.

Of the four, Canada at the outset was the prized possession. It was a left over of the American empire and next to the thirteen colonies was its fairest possession with promise of great horizons. However, its development did not match its importance and the early part of the century found it still 18th century in character, peopled and dominated by French inhabitants and culture and concentrated in Lower Canada and the maritime provinces which were as yet bases of fishing settlements. However the first waves of state-sponsored emigration

effected the major change of balancing the populations with British soon outnumbering the French and entirely new vistas of development in lumber, farming, fisheries in places of old style trapping and furs. The maritime provinces also developed as solid outposts of the mother country and assumed a stable character with representative assemblies in Nova Scotia and Brunswick. These developments gave rise to political problems centering round the clash between British and French settlers and the desire of the Assemblies to have responsible government instead of colonial type autocracy under Governors appointed by the Crown and under it. The outcome of these conflicts which were accompanied by unrest and rebellion was the famous Durham Report, the product of a fabulous type character who did not last too long but achieved enough to transform colonial thinking. The essence of this otherwise dull report was the recommendation for the grant of responsible government in place of "This system of irresponsible government" in his own words. This was the break through and the sanction for the government to pursue a new path which with the statesmanship of Governor General Elgin in 1849 opened the way to the great Canadian success story. It was the path which led to the formation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867. This was admittedly only a start which opened the great vastness of this land to economic penetration by the plough, the railway, the logger and the gun. A more important question was its unification through the welding of very independent minded provinces into a Union. It was as difficult as in Australia and unaccomplished until today but again the tracks were laid for a political CPR which would forge a nation out of scattered parts. The way was fraught with problems not the least being the notion that it was still British subordinate to the Parliament of the latter under very British-oriented Prime Ministers. However, by conduct and statesmanship more than legislation, the change into separate nationhood was slowly but surely asserted.

The early history of Australia is a success story of natural wealth and fruitful emigration. Beginning as a penal station of disrepute in New South Wales it grew within half a century to develop as a nation with separate states developing in West Australia, South Australia and Victoria. The secret was its Golden Fleece of wool first developed in New South Wales, the discovery of gold in Victoria and its unlimited farming possibilities. With its economic foundations thus assured,

Australia moved forward politically, encouraged by the example of Canada agitating for similar measures of self-government. In December 1832 the British Colonial Secretary conceded that the case for self-government in the Australian provinces was unquestionable. In 1855 the British Parliament sanctioned self-government constitutions on the Canada model for New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and later Tasmania. Queensland became an independent province in 1862. The next logical step seemed to be as in Canada, towards union but this took time because of the ingrained individualism of the provinces and differences arising from their separate evolution. Ultimately it was the security threat to the region from French and German designs in the South Pacific and Oceania which induced a collective sense expressed initially in the Federal Council of 1885. The latter was a failure due to non co-operation as New South Wales and South Australia did not join initially. This was followed after discussions about collective defence by proposals for a Federal Parliament and the first step in this direction was taken with the Federal Conference which met in Melbourne in 1890. A Federal convention was drafted at the end of the decade and accepted by referendum by the states concerned and the Commonwealth of Australia was announced in 1901.

Early in the century an assortment of pioneers consisting of missionaries, traders, whalers and, settlers penetrated New Zealand and the likelihood of problems arising with the large and sophisticated Maori inhabitants and French activities in the vicinity persuaded the British government to step in, take over from the New Zealand Company and declare a protectorate. A treaty was signed with the Maoris ceding lands to the British government and the latter took steps to establish a legislature. The New Zealand Government Act of 1852 established a relatively advanced decentralized system creating six provinces but under a General Assembly. Even this was not enough for the foreign settlers who demanded self-government on a par with the others and the home government in that mood of generosity of the mid fifties acceded. By 1856 New Zealand was almost a fully fledged self-governing state except for the responsibility of the home government for relations with the Maoris. The two were patently incompatible with the home government, obliged to protect the Maoris and restrain the settlers from making inroads on the Maoris and the result inevitably was a series of troublesome and painful wars which

poisoned the atmosphere marring the other impressive achievements. British policy of obliging New Zealand to fight its own battles looked step-motherly but it forced the country to develop by its own efforts. This was achieved in the last quarter of the century when it developed politically as a Dominion and materially through a series of nation building programmes which were launched by its energetic Premier Julius Vogel. New Zealand impressed the world by its rapid progress towards independence, unification overcoming federal prejudices, economic development and its enlightened policy particularly on labour and social reform which were unique for that time. It also became Britain's staunchest ally and advocate of closer links with it and the imperial tie. In Premiers like Vogel and Seddon it produced a kind of leadership which combined energetic administration, mass popularity, rugged nationalism and loyalty to Britain. New Zealand was a microcosm of the Dominions with all the basic components of original inhabitants, geographical divisions, centrifugal politics, chequered origins, but it overcame them to become a model.

The evolution of South Africa from colony to Dominion was very different to that of the others. It started as Cape Colony which guarded the approaches to the Indian Ocean where the European settlers came into friction with the older Boer immigrants. They reacted with their Great Trek bag and baggage and laager to form their own domains far northward hopefully to be free of the Cape, and have their own way with the native Africans. The latter were championed by missionary societies and supported by the government which watched the situation to contain the Boers and prevent their hostilities with the local inhabitants. Some co-existence seemed possible through the formation of the province of the Cape, Natal, the Orange Free State and Transvaal as the nucleus of a future federation like the others. Careful handling was needed control of the local situation and decisive statesmanship but the latter was not forthcoming owing to cross-purposes and doubts in the government. Although the situation had the same ingredients as Australia or New Zealand still the overwhelming African population and the dogmatic intransigence of the Boer imbedded in Old Testament-theology complicated the situation. Hopes of a peaceful settlement vanished in the maelstroms of the second half of the century. This was the result of the grab for Africa, the collisions between Boers, the Cape government and African states, the gold strike in the Transvaal

and of diamonds in Kimberley, the vaulting Pan-African and Pan-British ambitions of Rhodes and the matching imperialism of Milner, all of which precipitated the crisis of the South African war. The main issue was to reconcile the insatiable machinations of Rhodes who was now Premier of the Cape with the turbulent Uitlanders and the unyielding determination of Kruger emboldened as he was with the sympathy of outsiders notably the Kaiser. The events leading to the war from Majuba to the Jameson Raid of which Chamberlain was well aware are known as well as the disastrous course of the war. In imperial history the latter was a landmark for the participation of Australian and Canadian contingents presumably for the glory of empire. The new Australian cinema of Peter Weir which produced the beautifully sensitive Breaker Morant and Gallipoli perhaps throws a different light on this loyalty which was imperial folklore. Even Sri Lanka sent a CPRC contingent which is commemorated by the very evocative war memorial in Kandy park. After the ordeal of the war, independence was given in double quick time, an act for which Britain won the eternal gratitude of Smuts and his loyalty. Still he stood for a different brand of independence which was later embodied in the Statute of Westminster, the guiding principle of which was the supremacy of the Dominion Legislature over and above any notions of repugnancy. The implications of this appeared later when South Africa decided to put itself outside the pale of European civilization as commonly understood by its policy of apartheid. Thus by the beginning of the 20th century the four self-governing colonies had attained their consummation of nationhood and independence and they were considering new perspectives of their position in the world community. As against this achievement the history of the other side of the empire now merits consideration.

The two empires differed from each other for the greater part of the century in one major respect. This was in their character as the self-governing colonies were confined to four large land masses while the other empire was a sprawling disparate number of territories with marked inequalities of size and culture. In a sense this other empire really meant India because of its sub-continental character and massive size and population let alone its towering culture and history. The other colonies were to some extent at least initially regarded as logistically subordinate to it. This was true initially of Sri Lanka, as Britain's interest in acquiring it was its strategic importance for the

security of India. Likewise the Cape Colony was originally the gateway to India and stations in South-East Asia were protection from that quarter. Later Singapore and Malacca were springboards for launching out to the Far East. At the end of the 19th century Britain acquired its equally large African empire which became a rival to India and a fall back from it in the context of the freedom movement in India. Therefore until the last quarter of the century India dominated the Asian empire. This was due not only to its overshadowing size but also the charisma of its culture, its gifted people and its place in world history. India became a dominant factor in the overall foreign policy of Britain as an integral part of the Eastern Question. Britain's continental relations were greatly influenced by concern over India particularly those with Russia and France. The security of India became an obsession of statesmen like Curzon. It was Curzon who described it as "the only part of the British Empire which is an empire". It was its pride and richest prize which absorbed the energies of the mother country as no other. The policy towards India to some extent influenced the attitude towards the other Asian territories. At the same time its experience in India determined the course of imperial history as a whole as far as the other empire was concerned. The history of British India was therefore of vital importance to the evolution of the latter.

It is difficult to condense or do justice to these dramatic developments in a short space. One could only concentrate on the outline of events and the broad phases of their evolution. By the first quarter of the 19th century, the East India Company had conquered vast territories in Bengal, Central India and the south and coexisted in a position of growing paramountcy with a multitude of princely states. Although the Company was deprived of its trade monopoly, it consolidated its power in British India and administered it effectively. In fact the thirties witnessed the effects of Whig liberalism and evangelism when inspired by Macaulay's famous minute on education the Company embarked on its policy of Anglicization of India and Bentinck attempted social reforms with the abolition of sati and thagi. This mood was short-lived because with security factors involving the Punjab and Afghanistan a spirit of Chauvinism developed which was exemplified in the forward policy in Afghanistan and the lapsed doctrine of Dalhousie which further alarmed conservative opinion. The reaction to this was the Indian Mutiny which although essentially

a military revolt, inflamed both Muslim and Hindu opinion and stirred nationalistic feelings. British reaction was sharp almost panic stricken because the mutiny coincided with the Crimean War and in the context of the Eastern Question assumed a menacing character. Company rule was abolished after the mutiny and replaced by the direct rule of Britain. This marked a major change in British policy from the laissez faire mood of Company rule to a benevolent dictatorship which reached its climax with the proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India ruling through a Viceroy in India. This step was more than a stunt of the arch showman Disraeli or a tactic in his duel with Gladstone. It was inspired by a notion about the mystic of empire in India that it should be founded on allegiance and reality to an imperial sovereign in lineal succession to the great imperial dynasties of the past backwards from the Mughals to the Guptas and Mauryas. It was an attempt to create a backdrop of pomp and pageantry to British rule as a means of dazzling people into acceptance and submission. It was worthy of Disraeli's flamboyant imagination and suited the Viceregal representatives who were chosen. However it was mistimed and contradicted the democratic character which English institutions and English education was attempting to inculcate as the basis of British rule. This trend of opinion was coming to the forefront and bore fruit 10 years later with the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

This posture of benevolent despotism of British rule in India marked the impact of the ideology of Imperialism which was entering the British political scene. The historical circumstances which occasioned it have been considered elsewhere. It was a closing of the ranks of empire like an armadillo ensconing itself inside its armour to defend itself against the Continental machinations of Real politik and imperialist rivals overseas in the internationals cramble for colonial expansion which had ensured. This was accompanied by the concept of trusteeship in which empire was regarded as a sacred trust for Britain to guide and educate lesser peoples. It was a call to British chivalry, its manhood, its knight errantry. To falter or not heed it was betrayal, almost sacrilege, which the miscreant must expiate like Faversham in the Four Feathers or a Conradian hero. The trusteeship idea probably originated in India as a frontier folklore and was given a poetic rationalization by Kipling and the bards of empire. It was a theology, a kind of High Church imperialism which was being

THE GOVERNOR IN HIS CEREMONIAL ROBES

Sir Joseph West Ridgeway, Governor, 1896–1903 in his robes of office. He had an unimpressive record and is only remembered in the impressive Ridgeway Golf Links in Colombo. His name is commonly known in Sri Lanka for an unusual reason. He was the godfather to the son of his Maha Mudaliyar, Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike. The son, Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike was later to become one of Sri Lanka's most distinguished Prime Ministers.

From Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon.

preached by the upper class. Imperialism was a mania which was not confined to the militarists and politicians alone. The range of its appeal is astonishing embracing poets, aesthetes, historians, philosophers, popular writers. A notable example was John Ruskin, Professor of Fine Arts in Oxford. In a lecture at the Oxford museum in 1870 he issued a stirring call to the youths of England to make their country again a royal throne of kings, a sceptred isle for all the world a source of light, for which England "must found colonies as fast as she is able seizing every fruitful piece of waste ground". This gospel was re-echoed by a host of others the most famous being Froude the historian, Seeley the Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, Benjamin Kidd the sociologist, J. A. Cramb, a pseudo Darwin. Of course the politicians and philosophers like Houston, Chamberlain capitalized on it with a racist twist. There is a parallel to this movement with the contemporary German school of history exemplified by Treitschke and Mommsen which created a cult of Ceasarism with the latter's idolization of Julius Ceasar as the entire and perfect man, the glorification of the Holy Roman Empire and the exploits of the Teutonic knights. Thus trusteeship was the moral justification for imperialism as a solemn duty to which the British were enjoined by their possession of empire. In practice with all its romance and heroism it became a kind of playing soldiers of powerful firearms and firepower mowing down medieval armies, the mentality in fact of a public school bully or head prefect asserting his authority over fags. The mystic of the thin red line, of firing when you see the whites of their eyes or the cavalry charge were the symbols of the accompanying militarism the hollowness of which were exposed in the opening encounters of the Boer War itself when it met its true match.

Thus India was as if it were the cradle of imperialism which fostered its exponents and attracted the best known of them like Lytton, Curzon, Kitchener. Its hallmarks in India were paternalism in administration meaning development of its resources, unification through communications, expansion of departments, dedicated public service and high standards of conduct, interest in the arts and history in the background of an aggressive foreign policy. This policy was understandably impatient of aspirations for self-government which were the corollary to English education and British political theory as well as the development of the country which created an active and enterprising middle class determined to play its part both in governing

and in the administration. This movement was initially stimulated by the cultural renaissance under Raj Mohun and it gathered force with English education and economic advancement. The mutiny was a turning point which gave it an emotional basis. The Congress of Bannerji was established in 1885. Still in the opening decades it was a gentlemanly movement for representation more than independence and it was led by middle class representatives of whom Naoroji was a good example. Even the Congress was initially promoted through the enthusiasm of an Englishman, Allan Hume. This movement made slow progress and scant recognition, one such measure being the Indian Councils Act 1892 of Ripon which added unofficial representatives to the Central and provincial councils. Perhaps the turning point from gentlemanly politics to mass agitation was the Viceroyalty of Curzon which unknowingly or not stirred up a hornet's nest of political, communal agitation over his high-handed acts, particularly the partition of Bengal. His timing was unfortunate because it coincided with the Russo-Japanese War when Asia gave its first major rebuff to the European world. Many date the rise of Asian nationalism from that just as it was the second such war which enabled its consummation. The reply of the British government was the Morley Minto reforms which first admitted Hindu-Muslim representation but its measures were very limited. It added a member to the Viceroy's Council and increased the Central Legislature. They were no different to the measures in Sri Lanka 10 years later. The first World War suspended developments for a while but with its end it was resumed with a vengeance in the aftermath of Amritsar and the Muslim movement. The end of the war at least elicited the undertaking of Edwin Montague the first of its kind that "the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of Responsible Government in India is an integral part of the British Empire." This was a very qualified offer but at least admitted responsible government.

By now it was past the time for half measures. Gandhi was on the scene with his mesmeric appeal to the masses, B. G. Tilak was advocating his own militant approach to independence, Muslim opinion was hardening and turning towards separatism and the Congress led by Motilal and son had declared for swaraj. This was hardly an auspicious moment for compromise. Dyarchy was unable

to make an impact in the circumstances. Dyarchy offered decentralization and increasing representation in the provinces. It was equally a sop to the Muslims who were better distributed in the provinces. The federal approach towards organizing a combined Assembly of the Central Legislature, provincial legislatures and the Princes was initiated by Dyarchy. The Congress saw this strategy for what it was as a divisive technique to split the freedom movement. Still Lord Irwin strove amidst increasing doubts about British intentions to maintain a dialogue with Gandhi in between imprisonments and his efforts resulted in the Simon Commission of which Attlee was a member. The Simon Commission developed the system of Dyarchy carrying it towards provincial autonomy with the Central Government controlling foreign policy and defence. It was nowhere near even Dominion Status as enjoyed by the dominions and it pursued the divisive policy even further. It showed a major divergence in the approaches and thinking of the two sides. Gandhi as the moderate and sincere spokesman of the Congress was insistent on the unity of India, which it should be for the peoples themselves to realize after the departure of the British. The latter viewed India as a heterogenous society with built-in divisions and recommended a polity which would perpetuate them and operate within them as a framework. Whether this was a sincere considered conviction or a political tactic is an open question but ultimately the final settlement was to be on these lines. Irwin's perseverance also led to the Round Table conference when Gandhi appeared in London in the image of Churchill's odious description of him as the naked fakir. This was an attempt to bridge the divisions on the Indian side but Britain still wavered on the immediate grant of independence citing these divisions and the allegedly unrepresentative character of the Congress as the pretext. Still the Government of India Act of 1935 based on the Simon Commission Report was passed providing for a high degree of autonomy to the provinces. In effect it was preparing the groundwork for federation and presumaby to the continued presence of Britain to hold the balance. It is interesting for instance that the evolution of the federations of Australia and Canada were not characterized by a built-in provision for the continuance of British sovereignty which faded away automatically. The difference was that they started at different ends, the federal approach in India being the course imposed and favoured by Britain. The provincial governments were launched and seemed

to be shaping well when the war caught up with the experiment. It was a bit like the history of the State Council in Sri Lanka. The 1935 Act to some extent shot the bolt politically as it attempted to impose a federal system on India as a means of holding the minorities and the princely states. This approach was disowned by Congress but there was no escape from it as the forerunner of partition. The question of bona fides will however remain to nag historians as to whether the course of division was stage managed or whether it was a genuine acceptance of what Britain considered were imponderables.

The post-war Labour Government offered independence, perhaps sooner than expected. Mountbatten the one-time Supreme Commander was sent to work his charm and achieve. Thus began the great political struggle to decide on the future shape of independence within the limited deadline indicated. This was the famous scramble for Freedom at midnight. Finally amidst tense, highly charged scenes it was acknowledged that it could only be achieved on the basis of partition. Thus independence created two nations in a sequel which had no parallel in the history of the empire till then. There is some similarity between these closing scenes and the pre independence situation in Sri Lanka. There too Britain had introduced and toyed with communal representation and with the growth of the movement for constitutional reform there was a demand by the minorities for special representation and safeguards. In 1931 it was rejected by the Donoughmore Commission with the grant of adult franchise. Later the cry was resumed again with the movement for independence and the minorities canvassed for fifty-fifty. This was again rejected by the Soulbury Commission. In this instance there could be no doubt about bona fides in the categorical rejection of communalism.

Thus the history of British colonial policy in India differed from that in the other Dominions. In the latter, independence was readily conferred as a means of fusing parts together, but in India they were kept apart. The opposite argument was used that independence would cause and widen divisions. Independence was granted to the Dominions as an act of trust to measure up, but in India it was withheld. The case of South Africa pinpoints the contradiction in that the grant of independence came a few years after a very serious rebellion far more damaging and destructive than the Indian mutiny was in India.

Yet in South Africa that seemed a qualification. Thus clearly in the policy towards independence two different standards were applied in the two empires.

British colonial policy towards Sri Lanka was not in any sense modelled on India but influenced by it. Sri Lanka was invariably a recipient of shock waves of developments in India. They were subjected to the same major forces of Liberalism at the start and Imperialism in the second half. The differences were in scale and prestige. Policy to India was on a global scale while Sri Lanka was local in impact. In some matters like constitutional reform India set the pace. On the other hand the atmosphere in Sri Lanka was less charged and enabled healthy relations which remained to the end. The relationship became if at all too courtly and inhibited and a political movement proper only took shape in the 20th century and before were essentially parlour games.

Sri Lanka began its career under British rule as a part of British India. From 1796-98 it was administered directly by the Madras Presidency in a system of rapacity and plunder that was like the ravages of a flight of locusts. It provoked a serious rebellion but wiser counsels soon prevailed and it was terminated on the recommendations of a Commission of Investigation. It was replaced by direct rule from Britain through a Governor who was however subject to the general supervision of the Governor General in India and the Court of Directors of the East India Company. Also appointments to the higher posts in the Civil Service were to be made from the Indian Civil Service. This was an unsatisfactory system of dual authority as the Governor had no control over his senior officials who undermined him. It was presumably an intermediate stage until Dundas was able to make up his mind in the light of developments in the war. This final decision was taken in 1800 and was to terminate the connection with India and make Sri Lanka a Crown colony under a Governor appointed by and responsible to Britain. This was conveyed as an order to the Court of Directors on 30th December 1800. This was a sequel to another major decision which was probably clinched at this time in the higher councils of Britain to have permanent possession of the Island and negotiations to this end were initiated by the Addington Government leading to the Preliminaries of London of 1801. This also marked a change of mind by Dundas from his earlier

inclination for a Greater British India to which the other colonies would be subordinated. It is interesting to speculate on the reasons which prompted it. The importance of the Island to Britain was as a naval base which, to use the words of Panikkar a century and half later, was integral to the defence of India. From this standpoint it seemed desirable that Sri Lanka like Singapore should have a free hand, remain apart from the main-land without being merged in its affairs. Besides, at this time South India was in an embattled state with the struggle against Tipu and the wars against the Mahratha confederation and involvement in them would have detracted from the Island's wider role. The latter was in relation to British naval power in the region as a whole where it was a key to the Bay of Bengal and the Western oceans down to the Cape. This wider strategic purpose could have been better served through separation at a time when the importance of Sri Lanka to Britain was primarily strategic and logistical. In fact one of the interesting features of British policy towards Sri Lanka is that after this importance subsided with the end of the war, it lost interest in the Island and the naval base Trincomalee was neglected in favour of the new love Singapore and it needed the coffee planters to restore interest in it. Thus from 1801 under Lord North who was Governor from 1798 and by no means an auspicious beginning, Sri Lanka began its career as a separate Crown colony by no means as a prized possession of the empire or the promised land for travellers though Percival in his account written at the end of the century hinted at its political importance and commercial potential as an inducement for its retention by Britain.

It may come as an anti-climax to know that despite initial enthusiasm for it and effusive references later by Ceylon lovers, official policy towards it was essentially one of indifference and neglect. Perhaps India stole the thunder or Britain felt that the Island could look after itself. One disincentive is that it was no trouble maker and a haven of tranquility throughout, so much so that when an occasional breeze occurred there was a panic reaction as if it was trouble in Paradise. It is no exaggeration to say that in the 150 years of British rule, Britain seriously interested itself in the affairs and the future of the country only on three occasions. These were in 1828 with the appointment of the Colebrooke Commission, 1929 the nomination of the Donoughmore Commission and 1944 in the penultimate state of British rule the appointment of the Soulbury Commission in 1944.

Its only continuing interest was that the colony should pay for itself without drawing on the British exchequer and that it should contribute to defence expenditure. The latter in fact was the source of some of the only political issues that arose. For the most part therefore the colony was left to its own devices and it was up to the individual Governors to make what they could of it within the existing financial and other constraints. At the same time there were other pressures from unofficial sources like mission societies which had official support to contend with and which influenced the situation.The Governor was therefore the key figure as the pace setter whose calibre or lack of it could make all the difference.

On the other hand British policy stimulated local developments which produced their own momentum and contributed to the progress of the country through free enterprise. The official policy in the first half of the 19th century was to open up the country through private investment and initiative in the spirit of laissez faire with the state providing the logistical infrastructure. Later under the influence of trusteeship ideas the Governors began to take a hand in the welfare of the inhabitants and pursued programmes for the rehabilitation of ancient irrigation works and institutions. The Colonial office was generally aloof if at all reacting negatively like its advice to Gregory to drop the idea of a harbour in Colombo. Thus the impetus to the development of the country came from the commercial and economic forces which were stimulated by laissez faire and the initiatives of the Governors rather than any positive guidance or sponsorship by the Home Government. This was due to the negative approach of the latter at this time reflecting the influence of Utilitarian economics and free trade and the mistruct of state initiative. This attitude was contradicted by the support which was given by the state to evangelical activities directed against ancient traditions and religions in the colonies as a result of which the latter suffered discrimination and resentments were caused. The cumulative effect of these policies of laissez faire turning into benevolent despotism was that they benefited a particular section of the community whether fortuitously or deliberately at the expense of the masses resulting in distorted and uneven development.

The Colebrooke Commission was the third part of the Commission of Far Eastern Enquiry which was appointed in 1828 to report on the Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius and Ceylon. Colebrooke was the

sole survivor of three Commissioners originally appointed but later he was joined by Charles Cameron who dealt with judicial matters. Colebrooke became in effect the Commission. Not much is known about him except that he served with Raffles in Java. The context of the Enquiry was the transition of these colonies to British rule and the question of absorbing them and adapting them to the latter. For Sri Lanka there was a special problem of resolving the annual budget deficit which had necessitated recurrent subsidies from Britain. This was repugnant to the prevailing anti-mercantilist mood where the minimum expected of colonies was that they should pay for their keep. Colebrooke spent two years in the Island diligently touring it and gathering information without any co-operation from the administration and the Governor, Barnes, who was personally obstructive and hostile. Cameron in fact wrote his report on information supplied by Colebrooke. The result of these labours was a report which can veritably be described as the Durham report of the other empire. Like the latter it was dull and voluminous but, just as the Durham report, fired by a vision which was unique for that time. Colebrooke was not heard of before or after but he belongs to that small but rare circle of enlightened thinkers and reformers such as Brougham, Place, Owen, Grey, who were the salvation of post-war Britain and set it on the course of humanism and progress. Among the literary monuments of British colonial rule in Sri Lanka it is outstanding. We are indebted to the meticulous scholarship of Dr. G. C. Mendis that this document is available in edifying form to the public at large. It is difficult to believe that such a man could have existed at that time when Britain was still a Tory stronghold under a Prime Minister who regarded colonies as naval stations and the Island had a Governor with a dim view of the capacity of the inhabitants. The principal merit of the report is that though Colebrooke's terms were essentially to solve a budgetary problem, he produced a report that was a Magna Carta of Liberal beliefs about the administration and future of these territories. It embodied concepts such as representative government, restrictions on the powers of the executive, participation of the people through the legislature in policy forming, equality of economic opportunity, removal of discrimination which were revolutionary for Britain still in the shackles of an Oligarchy and the economic domination of a land-owning aristocracy. What is remarkable is that these ideas were expressions of conviction and faith in contrast for instance to the

Durham report which was persuaded by political pressures in Canada itself. In Sri Lanka there were no such pressures as British administration was just beginning to assert itself throughout the country with the road building achievements of Barnes. The concrete recommendations of the report are well known to need enumeration and its enough to say that they were a landmark in the evolution of the country and opened vistas which transformed it decisively. Some of the recommendations such as the creation of a Legislative Council with unofficials were not properly implemented in that spirit. Others were excessive in zeal such as the permission for civil servants to invest in plantations and the emphasis on English education which opened the door to missionary education and evangelism. Others did not realize expectations like the abolition of *rajakariya* which though primarily a humanitarian step was expected to release labour for plantation activity. The recommendations for popularly elected local officials were to broad-base the adiministration with grassroots links but the effect was to perpetuate the traditional indirect rule. A remarkable feature of the proposals for the public service was that they should be opened to local candidates suitably equipped with English. This was a step to the creation of a commercially-oriented administration like proposals in third world countries for the appointment of technically qualified personnel to man the administration in developmental fields as a variation from the idea of a general civil service. Colebrooke had the limitations of idealists of his kind who exaggerated the curative power of their ideas. Like Cobden and Bright he regarded free trade and enterprise as a universal panacea and the future of empire in a narrow sense was of secondary importance. Empire to him was a medium through which to spread the gospel of Whig liberalism, the free trade of the Manchester School and humanitarian beliefs for human equality and ending of exploitation of man by man. It is not unusual that this starry vision failed to take into account the languishing agriculture of the country which was its traditional economic base. The idea of paternalism was so alien and self-help so dominant that state-aided activity would not come within this prism. This was also a matter of the angle of vision because the focus of the report was essentially the maritime provinces and the newly opened Kandy and the historic granaries were far out of reach and sight until they were formed into a new province by Gregory. Colebrooke's humanitarianism therefore did not extend to the for-

gotten inhabitants of the wilderness. Instead his ideas were calculated to bring into being the robust entrepreneur class of local planter, artisan, craftsman and trader who were to capitalize on the opening up of the centre like the carpet baggers of America and transform the country with their pioneer spirit and creative drive. The problem which arose in the Central provinces and gave rise to the 1849 unrest were to some extent the result. It admitted, as Skinner laments, a lawless breed from the low country into these hitherto sheltered area separated from the rest of the country by a shield of feudalism and disrupted standards of discipline and conduct. It was a kind of Wild West situation with foreign planters and local adventurers trying their fortunes. The political recommendations also had stimulating results. The Legislative Council became in due course the forum for discussions and the medium for constructive opposition. No doubt it became an expatriate lobby for planters, businessmen, the Western educated intelligentsia to play at Parliament but it created a tradition.

The Colebrooke report thus marks the dividing line between medieval and modern Sri Lanka. This was effected by replacing a feudal order based on agriculture with a Capitalist economy, by opening the country to foreign investment, by inaugurating the age of the middle class entrepreneur, by initiating the technological revolution in transport, communications, public works, the application of scientific advance to development which would lay the foundations of a modern community. It also ushered in a new political dimension with the opportunity for popular participation in the Legislature through representation, which would qualify the powers of the executive and create a sense of partnership. In its overall impact on the history of the Island the Colebrooke report can be compared to the 1832 Reform Bill in Britain. Like the latter it was a recognition of the position of the middle class, a step towards their political enfranchisement, In economic terms the Reform Bill marks the impact of the Industrial Revolution on Britain while the Colebrooke report led to a comparable transformation in the installation of the plantation economy in Sri Lanka. The Reform Bill was the political climax of a reform movement which was inspired by egalitarian and humanitarian concepts and aiming at a overhauling of its laws, institutions and values in the same way that the Colebrooke report incorporated humanitarian ideas for removal of social iniquities, discrimination, freedom from monopoly

and restrictions on initiative to ensure the free play of economic and social forces. Finally the Reform Bill ushered in a period of feverish legislation which would shake Britain to its foundations while shaping the future course of its political evolution. Colebrooke's proposals likewise set the stage for the future economic and political perspectives in the Island. Where they differed is that the Reform Bill was open-ended in setting off a chain reaction towards progressive enfranchisement through successive Reform Bills while the other was circumscribed in its range to a particular class resulting in the latter becoming its chief beneficiaries. The effect of this in the Island was that political activity became the monopoly of a Western educated middle class intelligentsia more for the most part beholden to the rulers. It failed to link with the interests of the masses or the cultural aspirations for a national resurgence which was steadily developing goaded by its disabilities and this dichotomy was to be true of its political evolution until almost 1956.

The Colebrooke proposals for the creation of the plantation economy had already been anticipated by Barnes and they were speedily implemented by Horton and Mackenzie To Horton the distinguished apostle and pioneer of emigration this must have been a variation on his ideas in that in place of an emigration subsidy the relatively cheap upset price of land was an incentive. However, under Horton's schemes emigrant pioneers were left to themselves to carve out their plantation empires out of the virgin jungle This was an arduous task involving living on the hillside under canvas and boring their way through Planting itself was not easy without credit facilities, technical knowledge of soil and conditions and the toll was heavy. Like the first wave over the top in trench warfare, it came to a rude halt with the financial crash of the mid forties Later, schooled by experience, it gained momentum, helped by banking facilities and government underwriting.

During the second half of the century the momentum shifted from the unaided enterprise of the pioneer to the personal initiatives of the Governors. The latter played a positive role in promoting these developments but also moving into other fields of activity. This can be called the trusteeship phase when the Governors were imbued with a sense of idealism and responsibility for the conscientious performance of their tasks due either to a sense of duty or ideological

conviction. The Governors of this time also had exceptional calibre and antecedents. The latter were political or aristocratic. Governors like Ward, Gregory, Robinson, Gordon and Ridgeway were the products of the colonial system at its best in their combination of sensitivity with dedication. Even the worst of the British proconsuls of this age like Curzon had redeeming qualities. As against pinch beck Napoleons and racists like Milner and Bartle Frere some Governors were the finest administrators ever. The Sri Lanka Governors of this period were for the most part in that category. This was partly because they reflected in their persons the high moral tone of contemporary British politics. There can be no question of the deep moral commitment of Gladstone or the skill of Disraeli and several Governors were personally associated with them. Gregory was a friend of Peel and Disraeli, Gordon of Gladstone, Ward a well known Liberal MP. Gregory felt deeply for the people of Sri Lanka whose lot he felt was like of his own countrymen, the Irish. In this empathy they differed from their 19th century successors. Gregory's affection for Arabi Pasha and his championship of him reveals a respect for these peoples.

These Governors vied with each other in zeal and dedication to develop the country. These activities were mainly in the field of transport, communications, administration, institutional reform and rehabilitation. However, there was a tendency for their endeavours to be repetitive and stereotyped with one merely improving on his successor and taking over the baton. They followed circumscribed paths and objectives and were seemingly unable to break new ground. A few were inventive like Ridgeway who favoured admission of Ceylonese freely to the administration. Still, for the most part, they were inhibited in their horizons and confined to palliatives, unable to face up to major problems of the Island. This is not to belittle the idealism of some. The best example of such ventures is in the field of irrigation and tanks. The pioneers were Ward and Gregory, both of whom were moved by the miserable conditions of the inhabitants. Their relief became an object of their policy. To this end they initiated a programme for the relief and reconstruction of ancient irrigation works. Gregory undertook the restoration of the Kalawewa and the repair of portions of the Yoda Ela. Gordon was outstanding, carrying this policy to include works in the Southern, North Western, Uva and Sabaragamuva Provinces including the Tissamaharama tank, the

Walave Ganga works, the Hambegamuwa tank, repairing 42 tanks in all at a cost of three million rupees. Ridgeway followed up with the restoration of major works including the Giants' Tank, the Nachchaduva tank, the Kantalai, the further extension of the Tissamaharama. It is estimated that from 1855-1904 approximately Rs. 13,500,000 was spent on irrigation which definitely improved the food supply position and increased the area of cultivation. However it was a drop in the ocean compared to the magnitude of the problem.

There was a fundamental difficulty which limited the best efforts of Governors. This was the besetting problem of their dependence on revenue surplus to undertake these tasks. Thus good Governors could be products of circumstances depending on the availability of funds. The prevailing colonial policy was that colonies should pay their way and let alone contributing to them colonies had to meet costs of services like defence. This situation left little scope for the enterprise of the Governor which was conditioned by the financial situation at any given time. This was essentially a problem of priorities as the Governor had to decide on many competing claims for funds, the most vociferous being from the planters who further controlled the available media. In the face of these pressures it required exceptional courage for a Governor to undertake welfare activities involving heavy expenditure. Besides this dependence on financial vicissitudes resulted in an irregularity in the pattern of these activities. Thus after the hectic activity under Ward there was a slowing down under MacCarthy who besides had been Auditor General and was timid by nature. Again after the spirited regimes of Robinson and Gregory there was the anti-climax of "wait a bit Jim" who besides was handicapped by the coffee blight which impaired him as much as it did coffee. On the other hand Gordon who had to face the same crisis including the collapse of the Oriental Bank handled it so resourcefully that he was able to leave a surplus and undertake expanded activities.

The survey of developments during the second half of the century makes one more conscious of the omissions than the achievements. The latter was to usher in an age of "Victorian" prosperity when the economy flourished despite ups and downs and planters and businessmen both foreign and local reaped fortunes by exploiting the opportunities. This was indeed a boom for men of enterprise, with the opportunities opened for trade, industry, investment in the plant-

ation country. The rise of the resourceful low country Karava community to positions of great affluence was one of the notable results. These advances could not conceal the areas which had been overlooked in the colonial priorities which were now coming to the forefront and were really integral to the character and well-being of the country as a whole. These related to the traditional religions and cultures which had suffered, the underprivileged position of the bulk of the people due to the priority to English education.

A cultural upsurge was taking shape at the end of the century under Buddhist and Hindu leaders with foreign support. Vernacular-based nationalism was still a far cry but the cultural awakening was a fore-runner. It is noteworthy that these forces were not represented in the movement for constitutional reform of this time except for the circumstance that some of its leaders were prominent Buddhists and associated with the temperance campaign. They were for the most part Western educated high society Sinhalese and Tamils from the urban aristocracy and bourgeoisie of Colombo and its suburbs. As in reform movements of this kind the leaders were the professional and social elite such as doctors, lawyers, landed proprietors for whom reform politics was a family vocation, a prerogative by reason of upbringing and station moving with the rulers. They belonged to the affluent and ultra Westernized circle whose life style was an imitation of gracious living, their houses designed and adorned like the stately houses of the rulers back home. One of them was Alfred House, residence of C. H. de Soysa, and later Lakshmigiri built like an English Palace and home of A. J. R. de Soysa who was nominated by McCallum to the Legislative for reasons which were not a compliment to the nominee. They were typical of the coterie politics of the Colombo elite which was to prevail until well into Independence. Their cultural hybridization and alienation from the environment did not necessarily disqualify them from the role of leadership as some of the more nationalist leaders had a Western education and some even Western wives. The problem was their urban roots and class background which shut them from contacts with the rank and file. They were essentially products of a particular social milieu. It was many decades before a truly representative and nationalist leadership would arise. There was thus a certain hollowness about the early reform movements which emphasized the superficiality of the imperial political impact.

In the movement for constitutional reform there was some measure of keeping step with India. Although the character of the two movements could not have been more different, Britain followed a similar time table towards Sri Lanka though with a time lag. Thus the measures of McCallum coincided with Morley Minto and had similar divisive motivations. Dyarchy had its echo in the Manning reforms which increased the Legislature like the former. The Simon Commission gave provincial autonomy in the same way that the Donoughmore experimented with administrative responsibility as it was essentially a form of local government. After 1931 Britain opted for adult suffrage in Sri Lanka, abandoning the previous communal approach in favour of the classic Westminster "one man one vote" model. The actual grant of Independence to Sri Lanka was a surprise because the Soulbury Constitution which was offered after the war fell short. Ultimately Independence had to be elicited as part of a Defence Agreement which gave access to the naval and air bases in the country. It was accomplished through the state craft of D. S. Senanayake and diplomatic genius of Sir Oliver who on this as well as before showed himself to be one of the greatest figures of the country.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR IN SRI LANKA

From the inception of empire the Governor was the key to the system of government which prevailed in the colonies. He was the symbol of the Crown or sovereign and the representative through whom power and authority was exercised. As a rule he was both appointed and sent from the home country. The Governor was the chief executive but a system developed in which he was accompanied by an Executive Council and a Legislature. The forms as well as the powers of these auxiliary bodies varied as between the colonies concerned because in some the Legislature was an Assembly even bicameral and the Executive Council consisted of both officials and unofficials, representative of the colonists. However, whatever their different forms, the underlying principle was that the Executive Council was an advisory body to brief the Governor on the local viewpoint but which he was not obliged to consult and the Legislature was also a deliberative body to serve as a forum but the decision or opinion of which was not binding on the Governor. The latter took his instructions and was responsible to the home government and the role of the local bodies was to ensure that his administration was as far as possible in keeping with the interests and wishes of the colony. This was of course not an ideal arrangement at all, the proof of which was the revolt of the American colonies. The main weakness and grievance was that the Governor as the king's servant and nominee was not responsible to the Assembly which was just a convenience to him, doing his wishes but getting no return. From the Governor's point of view this was a gap in confidence which increasingly prejudiced his relationship with both the Council and the Assembly. He could perhaps ride rough shod over the Council as it consisted mainly of officials but the Assembly was different and invariably turned rebellious.

The best example of the system and also its limitations were the administrations in the colonies in Canada in the 18th century. There was an Assembly in each of these provinces established as follows: Nova Scotia 1758, Prince Edward Island 1769, New Brunswick 1794, two Canadas 1791. These governments were invariably coteries composed of the Governor assisted by Councillors who were drawn from the affluent circles alongside Assemblies which were unrepresentative and to which he was not responsible, resulting in growing estrangement between them. Thus the government of Upper Canada was referred to as the "family compact" and of Lower Canada was predominantly English speaking. This was the context of the political conflicts which arose in both, sparking off rebellions. However, thanks to the Durham report and the family tie between Canada and Britain these problems were handled with sympathy and this early political system became the foundation of the Dominions on which others in the self-governing category were modelled.

The Crown colonies in contrast had a different history and beginnings. They were not extensions of the white family but military possessions which were acquired by force and in the circumstances of war. Most of all they were alien societies. Besides, except for India, they were relatively small and regarded as bases or naval stations linked to defence strategies of the empire. The Governor at the outset was a kind of garrison commander, invariably a military man, and for his council he could not be expected to choose representatives of a subject society. Sri Lanka belonged to this category of Crown colonies which were captured in the course of war and hence its administration had an authoritarian character from the outset. This remained basically unchanged for almost a century except for window dressing from time to time. This policy was justified by a number of arguments which were offered and applied at different times in the history of the Island. These represented various phases in the formulation and evolution of British policy towards the Crown colonies during this period. At first it was mistrust of the participation of the local inhabitants and taking them into confidence in the higher councils of the government. Hence the first members of the Governor's Council were his immediate associates. The next phase was the necessity of protecting the mass of the native population from the machinations of expatriates like planters and even the local burghers in view of their manifest advantages over the others. Indeed Ward

had some strong views on the subject. This became an argument of welfarism, of the British government holding the balance between natives and their exploiters. In the next phase this argument was neatly turned, when in the context of communal divisions among the local population which were sedulously fostered if not actually created by the British, notably Manning, the latter became the indispensable umpire to hold the balance between the inhabitants. Finally with the repudiation of communal representation their fall back position was the need for further education and experience to qualify for complete independence. Hence the idea of internal autonomy was proposed as the penultimate stage to the latter in the form of the State Council and later the Soulbury Constitution. At every stage the Governor was the official spokesman of this policy and the executor who faithfully implemented them. The broad lines of policy were normally laid down by the Colonial office according to the prevailing thinking of the party in office but the attitude towards each colony would be shaped by the advice and assessments of the Governor. Also the manner of the implementation of a particular policy was in his hands and his responsibility which meant incurring the blame if it miscarried.

In general it can be said that the history of the British Governorship was an evolution from an authoritarian position of almost undisputed power to a circumscribed status where both the substance and exercise of power was progressively qualified. The change was somewhat abrupt because the initial authority remained unchanged for almost a century. However, certain adjustments were made from time to time, in step with the movement for constitutional reform, until with the 20th century a number of concessions were made which backfired on the Governor and complicated his position. From thereon he had to rely more on diplomacy than authority, the latter being a reserve to be used in an emergency or in exceptional circumstances. The success of their office depended on their skill in handling the local elements, manipulating and keeping them divided, a task in which Governors like McCallum and Manning excelled. This was accomplished by active lobbying and infiltration into local circles, with a view to exploiting them in the manner of foreign ambassadors in third world countries today where aid is the leverage in lieu of political concessions in a colonial context. The dividing line was Ridgeway who mingled administraitve paternalism with a gleam of idealism but in the aftermath of the Russo-Jap War and its emotional

impact on Asian countries combined with political threats to the empire, imperial policy became narrow and possessive. It is noteworthy that McCallum who initiated this policy proposed the idea of the Durbar which has been attributed to the Malayan experience of Clifford but was really a time-honoured practice of Indian Emperors, one of the most famous being the Assembly at Prayoga under Emperor Harsha in the 7th century. In Sri Lanka the object was to draw a red herring by attempting to restore traditional forms to counteract the constitutional reformers. Throughout all these changes and vicissitudes the image of the Governor remained unchanged as a despot, immaculate in his shining uniform, the cynosure of the people from whom power and influence emanated.

The life of the Governor however was no bed of roses, no triumphal march like a procession of Brownrigg. After the opening absolutist phase it became difficult with time. Even at the start he had problems with the Army Commander and the Chief Justice. These were resolved in his favour. Later he was under pressure from various elements which, while not seeking to subvert him or British rule, still wanted to extract various concessions for themselves. Besides, although the Island was a Crown colony under the autocratic rule of a Governor who was supreme, there was a democratic spirit within owing to the mercantile, planting and professional bodies in the country who had very able representatives. Some of them like George Wall, Ambrose Lorensz, Capper, James D'Alwis were outstanding for any age. There was also freedom of opinion and expression in the country and the Governor Wilmot Horton himself set an example by encouraging the "Colombo Journal" and contributing to it himself. Thus an opposition came into being composed of these representatives who engaged the Governor in a continuous and acrimonious exchange demanding concessions for the promotion of their interests as well as political reform aimed no doubt at the same end. Such manifestations were spasmodic and occasioned by economic ups and downs in the country because, when the economy flourished, the agitation evaporated. Still they were a major curb on the Governor and somewhat of a threat. These groups had links with influential interests at home with whom they were in touch on affairs in the colony and an adverse comment in the right circles to a M. P. or Minister could spell trouble. Even in the Island they were too redoubtable for the Governor to ride rough shod over them or ignore them with impunity.

The Governor for his part was not lacking in resources or easily overawed. He also had his own lobbies and contacts back home who would protect his interests. Some like Ward, Gregory and Gordon were influential politicians themselves. The mandarins had their colleagues in the Colonial office who would shield them. The Governor himself was a formidable figure, very often the match of his antagonists. Thus Robinson made short work of the opposition elements who caused the famous storm in a teacup in 1864 by defeating the budget. His technique was the same divide and rule policy which he was to employ with such lethal effect later. At this time it was to play European planters against the professional interests, officials against unofficials, and maintain a balance. Besides, except for some act of grave misconduct or folly, it was not usual for the home government to disown a Governor. It was a matter of public face and international prestige. The government in power would go to any lengths to save a Governor for fear of political repercussions in the party struggle. It will be recalled that despite all the Parliamentary agitation over Torrington and the proceedings of a prestigious commission, he was in no sense censured or even found guilty. Instead he was supported by the Secretary of State, Earl Grey, and his recall was explained on the grounds of bad relations with the civil servants. As often happens it was the minions who got the rap. It recalls the verdict in a sensational shooting case where the accused who faced murder charges was finally convicted for misuse of a gun. The Governor was thus strongly entrenched and could give a good account of himself. Still it was in his interests and of all concerned to avoid rift and confrontation and sort out matters through diplomacy and guile. In the 20th century they showed a remarkable aptitude for these traits and a trace of Machiavellian amorality.

Following the conquest of the Dutch territories by the British, these territories were placed under the Madras government which administered them with such rapacity that they revolted occasioning its termination and a change to direct rule. This too was an interim stage, an echo of the highly discredited dual rule in which the Governor was under the supervision of the Governor-General and Company head office in Bengal like one of the Presidencies. This was an ambiguously unsatisfactory position as the civil service was recruited from India. That too ended in 1802 and the Island became a separate Crown colony governed directly from Britain by a Governor appointed

by the latter. Frederic North who was appointed in 1798 continued under the new arrangement. The governorship began its career with supreme power in the Island qualified only by the Council which was associated with him as both an executive and legislative body. It consisted of the Governor, Chief Justice, Army Commander, the Secretary to the Governor and two other nominees of the Governor. It was composed entirely of officials who, except for the Chief Justice and Army Commander, were under orders from him. He was expected to act in consultation with it though this could be dispensed with in an emergency. Also its opinions or decisions were not binding on him. It was essentially a consultative body though perhaps it was wiser to act with it than without, at least to share responsibility. However, even this body was not smooth sailing as the civil servants were not all inclined to be co-operative. Their conduct, an echo of the sub-continent mentality, was the subject of bitter complaint by North. The Governor wielded substantial powers particularly in appointments to the administration which up to the highest rungs were solely in his power and even in the higher service he had powers of dismissal and his views carried weight. Until 1833 these powers were unchanged and this period was the zenith of the power of the Governor. The incumbents too were military figures who capitalized. Maitland who cleaned the administration and really set it on its feet was a martinet. Barnes had the attributes of the good soldier idolized by his men, working like a Trojan and setting a great example, essentially like Admiral Layton of a later day, a military administrator with supreme scorn for native aspirations. Ironically both had common experiences of seeing reform commissions acting under their noses, namely, Barnes of Colebrooke and Layton of Soulbury. Brownrigg was another militarist who, besides, liked the grand style of elaborate escorts and on his culminating victory, of "ride in triumph through Persepolis" when he entered Kandy in style. The only odd man out was North who was a kind of Gilbertian overture to British rule. The instructions to the Governor from the home government were emphatic on his total responsibility to it and any step without prior sanction had to get instant covering approval. Still this was not so important in those times when a boat took one year to come and during that time the Governor was on his own. This state of affairs

was to last till 1870. The Governor thus had to worry more about his associates in the colony than his overseas masters. This phase of rule by the Governor in council lasted till 1833.

The change of that year which was under Governor Horton was the establishment of a Legislative Council on the recommendation of Colebrooke. The latter created a "bicameral" arrangement of the old Executive Council which was now exclusively in that capacity and the Legislature which was deliberative. The Executive Council consisted of the Governor, Army Commander, Colonial Secretary, the Queen's Advocate, the Treasurer and Government Agent of the Western Province. The Legislative Council consisted of nine officials including all the members of the Executive Council and six unofficials nominated by the Governor from the foreign residents and indigenous inhabitants, the main qualification for the latter being ability to speak English. Nomination to them caused a problem at the outset as the Governor did not appoint the European members on the grounds of lack of suitable persons. The Governor had a casting vote and presided over the proceedings. He alone could initiate subjects and he had veto power. Legally he was supreme but it was in his interests to work peaceably and not ride rough shod. About the function of the Legislative body there was some doubt. Colebrooke evidently intended it as a source of information, a means of briefing him with the local angle, so to say, and hence improving the quality of his administration. The Council itself thought otherwise and saw itself as a kind of Parliament to both deliberate on matters and act as a brake on the Governor. Perhaps this was an exaggerated view because the notion of shared responsibility was still a far cry. On the other hand it was naive for Colebrooke to think that the members would be content with being some kind of brains trust with no say in affairs. It was but natural that in the circumstances they should seek to assert themselves to the maximum. After all they were there as spokesmen of their interests and could hardly be content with academic expressions of opinion.

The question of powers raised other knotty issues. One was about the voting rights and freedom of speech of officials. Some favoured the same rights as the unofficials in this regard. This was an absurd view as they were surely the king's men who had to stand up for the government at all times. If they wished to dissent they could do so at

the Executive Council stage where all matters were discussed in advance and the position of the government prepared. The critical or hostile position of an official should therefore be unacceptable as a contradiction in terms. The insistence on this point suggests that civil servants of that time were much more independent than later generations who were schooled into becoming yes men and no more and later became the doormats of Ministers under independence systems. Perhaps the laissez faire attitude when they were permitted by Colebrooke to engage in business was the explanation. The Colonial office was prepared to recognize freedom of expression but up to the point where it would not jeopardize a Bill in which case they had to support the government. Later, with the development of a professional civil and colonial service, the rules were tightened regarding latitude of the public servant and the Colonial office came down heavily on independent attitudes. An ultimatum was later served of support or resign. Perhaps this was more in keeping with the fitness of things where the opposition of officials to the Governor would seem absurd. It is clear from the unseemly infighting of Torrington's time that there was a serious problem of disciplining the civil service. This was also due to the antecedents of the civil servants of that time. Some of them were clearly the results of flagrant nepotism, appointed through commercial and family interests. In character too they were free lancers without the mentality for administration. They were at heart adventurers and swashbucklers like the archaeologists of this time who stumbled on ruins. This was true of Layard who was coming overland as a tea planter to Sri Lanka when he lingered at Mesopotamia long enough to become the hero of Nineveh. Mitford who accompanied him came all the way to Sri Lanka and although without prior experience was appointed to the civil service. Many appointees of this time were either cases of family tree or had strange antecedents. One was a seaman who instead of becoming Captain of the Queen's navy became a District Judge. There were eccentrics but this was an endearing feature of British colonialism which softened its impact. No other system could have produced a Leonard Woolf or even a Hugh Clifford. The relatively light hand of the Colonial office and esprit de corps was perhaps the answer. This tradition was to continue to the end when the son of a Governor-General became a real life ascetic. With civil servants of this kind it is not surprising if

they became recalcitrant members of the councils and a source of trouble to the Governor through their show of independence and eccentricity.

Another problem was the Chairmanship of the Governor over proceedings of the Legislative Council This was contrary to the view of Colebrooke that this would cramp its style. This was again an unrealistic attitude which misconceived the nature of this body. If its purpose was to afford the local point of view and be an aid to government the presence of the Governor would have been logical to it. Also it was a deliberative body rather than a decision-making one, and even if it had a decision to convey, the Governor was not bound by it. Hence without the Governor on whom to impress its view-point the Council would have been operating in isolation in a vacuum so to say. The whole object of the Council was obviously to foster a kind of partnership government out of which responsibility could sprout in due course. To that extent it would have been in keeping with the twin ideas of British colonialism, namely, trusteeship and education for responsibility. What was wrong was the tardiness in extending unofficial representation and giving it a sectional basis which distorted its evolution.

With all its limitations the changes of 1833 although they lasted till the end of the century still affected the position of the Governor in practice more than theory. It opened the doors to a political process in which the Governor was under constant pressure from various elements for more say in the government and decision-making, in short, responsibility. As stated already these were sectionally inspired spasmodic manifestations which waxed and waned but the fire of controversy forged the leaders and the generation that was to initiate the freedom movement. This campaign for political concessions and in effect responsibility was prosecuted by a number of powerful spokesmen from the professional field. The most famous was Dr. Christopher Elliot who through his "Ceylon Observer" launched relentless agitation. There was an academic edge to his campaign which is betrayed in his writings. There is room to attribute its motivation to the events of 1848 in Europe though the parallel between a revolt against the ancient regime of Europe and British Chartism is hardly apparent. This first generation of reform agitators could, like their counterparts in pre-Reform Bill Britain, be quite romantic and remote

This movement was not confined to the professional classes alone, of whom Elliot was a spokesman. A number of groups arose in this political atmosphere, the climax of which was the pseudo storming the Bastille when the budget was defeated and the consternation it created recalls the effect of Oliver Twist asking for more. These were the Ceylon League which was formed as the aftermath of that crisis. The unofficials resigned but were ignored and forced back by a totally cynical Robinson. Elliott founded the Friends of Ceylon in 1833 but its motivation seemed to be no taxation without representation. The planters and merchants formed the Ceylon Planters' Association in 1854 but their object was to press for more financial support for transport, communications and concessions which would ensure financial control to further their own interests. Herein lay the difference between them and Elliott's movement which was for the enfranchisement and representation of the urban Western educated intelligentsia as distinct from expatriate entrepreneurs. This was the cue to the Governor who had a good opportunity to drive a wedge, playing the expatriate group against the professionals and both against the indigenous inhabitants. This was probably the point of the remark attributed to Ward about the Ceylon Burghers. The case for Britain at that stage was that the natives should be protected from the middle classes who sought power to exploit them. It was odd to hear this from a Liberal like Ward when Gladstonian policy at that time was for the free grant of liberty as the panacea for political ills. All these groups were short-lived and Robinson's masterful handling of them took the ground from under their feet.

The record was not completely negative. A number of concessions were made. A distinction was made between fixed and contingent expenditure and the latter came under the purview of the Legislature. This was applied over defence expenditure which was treated as a fixed annual charge as distinct from contingent expenditure. This decision followed the famous crisis on which however the Colonial office prevailed as it was adamant on the necessity of the colony meeting this expenditure. Another concession was the right of unofficials to introduce subjects other than finance or revenue. Thus the mid century was a time of acute political agitation mainly from three quarters. These were the expatriate interests seeking more leeway and control, the professional classes for academic liberalism and the Legislature for responsibility. None prevailed because the Governors

were able to gain a measure of them exploiting their infighting and weaknesses. The Governors themselves were some of the ablest to come. These Governors had charisma and stature and could handle these situations. This is where, aside from the question of intrinsic power, the key was the character of the Governor. His personality meant much more than his official and constitutional status. Some of these Governors were well entrenched at home. There is the incident of a leakage of Robinson's despatch with candid comments on the Ceylon League which occasioned questions in Parliament and a public meeting in the Island. The Duke of Buckingham who was Secretary had discussed it with Robinson and had a hearty laugh over it. Colonial affairs, unless they concerned a family member, must have seemed Liliputian to their Lordships. The Governors thus withstood attempts to erode their positions very successfully indeed and hence their status as laid down in 1833 did not require modification until the turn of the century. This is surprising and is a measure of their skill in handling the situation as well as of their power. Thus throughout the 19th century the Governor was the masterful dominating figure who had a firm hand on the situation manipulating it so as to keep his position and that of the Crown intact.

During the last quarter of the 19th century, the internal situation underwent a change with the entry of the caste factor into the political scene. Indeed this period and the first quarter of the next was the heyday of casteism in the Island as a force which was ruthlessly exploited by the British and which equally distorted political evolution and generated bitter and unseemly social tensions within the majority community. It was a dominating factor until the Manning reforms of 1921 after which it subsided to be replaced by communalism partly because in the meantime, thanks to the victimization of the Sinhalese after the riots, they were closing their ranks. It was necessary and opportune at that stage to find an alternative divisive factor and hence communal constituencies which had been inaugurated in India under Morley Minto and which seemed to have promising scope in the Island afforded the answer. From thence until Donoughmore there was a shift in official policy from caste to race and the role of the Governor was to foster and exploit them as earlier it had been done in respect of caste. The more notable instruments of this policy in the two phases were Gordon and McCallum for the latter and Manning for communal politics.

The emergence of caste as a political and social force was not a sudden manifestation but the cumulative impact of a process which had been initiated with the consolidation of British rule in the Island. Specifically it was the effect of the opening up of the country to economic exploitation through plantations and trade which was effected by British pioneer enterprise and capital. It opened the doors and created a Ceylonese entrepreneur class which was if at all more adventurous and energetic than their British counterparts. The latter were the low country Sinhalese whose amazing drive and zest and capacity for capitalizing on the situation brought about an economic and social transformation of the country. This amounted to a virtual inundation of the Central and Western Provinces by them at the expense particularly of the Kandyans who found themselves the victim of British encroachments on their land and low country inroads on their trade. This was partly a consequence of a historical imbalance where the Kandyans had been victimized by the British initially after the 1818 rebellion whereas the low country Sinhalese had, if at all, benefited from foreign rule to develop a pragmatic mentality of being flexible, obliging in order to capitalize on the vicissitudes of their historical experiences. Not that they had been submissive or less tenacious of freedom than the Kandyans but that centuries of foreign rule had accustomed them to the latter, inculcated a sense of statecraft in dealing with them, and thus prepared them with resourcefulness and initiative for a time when they could give rein to their talents.

Foremost among the low country Sinhalese was the Karava community and their numerically smaller associates, the Salagama and the Durava. Their advent to the scene has a parallel to the take over of the Kandyan court by the Nayakkar clan who were likewise a commercially oriented group, worldly wise through experience of foreign powers, experts in statecraft, clannish in their matrilineal systems. It is not unlikely that the Karava was ethnically akin to the Nayakkars and similar Indian communities, having originated from India either as mercenaries or traders somewhat like the Muslim communities and adopted the Island as their home, appropriating the seaboard where their nautical talents both as sailors and as fishermen were put to good use. In the 19th century while they continued to practise their traditional skills they had other avenues for their talents in the opportunities for entrepreneurship created by the plantations. This was for them the gold strike not as pioneers themselves in the

first instance but the indispensable suppliers of goods and services and infrastructure for the upkeep and furtherance of the new economic order in the country. They became an invading army, a pioneer corps of artisans, builders, transport men, retail traders, suppliers, clerks, book keepers, in short the technical services needed by the plantation economy. They established service houses which foreshadowed the trans-continental corporations of later times, operating like Zabaitsu in the opportunities they afforded for the caste for employment, for enterprise, thus furthering the individual and collective economic interests. It was a parallel to their marriage policy where a kind of endogamy was practised which kept wealth within the group. Over the decades it began to form a kind of economic and social imperium in imperio, controlling major economic interests. These were principally transport, arrack distilleries, toll renting, industry, graphite, building construction. Later they ventured into plantations, principally coconut in the low country, and coffee on which the de Soysa's made their fortune. Socially they became like the Dutch republic in the 19th century an oligarchy of a number of powerful and wealthy families with men and women of great talent, professional standing, education, who were more than a match to rival groups, intermarrying though not entirely free of an undertone of infighting due to envy and feelings of dynastic superiority. Some of their representatives at this time included James Peiris, for many years their rising star, indeed whose eminence was acknowledged even by his rivals, Dr. Marcus Fernando acclaimed even in British circles at that time for his professional eminence, H. L. de Mel, shrewd businessman and agriculturist whose efforts were responsible for the establishment of the L. C. P. A which gave a due place to the Sinhalese planters in the teeth of opposition from British planting interests determined to keep their hegemony. This saga of the rise to power and affluence of the Karava community, of how a handful of families like the de Soysa's, Lindamulage de Silva's, Dias'es, Salgadoe's, Amarasuriya's, Peiris'es de Mel's, Fernando's came to attain a position of social and economic dominance in the land has been examined and detailed by the sociological historian, Dr. Michael Roberts, in his several writings and notably his recent "Caste Conflict and Elite Formation" which is a work of meticulous scholarship in the tradition of Namier for its tracing of antecedents and links.

The rise of such a family oligarchy through its own initiative and resourcefulness would bring them sooner or later as history has shown into conflict with other powerful groups or with the political order. This situation was the equivalent in the Island of pre-1832 Britain where the rising industrial middle class found its way blocked by a land-owning oligarchy entrenched in Parliament. Such a situation faced the Karava community as the British government and notably its Governors were mistrustful of them both of their economic power and aspirations. Besides, the government was inclined to favour the Goigama caste which was numerically larger and claimed to be the premier caste. Rival claims to superiority solar and lunar lineage became the favourite topic of that time which triggered off a war of tracts, letters to the Editor, publications some scurrilous, propaganda financed by both sides. The Governors also had some sentimental inclinations towards the Goigama as a kind of native aristocracy having common interests with the British. The latter were thus drawn into the caste conflict by their overt support of the Goigama. There were other grounds on which the Karava was not persona grata. Due to their affluence they were linked both with the incipient nationalist movement as expressed through temperance and the Buddhist revival and they were also associated with the movement for constitutional reform. Indeed, later, they were closely associated with both the Ceylon Reform League and the Ceylon National Congress and some of the leaders were from their ranks. The Karava community, particularly the leading Buddhist families of Panadura, were under suspicion of complicity in the 1915 riots and suffered imprisonment, apart from vitriolic castigations as traitors and lower forms of life by the authorities of the time. Thus the Karava at this time became almost a target of the British government for their economic power and ambitions and were politically dispossessed, but with characteristic resourcefulness they made up by infiltration into the administration and education, becoming a factor which could not be shut out indefinitely with impunity.

If politically there was ill will, not so socially, as these relations could not be more cordial. This was the paradox of colonial rule and the undertone of cynical Realpolitik. One could sup with the devil with no compunction for the sake of the empire particularly when the table was as good as that of the de Soysa's. There was wining and dining by Governors and their minions in the loidly

mansions of the Karava families who were like the princes of the Italian Renaissance in their taste, their life styles and their ostentatious homes, decked out with Italian marble or antiques from Sotheby's and Christie's purchased on their frequent shopping sprees abroad. Such were the houses of Karava leaders like "Rippleworth" of Sir James Peiris, "Lakshmigiri" of A. J. R. de Soysa, "Sravasti" of W. A. de Silva, "Villa Venetia" of Sir Marcus. They revelled in hospitality particularly to the British masters, one notable occasion being the visit of Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, during the Governorship of Robinson. He was feted by C. H. de Soysa at "Alfred House" the residence named after the royal visitor. The fabulous hospitality of the event, of gold plates and extravagance was the talk of the town for decades. Thus the rulers moved on close terms with the Karava families whom they recognized as their match but remained cautious. The period from Gordon to Manning was the time of maximum confrontation, owing to the official policy of exploiting caste. This was the second in the sequence of their political techniques. The first was the division between expatriates and inhabitants, the second, caste among the latter and the third, in the period before Donoughmore, communal divisions.

The impact of the caste factor was felt at the end of the 19th century. Governor Gordon had to contend with it on assuming office. It was focussed at that time on the nomination of the Sinhala unofficial to the Legislative Council. Traditionally the nominee had been Goigama, starting from the famous James D' Alwis. What is more, they were all drawn from almost the same family. The Karava was now politically active with the formation in 1882 of the Ceylon Agricultural Association which became the Ceylon National Association. Their claim was for a Karava nomination to this place and they offered in James Peiris one of the finest there was. From a British viewpoint he should have been ideal as a Cambridge man, President of the Union and all that, great lawyer, a paragon of honour, honesty, and married to the eldest daughter of Jacob de Mel, one of the great arrack and toll renter tycoons. Still the honour was denied at recurrent vacancies. Gordon attempted another ruse to frustrate this attempt. He affected a peculiar interest in the Kandyans in whom he saw some affinity to the British and he added two unofficial seats, one for a Kandyan and the other, a Muslim. It is suggested that this act was inspired by Gordon's Fijian experience just as McCallum's

Durbar is attributed to Clifford's experience in Malaya. There are possibilities but it is just as likely that the idea came locally. There was certainly not much in common between Fijian chiefs and Kandyans and one should not have assumed that the latter were docile and submissive. On the contrary they had a tradition of fierce resistance to foreign invasion. The Kandyans if at all were interested in recognition of their political individuality and wanted a kind of semi autonomy. It is unlikely that Gordon would have gone that far. Gordon's public statements show that he was opposed to increased representation let alone responsibility but he seems to have been particularly ill-disposed to the Karava community. He discriminated in favour of the Goigama by appointing the latter in large numbers to the honorary and other posts available at the time. He thus incurred the bitter dislike of that community who blocked an attempt to give him a public address and statue in his honour and a Moratuwa group broke up a public meeting to consider these proposals.

The career of Gordon as Governor is thus an instance of the effort of the latter to use the caste weapon in upholding the British position. It is clear from his problems and the bitter resentments which he aroused that the position of the Governor was becoming embattled and difficult with time. Earlier it was a matter of dealing with planters and business interests and handing them sops. They were never really a threat to the British position. Both British and Burghers were just friendly rivals and the exchanges in the council were good natured jousting "no offence meant old man". In the caste battle however pride honour was involved and the Governors had to tread warily. The stock ploy of native aristocracy and ancient institutions like headmen and *gansabhas* were bankrupt and other methods had to be tried. In the meantime the caste issue was only a facet of a wider problem which was the challenge to British rule by the new middle class. Perhaps there was substance in Ward's previous argument that conferment of representative government in his time would have landed the inhabitants squarely in the hands of the expatriate tycoons. This argument was not valid any more. Besides, even the constitutional reformers were not asking for independence or the end of British rule. On the contrary they wanted to eat the cake and have it. They only wanted a say and standing to better enjoy British rule. They presupposed a British umbrella at all times. Sir James throughout his career never seriously entertained it. He

VIEW OF ALEXANDRA PLACE

View of Alexandra Place, one of the central spots in Colombo. From Alexandra Place, one turns to a series of roads, named after the Governors, Ward Place, Rosmead Place, Barnes Place, Horton Place etc. Most Governors names are commemorated in principal street names in Colombo. These names have been retained after Independence.

Photograph Studio Mins.

was bound so much by the interests of his class and their desire for power that he fell short of the Gladstonian ideal of freedom as a birthright. Sir James had his own problems because as a churchman linked to the de Mel's he represented a particular section of the community isolated somewhat from the other more activist groups of Panadure now stirring under the banner of temperance and theosophy. The latter were led by the great entrepreneur families of Panadure like the Ponnahannadige Dias, P. C. H. Dias, Salgadoes. Thus the British could have afforded to be more generous at this stage and associated itself more firmly with the middle classes. Instead they succumbed to the narrow possessive imperialist policies of this time to some extent extending their policy in India to Sri Lanka. This was a big mistake. This error arose partly from Ministerial compartmentalization in the British government where presumably there was insufficient pooling of experience. India and the other Crown colonies ran on different tracks. No high-ranking officer who served in India was ever appointed to Sri Lanka. The difference between the two was missed. India with the start of the 20th century was already demanding independence and had an active determined movement pressing towards that end. Curzon's partition of Bengal and Morley Minto had stirred the Indian masses and given a popular base to the political struggle. It was almost the opposite in Sri Lanka where even the idea of nationalism was not clearly perceived as an end. It was still in the stage of Oxford and Cambridge politics and would be so almost till 1956. It was not till the radical movement of the twenties of Goonesinghe and Sama Samaj that the country entered serious national politics. The British thus lost a good opportunity of entrenching themselves. This was entirely the bad judgement and prejudices of the Governors. Perhaps Ridgeway was the only exception but McCallum and Clifford were a wrong choice, the first being a pettifogger and the other an intellectual snob and disoriented in his idealization of natives. Perhaps a man of vision like Gregory or Ripon in India was needed to advise the home government on policy. Much of the mistakes of British policy, particularly the rank communalism of Manning and the psychopathic racism of Stubbs, could have been avoided. These errors have vitiated political life in Sri Lanka to this day. When the British government changed their policy in 1931 it was a trifle too late. Some of the best minds in the country like Ponnambalam Ramanathan were turning to communal politics. Thus the first two decades of the century were

a crucial period when important steps were taken by the Governors. These decisions shaped the course of events in the decades to come.

The first major constitutional change since 1833 occurred in 1912, with the McCallum-Crewe reforms. These were for the increase of the unofficial members in the Legislative Council from eight to ten, for four out of the latter to be elected namely the two Europeans, one Burgher and one educated Sinhalese, for renomination of unofficials to be discontinued. The significant measure here was the admission for the first time of the elective principle for the unofficials. These measures did not alter the status or power of the Governor in any significant way. Still they placed an onus on him about which Blake was to complain as a heavy turnover of work. To that extent they certainly changed the role if not the power of the Governor. It was the culmination of a process which began earlier when the recalcitrance of the members of the Legislative Council obliged the Governor to step in boldly and either lobby or cajole them into compliance. The basic overriding principle in the conduct of the Governor was not to rock the boat at all costs. Disagreements, exchanges were in order but within limits, which will not cause heavy weather or interfere with the smooth passage of the ship of state under the helmsmanship of the Governor. The new measure certainly added to the difficulty in that, though the government still had the majority as there were eleven officials to the ten unofficials, the latter could be more troublesome more so with the elective principle which made for more spirit. Besides, even the end of renomination tended to toughen the attitude of the unofficials who did not have to fear the blackmail of dismissal. The odds against the Governor were thus greater though his power was still intact.

The Governor accordingly coped with the situation by a change of tactics. McCallum was well suited to the task as a practical man, a military engineer by background and well known for his matter of fact cutting the Gordian knot ways. In this he had the enthusiastic support of his Colonial Secretary Clifford. McCallum in fact foreseeing the trend of events had already prepared for this eventuality by a policy of rapports with the unofficials and minimum use of the majority. In fact the Colonial office instructions of this time endorse this approach. There was even a measure of accommodating the unofficials if they were insistent on a point provided it was not of a

fundamental nature. Thus a policy of good relations by a spirit of accommodation was cultivated which enabled the system to work harmoniously. Another step to which McCallum attached importance was the establishment of the Finance Committee of the Legislature in 1907 where the unofficials were in a majority but as far as possible decisions were taken without a vote. Its object was to study and examine finance measures in an informal atmosphere before formal tabling in the Council. Thus formal disagreements were forestalled to an extent. This was again the same policy of being nice and establishing confidence. With all this show of goodwill the methods employed were not as bona fide as professed. Instead the elective principle was applied in a way which was almost low cunning but perhaps admissible according to the standards of colonialism which would miss nothing to gain its ends. Colonialism was really not much worse than politics of Independence. This scoop of McCallum was to nominate A. J. R. de Soysa and Obeysekera to the two low country nominated Sinhalese places to make up for the victory of Ponambalam Ramanathan over Marcus Fernando in the contest for the educated Sinhalese seat where the Goigama and other castes had banded together against the Karava candidate. The two nominees were chosen by the Governor for their acknowledged mediocrity which thus precluded any trouble from that quarter. This was an insurance by him that his goodwill plans did not miscarry. His position was further strengthened by the directive at this time obliging officials in the Executive Council to support government measures or resign, thus removing any discretion on the subject. The McCallum reforms thus amounted to little besides a cosmetic illusion of responsibility. The Finance Committee participation foreshadowed the thinking of the Donoughmore Constitution to grant administrative experience and opportunity in lieu of responsibility in an effort to defuse the latter.

The success of this policy was short lived. It was shattered by the events which followed. The latter marked the impact also of the political and nationalist movement in India which was aroused by the Morley Minto reforms. From 1912 the Temperance movement in Sri Lanka was gathering force and because of its link with Buddhism it became a national revivalist movement. It brought into being a more basic grass roots leadership with more links with indigenous feelings than the elitist reformers who were more expatriate in their emotions. At

the same time there arose a socialist movement among workers in industrial establishments and commercial bodies led by a new type of leader. The latter represented by A. E. Goonesinghe was radical and militant in character, the first in the Island's political history to have mass support. Despite different ideologies they had links with the Temperance movement. The turning point in events were the 1915 riots which had a traumatic effect on the scene. The riots itself were a local affair and could have been contained. They were caused by bad blood between Sinhalese and Moors over business rivalry and some element of religious conflict because this was the time of awakened Buddhist sentiment. Another sheer coincidence was the celebration of the centenary of the Kandyan Convention which was observed throughout the Island in March 1915. This was like the old myth which ignited the Indian mutiny. Clearly Sinhala nationalism was on the warpath at this particular time and oversensitive. Unfortunately this was true of Muslim sentiment also owing to the war against Turkey. Whether the British actually saw the riots as a nationalist uprising or not their conduct gave this impression. The government came down heavily on the Buddhist leaders including the temperance workers and the Panadure Buddhists. The reprisals which followed in the hands of blood-thirsty planters victimized the Sinhala villagers. Any confidence which existed between the British and the indigenous inhabitants was disrupted by this rough-shod behaviour and for the first time the latter began to think in separatist terms closer to the Indian movement. This was marked by the formation of the Ceylon National Congress on the Indian model. It induced the Sinhalese to close ranks and for a moment the British were faced with the dangerous prospect of national solidarity. Besides, the Montague declaration of 1917 gave some direction to this spirit of unity and the appointment of Ponnambalam Arunachalam as the President of the National Congress appeared to clinch it. Britain was not slow to act and the answer was the set of reforms associated with Governor Manning.

These reforms represented the new strategy of the government in facing up to the latest threat of the Ceylon National Congress incorporating radical elements of the Lanka Youth League formed by A. E. Goonesinghe and a more determined leadership among the reformers. This was to counteract any concessions seemingly granted towards responsible government by a groundwork of checks and balance and interlocking internal safeguards which would really

block and contain that pressure. This was achieved through the communal sub-structure which was meticulously engineered by Manning to frustrate the aspirations of those whom he castigated as the low country Sinhalese. His plan was to subvert the Congress by sowing dissension among the Sinhalese on the one hand and between them and the Tamils on the other. Manning was well suited for this Machiavellian role. As one who had fought the Mad Mullah of Somalia, the political madness of the local politicians in their susceptibility to national suicide held few terrors for him. Besides he had in Milner the Secretary of State an ideal partner for his schemes. It was a case where the Sinhala saying "lid to fit the jar" fitted perfectly. Together they stage managed what are known as the Manning reforms of 1921. Its main features were the addition of three nominated unofficials representative of the British, Sinhalese and the Tamils and the creation of a greatly increased Legislative Council consisting of 14 officials and 23 unofficials of whom 16 were elected. Of the latter five were communally elected or through special interests and the balance territorially but on the basis of nine for the Sinhalese areas and two for the Tamil. Of the seven nominated members four were named to represent the Kandyans. This arrangement it will be seen gave a theoretical majority to the unofficials but in a chequer board of conflicting minority representation engineered so as to play into the hands of the Governor and ensure his mastery of Legislative. In any case the new constitution ensured reserve powers to the Governor in some untoward event, under Clause 52 which allowed him to act unilaterally with the official members only on a matter of paramount importance. In practice he hardly had recourse to it as he was adequately covered by the communal strategy. The mechanics of this supporting communal substructure and how it was effected are outside the scope of this study but the words of the professional historian on it should suffice. It has been described "as an illuminating text book case study in the application of a policy of divide et impera". It was contrived as a classic Napoleon type military manoeuvre of dividing the enemy and defeating him in detail. The enemy in this case were the sectionally divided ranks of the Congress as they faced the British under a common banner. The latter however concealed heart burning and grievances over place in the sun and due place. The Kandyans harboured a feeling of being left behind in the race for progress while the Tamils somewhat like the Muslims at that

very time in India were sensitive to Sinhala domination disrupting the sense of partnership which had prevailed till then when Arunachalam became the heroic champion of the Sinhalese. Some tension and rivalry was inevitable given their heightened nationalism which was fired by the cultural Renaissance of the Buddhists and the Hindus but it was Manning who set them on each other by tossing the bone of the special seat for the Tamils in the Western Province into the arena. Feelings were never the same again and this was marked by the replacement of Arunachalam by Ponambalam. The Sinhala politicians of the time also fell into the colonialist trap by reneging on a promise given earlier and being unbending. Still it was the government which started the rot by planting the poison of communalism. The idea of rivalry destroyed the spirit of partnership which had been fostered between the two communities and to which decades later when it seemed to be in shambles an enlightened leader like the late M. Tiruchelvam was to advert as the essential basis for amity. The Kandyans of that time swallowed the bait when Manning sent a Kandyan delegation to meet Milner who was himself sceptical but Manning rammed the idea down his throat as well.

The features of the 1921 reforms were carried even further in the revised constitution of 1924 in that parallel to considerable increase of elective and nominated representation which ensured an unofficial majority in the Legislative Council the blocking mechanism was equally intensified in furtherance of communalism so that it could counteract any efforts of a group to prevail over the others. This was the declared justification of the system but its effect apart from embittering the majority community was to stultify the political process as a whole and strengthen the entrenched position of the Governor. In effect it meant little progress, if any, towards responsible government, as the Sinhalese politicians bitterly complained. The position would be clear from the following breakdown of communal representation in the 1924 Legislature. It had 49 members of whom there were 12 officials and 37 unofficials. The latter were divided into 23 territorial constituencies for Sinhalese and Tamils, 11 communal constituencies for other minorities and 3 unofficial nominees as well to boot. Besides, election was under a heavily restricted franchise.

It has been suggested that these changes correspondingly restricted the powers of the Governor. The evidence adduced is the provision for a Vice-President to preside over the Legislative Council, the lack

of an official majority in the latter, the fluctuating unpredictable attitudes of members due to the proliferation of interests, the presence of unofficials in the Executive Council some of whom were vociferous critics. Still to the extent that the paramount importance of that power was affirmed and that the Governor could ignore the decisions of the Executive Council there was no real diminution of power. Instead what happened is that the burden on the Governor became intense and nerve wracking. He was in the position of a bookmaker unsure whether his manipulations would work. The Governor became a full time manipulator and lobbyist like a Prime Minister with a narrow majority continuously rigging combinations between the disparate elements, cajoling, threatening, flattering with sycophancy alternating with threats to uphold the government position. Theoretically he could use reserve powers but this would be an admission of failure, a loss of face for the government which the Governor would endeavour to avoid at all costs. The Governor became like the US President trying to get some sensitive legislation such as the return of the Panama canal or the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia through a hostile Congress thus obliging him to resort to an orgy of campaigning and canvassing. He was like the modern diplomatic trouble shooter of a super power ordered to sort out some crisis in double quick time requiring again secret deals promises which would create the next crisis. The Governor had now to be a diplomat par excellence, a kind of Permanent Representative at the United Nations lobbying night and day to get a resolution drafted and passed. The strain told on the Governors in volume of work, mental pressures and mounting entertainment bills about which Stanley complained. This was before the era when Queen's House went austere and entertained with fruit juice. Thus the Governor had a heavy burden to carry and while power was intact he was under too much pressure to bask in it.

It is not surprising that the whole superstructure was dismantled by the Donoughmore Commission. It was due not only to possible doubt about the efficacy of communal policies but that the system itself was top heavy like a house of cards perched precariously on the shoulder of a Governor and manipulated tirelessly by him. Perhaps the labour and the nervous strain was not worth the candle and the government decided on a new dispensation. This was not a substantial grant of responsibility or withhdrawal of British power. It was rather a new

foundation for power in which administrative partnership was introduced to divert from the issue of immediate political responsibility. In that context the position of the Govenor assumed a new complexion. This was a form of remote control in which he was no longer in the driver's seat in immediate charge of the Government but had to regulate it from backstage through the reserve powers when needed and the monitoring of bills. In respect of the latter certain subjects were reserved to him and outside the competence of the Legislature. He could also address the State Council and enact special ordinances. The real control if at all was exercised through his officials who held a key position on the different committees. The Governor was also a referee involved intimately in the play and generally responsible to the Secretary of State for a smooth game. Later his experience and observations were enlisted when the system came up for review. At that stage they played a valuable role. Clifford's report as Governor was instrumental in getting the Donoughmore Commission and Caldecott's report on the latter likewise led to the Soulbury Commission.

The Soulbury Constitution created a Governor with reserve powers alongside a system of internal self-government. However under the Independence Constitution the Governor as Governor-General became the classic constitutional monarch of the Westminster Model with dangerously ambiguous powers in the sensitive area of the transition of power. Sri Lanka had two experiences when in 1952 Lord Soulbury the Governor-General invited Mr. Dudley Senanayake to form a government when Sir John Kotelawela fully expected this honour to be his and later in 1965 when Mr. Senanayake was summoned again but the defeated party would not say die. Under the 1972 constitution the Governor-General changed his image and character to President but with powers unchanged. In 1977 Sri Lanka opted for an Executive President with an auxiliary Cabinet and Parliament. This was a throwback to some extent to the old colonial Governor with his authoritarian image but shorn of alien trappings and instead in nationalist garb.

The power of the British Governor was not derived solely from his constitutional position and political supremacy in the Island. There were several other elements in the scenario of the Governor which contributed to foster it. Psychologically he was part of an

elaborate histrionic to create a mystic of the governorship. This was effected by stage managing his exposures to the public his entrances and exits so as to create an impression of remoteness and difficulty of access. He became like an oracle, a cult contact with whom was carefully regulated by the College of high priests surrounding him at all times, according to the script. Ordinarily he would not fraternize with the locals except on carefully selected occasions with political objectives in view. However he would be exposed to them on set occasions like expositions of a sacred relic to worshippers. The mystic of a supreme presence who would appear from time to time amongst his people and then retire into his abode was thus maintained. On these public appearances he was suitably accoutred and surrounded by ritual in a way which heightened this illusion and histrionic. He was invariably an impressive physical specimen soldierly in bearing and majestic in mien, resplendent in shining white uniform with gleaming sword hilt and cockade or the ceremonial uniform of scarlet and black. looking like a Hussar on the field of Waterloo. There was drama when he appeared with crowds lining the roads, held back by lines of police, the hushed silence as the moment drew near, the perfect timing when at the appointed moment the pilot car appeared in the horizon, the cry among the crowd that he was coming, the present arms, throaty commands, the nervous tension of the Guard of Honour as the great one walked past scrutinizing everyone with piercing glance. Access to the Almighty was if at all more complicated on those rare occasions which were levees or specific functions. Only the elite and the favoured were allowed as the humble could not afford the expensive dress order required. Every such event would be a miniature of a similar event at Buckingham Palace. Public appearances would be orchestrated and crowds wait hours to catch a glimpse but to have a ringside seat was an achievement like a place on the route of a Coronation procession.

The Governor was also the greatest patron of the land, patron saint like in the claims for his intercession. He was the coveted much sought-after guest at prize givings, sports meets, charity events, fairs, fancy bazaars, unveiling and opening ceremonies, attesting witness at weddings of high society, quite apart from the state occasions. He was forever at such functions delivering homilies, words of advice, urging subjects how to behave themselves, be good citizens and serve the Raj. Ordinarily he would not miss such openings which were

essential to his purpose, however irritating and repetitive to extend his benevolent sway and impress his authority and win the gratitude of those who were thus favoured. It was like the nursing of a constituency by an M.P. To have him as a private guest was strictly for the upper class and an event in the lives of the host which would be documented and recalled for decades. It was a means of out pointing a social or political rivalry. They were financially burdensome because of the regal ostentatious scale indulged in and the hosts invariably ended in the hands of the Chettiar. Only a few like the de Soysa's and the Bandaranaike's could afford this luxury.

He was a patron saint in another sense as well, being supreme dispenser of favours. Thousands of jobs depended on his wishes and the retention of the others. Displeasure could blast a career just as favour could make it and raise one to the heights. Public servants, public men had all to make their genuflections to him and burn the pinch of incense for their well being. He was of course no cheap bloody despot or Caligula but still like all divine beings he had to be humoured. Even Woolf saw the merit of pleasing a Governor when he helped Clifford in an amorous episode and was suitably rewarded. He was not feared but held in awe. To bask in his favour was to thrive but earn displeasure very unwise. In the context of the Legislative Council, politicians would stand up to them trade and hurl harsh words and the Governors were not unchivalrous and took them in the spirit of an University debating joust but it was a dangerous game unless the politician was well entrenched. Opposition in other ways out of court could be equated to treason and invite retaliation and severe strictures like Stubbs' very harsh comments on the Panadure leaders over their alleged complicity in the riots.

In Sri Lanka however the British Governor fell short of the divine aura of the white God. He never became "Sanders of the River" like the District Officer in Africa except perhaps in rural localities where he was merged with some animistic spirit. The difference was perhaps the cultural sophistication of Sri Lanka society, their highly advanced civilization and ethics. However, during British times this culture was dormant, having suffered from centuries of Western encroachment and it was really with their upsurge that British supremacy was really challenged. Still if the local society was submissive it was not for cultural inferiority but for economic

advancement in a context where one had to be in step with the ruler to forge ahead. This was the normal reaction anywhere in that if one wanted to push ahead one had to first obtain the resources. Thus the patronage of the Governor and his exalted position was not a sign of sycophancy or parasitism but the hallmark of the system within which the subjects had to find their way.

CHAPTER VII

QUEEN'S HOUSE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT

The official residence of the British Governor until the end of British rule was the building known until recently as Queen's House situated in the heart of modern Fort in Colombo. Previously it had been the residence of the last Dutch Governor Angelbeek and after him of the British Army Commander Macdowall. During that time Lord North who was the first British Governor had occupied a residence near modern St. Peter's, Fort, and this was the scene of the conviviality and extravagant revelry for which he was famous. The transition to Queen's House as the official residence was effected by Governor Maitland when he acquired the property for the purpose by a transaaction which appears to have been dubious. Maitland was thus the first British Governor to occupy the residence and thus inaugurate it as the official seat but he does not appear to have been conscious of the honour or of the ship he was launching as his treatment of it was marked by the same parsimony and niggardliness which characterized his administration in its fervour to undo the North regime. The first real occupant who did justice to that role was Governor Barnes under whom it was designated as 'King's House'. The change to Queen's House occurred under his successor Horton to signify no doubt the transition from a King to a Queen when Victoria succeeded William. Barnes not only lived up to his role but also enjoyed his regal life style and his extravagant conduct was like a prince of the Italian Renaissance in dotting the country with official residences. Some of these were disowned by his successors who found them too Sybaritic for a sober representative of HMG and attention was concentrated on Queen's House as the premier residence with the others in Kandy and Nuwara Eliya to serve as country seats when in Viceregal fashion the Government took an annual change of air.

Such a decision may have been the context of the extensive repairs and overhauling which it underwent during Horton's time when the building was virtually rebuilt and transformed to become in the words of a contemporary observer a "beautiful edifice" and presumably assume something of its modern appearance. A similar programme was undertaken for renovation shortly after under George Anderson in 1852 when it is reported that the residence was practically rebuilt at a cost of £7,000. Gregory's first impressions of the residence were unfavourable as he thought it ungainly and too large which was a curious reaction for a man of his expensive tastes. The last quarter of the century appears to have been its hour of glory when visiting royalty were entertained in it and the patrician occupants of the time were able to give full rein to their aristocratic predilections. Due perhaps to the wear and tear of pageantry and hospitality the condition of the building appears to have deteriorated to the point when it was rumoured that the Governor's lady was endangered by flying masonry. This occasioned another programme of protracted repair when the residence was actually shifted to "Temple Trees" at present the official residence of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. This proved to be a long drawn out and complicated episode indeed when a committee of investigation was appointed to report on the building, money voted by the Legislative Council and plans adopted which were abandoned, temporary occupation of the premises by Government departments and due to the intervention of Governor Stubbs the implementation of a more limited programme of renovation and rebuilding as an alternative to certain proposals contemplating possibly another residence. It was Governor Stubbs who described Queen's House as "the most dignified Government House in the colonies in the opinion of many". Evidently his timely enthusiasm was responsible for saving it. However its colonial glamour was gone because when Caldecott occupied it the war had come and with it Admiral Layton and the Governor was shorn of his powers. After the war there was a brief interlude before the British Governor made way for the new order.

The transformation of a Dutch residence into the Queen's House of British times during the 140 years of its occupation by British Governors is a political and architectural saga, details of which are not relevant here. Presumably the architectural turning point was the extensive programmes carried out successively by Horton and

Anderson when Queen's House appears to have become part of a Baroque-like complex with the adjacent General Post Office and the broad piazza like street outside stretching from the Clock Tower to the Customs Office to which the addition of Gordon Gardens gave further dimension. Queen's House shared some of the architectural attributes of the Post Office and the contemporary Colombo Museum as colonialized Baroque in their four square solidity, impressive frontage, Renaissance like windows and galleries, ornamented exterior and entrances a stately heaviness. Queen's House also has its distinctive features which are its Dutch legacy in the broad verandahs at the entrance and extending round the house the corridors opening on the sea gardens at the rear like the inner courtyard of a Dutch residence. The marble tiled ground floor ushering one into an entrance hall and the upward sweep of a two way staircase are the unmistakable Baroque traces. An unusual feature is the side entrance leading directly to the porch instead of round a driveway as a result of which the imposing frontage is lost to the public view in that on its visible side it is screened by the foliage of Gordon Gardens. For the most part except for the lateral view Queen's House is like a coy maiden screened from public exposure. Still its stately contours, the whiteness shining through the trees, the air of retreat and the unrivalled location looking down on the nerve centres of the old days which were the Chief Secretary's office which is modern External Affairs, the Legislative Council now the President's Office, the General Post Office was appropriate to the desired physiognomy of power as represented by the Governor who was somewhat like the priest of the "Golden Bough" ever vigilant, though reclining in the sylvan beauty of the grove of Aricia.

The layout of the house as one finds it today consists of the public area where pageantry and ceremony is enacted and the living quarters of occupants and guests. The first is in the form of two parallel halls separated by the stairway, one of which is the lounge and the other the Audience Hall, once the scene of the levees and now for events like the presentation of credentials by foreign envoys. Like in all such Halls in the British tradition the walls look down on the happenings of today through the large-sized portraits of Governors which adorned them charging the atmosphere with a historic dimension. In the lounge the modern envoy has his tete-a-tete with the Head of State where Governors lobbied with politicians and cultivated the high society endeavouring by blandishments and bullying to perform

his gubernatorial duties. The living quarters extend to the sea on both floors with ample saloons designed according to the spacious standards of those times. Queen's House would not strike a modern observer as a stately mansion of Britain, replete with magnificent interior decor and classicsm but rather as a typical seat of colonial power, expansive but not extravagant, calculated to awe instead of dazzle with the accent on remoteness and detachment communicating a sense of power.

Queen's House was a part of the apparatus of power in the country and to that extent an instrument of the Governor. At the same time its presiding deity was the Governor's lady, the veritable Queen to whom it was in an intimate way the private abode and the stage where she played her own official role. The latter was not an inconsiderable one and the first is not entirely irrelevant to a study of Governors. It is odd that though they were for the most part the servants of a Queen there were no women Governors among them. Is this attributable one wonders to the question of emancipation of the species or a distrust by women of their own kind. The personal side of the Governor's lady as an influence on the Governor cannot be lightly dismissed. This is not only a question of the popular theory about the contribution of the memsahib to the erosion of empire. This is based on the view that the average British wife coming from a parochial lower middle class background with scant prior education about the world outside wrecked the delicate relationship with the indigenous people by their insensitiveness to their feelings, inability to understand susceptibilities or disregard for them, flaunting of power and authority. Any study of colonial society will show evidence of it but this was also the result of Britain's separatist approach to colonial rule as the hegemony of a dominant external minority whose cardinal sin was to merge or even to mix. This attitude was certainly not conducive to healthy relations but on the other hand it was all a part of the mystic of power. The first formal break with this dogma was with the famous Edwina Mountbatten but one should remember that this was in a context of withdrawal. Would an Edwina have been possible in the heyday of empire? This theory did not really apply to the top echelons where apart from the high calibre of the ladies their aristocratic background in many cases such conduct would have

been officially impolitic. Any candid comments therefore had to wait until after the local guests had left when it would be open season for gibes and mimicking.

In a Governor's wife the personal factor would assume a different form. It was more a question of mental and physical health, adjustment to surroundings and duties, reaction to domestic chores and the burdens of playing the role. The exacting task of being a Governor's wife really called for a certain type of background and character. This would be a physical toughness which would stand up to climate stress, adaptability of character, mental equanimity in shouldering the responsibilities, a certain tolerance and breadth of mind, liberal education not merely in the Western classics but in geography and history as well, freedom from prejudice. Their success and contributions could be in proportion to the extent to which they possessed such attributes. Up to a point this was a matter of class and upbringing. The high born would have experience of entertaining and hospitality but in a grand style which created its own form of snobbery and exclusiveness. The basic problem of this British ruling class in the colonies was the cultural barrier due to an ingrained belief that theirs was essentially a civilizing mission of mending the ideas and ways of cultural inferiors. Of course individuals would react to this notion of their duties in different ways ranging from a charitable disposition and feigned compassion to rank snobbery and condescension. A nature which stood above, unvitiated by these built-in preconceptions, was rare. The best of them would succumb on exposure to the sullying influences in the local scene.

A besetting problem of the Governor's lady which lowered her resistance to local pressures was the loneliness of her life. Living in a sprawling impersonal mansion which was stage floor and residence combined, depending on obsequious domestic staff with whom she could scarcely communicate due to language problems, with few friends other than compatriots whose own motives would be dubious, there was in their lives a touch of the "Lady of Shalot". Some of them took refuge in a private world. British wives showed a talent for hobbies and recreations. They became painters, writers, poets, bird watchers or found other original and creative ways to beguile their time. The more extrovert plunged into social pursuits becoming busy bodies in society, organizing charity, or the life and soul of clubs.

They were rarely lacking in energy. Thus at a personal level, life at the top was a coldly lonesome existence for the Governor's lady, fraught with responsibilities and strains and not all of them succeeded in facing up to them. In Sri Lanka there were two known cases of mortality of these causes. They were the first Lady Gregory who died of sunstroke and Lady Caldecott of ill health. Even Mackenzie almost died of a sunstroke. Lady Clifford showed signs of strain the same time as her husband.

The official role of the Governor's wife as the first lady and in Sri Lanka the chatelaine of Queen's House was no different from that of a political first lady, a wife of a Prime Minister or Head of State. If at all it was more onerous because of the exotic and alien setting in a foreign land. The official duties were multifarious as they were onerous. The first was as the Governor's partner, the royal escort so to say, accompanying him on his official round of patronage duties such as opening ceremonies, prize givings, civic activities, social occasions like weddings and the unending dinners and banquets where they were invariably the chief guests. Secondly, there were the parallel and counterpart responsibilities which she performed on her own in respect principally of women's activities and social and charitable events. The Governor's wife was the patron saint of most such organizations, dispensing charity and benevolence as the husband did patronage. This was a supporting service which gave him prestige and enhanced the image of the state. Wives with ingenuity could excel in this role not only in organizing skill but also originality and creativity. This could be some extravagant ball or some particular type of exhibition. Lady Barnes showed a flair for receptions with a Thespian flavour, Lady Brownrigg for supper and dance. Lord North who had no wife excelled as a bonvivant and gourmet and his spectacular dance parties were the talk of the town. Thirdly, as official hostess the Governor's wife was responsible for state hospitality at the residence whether at dinners and banquets or the public receptions which were held from time to time for special celebrations such as the royal birthday, Coronations, visits of Royalty. No doubt particularly in the latter she had the support of a large establishment and entourage but the final responsibility devolved on her for the impeccable conduct of the proceedings and flawless Protocol. perhaps when the atmosphere became politically tense with the

increasing influence of the reform movement and the Governor had to engage in intricate manoeuvres to contain the situation, the burden on the first lady would also have increased.

As lady of the household she was also obliged to be hostess to a steady stream of distinguished guests to whom official hospitality was extended. These were invariably visiting Royalty, statesmen and political figures of the day on sight seeing tours or passing through visits at a time when Colombo harbour was an international port of call. Some of these visitors included military heroes of that time like Allenby, Kitchener and Ian Hamilton. Such visits would entail other activities such as accompanying the guests, making special sightseeing arrangements to the extent of organizing a show of sorts like Kandyan dance display beloved of visitors or even an elephant kraal, that being the local equivalent of a tiger hunt. As a corollary to these household duties was the responsibility for the upkeep of the residence, the decor on occasions, its spotless appearance, the management and supervision of the domestic establishment, acting perhaps through some local Jeeves who like an estate kangany was the intermediary for the minions. It was an Edwardian upstairs downstairs except that the latter was no basement but an outhouse crammed with different forms of lower life from butlers to stable boys. As official hostess the Governor's wife came closest to an Ambassador's wife who also had to cope with the same all year cascade of VIPs needing food and shelter and escort services. These could be itinerant Foreign Ministers circling the globe on an endless quest for peace, Ministers attending conferences and calling on supporters who have become expatriates, Heads of State and Government on state visits and officials permanently engaged in international initiatives. These visits meant that transport was commandeered, accomodation needed, programmes had to be arranged leading to receptions and hospitality. They exhausted overseas missions already emaciated without staff and resources. Unlike Governor's wives, heads of missions lacked clout being at the mercy of the Treasury except for political appointees for whom no restrictions applied and the exchequer was at their disposal.

It would be interesting to view the wives of British Governors in terms of these considerations and see how they measured up. The first official first lady to occupy the residence was Lady Brownrigg and she literally set the ball rolling with her penchant for balls and

official entertainment. She had no lack of occasions for celebration either this being the time of the conquest of Kandy and the suppression of the 1818 rebellion. She was not only a good hostess but a kind one as well as the experience of Skinner would testify where he had fallen asleep at an official dinner and was tucked into bed by the first lady whose enthusiasm for his company remained undiminished. She had a disposition unusual for a Governor's lady of that time for the instinct which prompted her to build a rest house for Adam's Peak pilgrims and her ascent of the peak herself which, according to reports of that time, must have been a feat. These attributes would prove that her solicitude for others arose from genuine concern, rather than the stylized charm of a first lady. Lady Barnes was known for her Thespian enthusiasm which converted King's House as it was then called into a sylvan "Midsummer Night's Dream" setting where she and the entourage displayed a remarkable histrionic talent. In these exercises the British community revealed that innate dramatic genius of which Shakespeare was a supreme expression and which has made British theatre and dramatists the greatest in the world. At least one effect of British colonialism was to impart this message to the rest of the world. Lady Horton had some mysterious connection with Byron and Mrs. Leigh and whether the poem supposed to be about her attested to a genuine fact or was an extravagant Byronian conceit it is hard to say. It is odd that there is no independent evidence in the Island of her celestial frame. Mrs. Mackenzie is another rather contradictory personage whose precise nature cannot be easily pinpointed. We have the evidence of James d' Alwis about her motherly disposition shown in her solicitude for him as a young student. On the other hand there is her eccentricity and certain comments made by an American visitor that she was dowdy and garrulous. The eccentricity was her addiction to the hookah, acquired no doubt when she was the wife of the Admiral of the East Indies fleet, Lord Hood. Such traits were not unusual for Englishwomen of that century as the lives of women like Lady Hester Stanhope, niece of Pitt or MaryKingsley or Mary Shelley for that matter, Mary Wollstonecraft, George Eliott would illustrate. The lure of the East was irresistible to some of them and the contact played tricks with their personalities. This metamorphosis is an element in the saga of the Governor's wives and the Vicereines of India comparable to the challenge of exotic places and cultures to the Governors themselves

and the crisis of identity which it posed as the career of Clifford would illustrate. Her eccentric ways do not appear to have interfered with her marital duties as she was the mother of eleven children. This tradition for fecundity was continued by Governor George Anderson who married three times and had fifteen children.

One wishes that more information was known about Lady Ward besides the fact that she had two daughters both of whom raided the arsenal of the local Civil Service for husbands. Lady Ward was the aunt of no less than the lyrical genius of British poetry, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and her family was in intimate contact with the poet. Her father Sir John Swinburne and The poet's father Admiral Swinburne who was her brother used to interchange their residences at Northumberland and the Isle of Wight respectively with the result that the poet was moulded by the twin influences of both these locations and the families. It is evident of course that it was the Southern influence which prevailed intellectually but the personal contacts remained. Lady Ward also had something of the family talent. She was one of the three intellectual first ladies whom the Island had, the other two being the second Lady Gregory and Lady Clifford. Lady Ward's contribution was as an artist who illustrated her husband's book on Mexico written when he was Ambassador there in 1823.

It is an irony that one who would have been the greatest Governor's lady in Sri Lanka and perhaps of all time never became the chatelaine of Queen's House. She was Isabella Augusta Perse, the second Lady Gregory who married him after he resigned from the governorship following the untimely death of his first wife. He was 63 and Augusta 28 when they were married and if the marriage did not become one of the world's great love stories, it was a blissful one and it launched the young bride on a career of fame which would make her a world figur . As for Sri Lanka although she accompanied her husband on the second of his three visits after he was Governor her stay was brief and there is no reference to it in her writings. This was Sri Lanka's loss because had it been otherwise not only would she have brought lustre to Queen's House but Sri Lanka would have been able to share something of her immortality. Augusta Perse was the youngest daughter of a family of 16 children. Her father was a typical Anglo-Irish landowner whose domination of that country created the Irish tragedy. Augusta spent her childhood in her country seat of Rox-

borough not far from romantic Galway Bay and even Coole the home of her husband to be, immersed in the chores and pursuits of a country lass of that age, looked after by a doting family nurse who became a major influence in her life. She showed no promise in her youth and her shy diminutive figure smothered by so many children masked whatever there was except for the bright sparkle of her Anglo-Irish eyes. Her biographer's description of her as a wood nymph may be apt but perhaps a frightened faun would be better. Her description of herself as a girl in her unpublished "An Emigrant's Notebook" reveal a perceptive and observant nature. This was the time presumably when under that disarming facade she imbibed the impressions and influences which were to flower as dramatic insights. This was her delving into the dark world of Gaelic folklore, her familiarity with its myths and tales as narrated by her nurse, her sensitive response to the nuances and sounds of the Gaelic tongue, her intimate knowledge of the country-side and people.

Her marriage to Sir William was the result of a chance encounter with him on a visit to Italy. Perhaps they complemented each other with Sir William finding assurance in her retiring introspective personality and with Augusta overawed by his background and image and conscious of her own limited appeal, seeing in him the father figure she had missed as a child. One can believe that the marriage was a source of happiness to both as later she missed him with the intensity of Victoria for her Albert. To her it was a turning point in that it admitted her to the world outside the parochial circle of her upbringing. It opened to her the wide horizons where her own genius could disport itself. Sir William was still a respected figure particularly in cultural circles because of his work for the British Museum and therefore his house in St. George's Place, London attracted intellects of the day. This was presumably the timely exposure which turned her ripening intellect into creativity. The first impact curiously was political in her championship of the cause of Arabi Pasha, the Egyptian nationalist leader. Sir William had already met him in Egypt in the company of Arabi's other English admirer, Scawen Blunt. Together in Britain they had launched a campaign on his behalf at least to combat the vicious propaganda which made him out to be some kind of savage. These initial efforts failed as events overtook them with the nationalist uprising and the naval bombardment of Alexandria, the outcome of which was the capture of Arabi and his trial on treason charges. At

this juncture their campaign was to save his life and it was probably their intervention which changed a certain death sentence into exile in Ceylon. It is not unlikely that the latter too was arranged by Sir William. Augusta distinguished herself in this episode by a pamphlet which she wrote entitled "Arabi and his Household" which refuted malicious stories in circulation about his dishonesty. The response of both Sir William and Augusta to Arabi was not only out of admiration but also an echo of their sympathy for the Irish martyrs of the time. The Arabi episode is revealing as it foreshadows the inter-relationship between culture and nationalism which was the keynote of her ideology.

With Sir William's death after 12 years of marriage Augusta moved into the stage of theatre and history. This is part of the history of Irish nationalism and the Irish Renaissance at the end of the 19th century. Augusta's role in it was as the historian and part creator of the Irish theatre, the friend and patron of its great dramatists and poets, a dramatist herself of rare talent, the compiler and discoverer of Gaelic folklore, the fearless champion of the theatre and a fighter on its behalf in the teeth of prejudice and hostility which was directed against her personally. This was partly due to the inherent contradiction in her own position where being Anglo-Irish she was a representative of the oppressive establishment but her espousal of Irish nationalism militated against her own kind. This issue arose pointedly over the staging of plays in the theatre in defiance of an official ban. The different aspects of her versatile career merit a full length biography which would do them justice and here it would suffice to merely glance at them to appreciate her place in history.

Her monumental achievement was the formation of the Irish theatre in which she was the moving spirit, and her efforts on its behalf are recorded in her book, "Our Irish Theatre". It was the fruit of perseverance and dedication. This is primarily a personal narrative of her struggles and hardships rather than a formal history which it should have been, but it gives an insight into the lives of the artists and the factors she had to contend with. This brought her into intimate contact with the great dramatists of the day whose patron and associate she became. In fact it was even said that she contributed to some of their works and this suggestion caused controversy later. An example of this was the play by Yeats entitled Kathleen ni Houlihan which he

dedicated to her acknowledging his indebtedness but he later seems to have disclaimed it. Her contribution was mainly in her sensitiveness to the Gaelic speech and to her translations of Irish folklore. Both Douglas Hyde and the great Synge made use of these translations. But more than a fellow writer her role was essentially moral as the great champion of the dramatists in the staging of their works in the prevailing atmosphere of hostility. Her association with Synge in the release of his masterpiece "Playboy of the Western World" incurred for her the suspicion of the nationalists as a renegade and of the Catholics as an Anarchist. She disliked the play herself but she stood for it as a matter involving freedom of speech. She won the gratitude of Bernard Shaw for her support of the staging of his play "The shewing up of Blanco Posnett". This was banned in England and also in Ireland by the Lord Lieutenant but she had it staged at the Abbey theatre in defiance of the ban. She helped James Joyce with money and introductions before he became famous but he repaid her with unkind references in the "Ulysses". Unfortunately she was not fated to win the gratitude of these associates. With the notable exception of Shaw whose description of her as the "greatest Irish-woman of her time" was a rare acknowledgement by a contemporary, she was generally defamed or belittled by them. Even the biographical notes about her by Yeats in lieu of the biography which he claims to have planned did her scant justice.

As a dramatist in her own right she wrote several plays, some of which were praised by masters like Hyde and Yeats. They were mainly local or situational in content and character centering on themes of escape, prisons, war, Irish history, legend. Typical of them was "The Rising of the Moon", one of the best known which is a suspense story; "The White Cockade" about the escape of James II; "Kincora" where the heroine Gormleith is a Lady Macbeth like personality; "Dervogilla" about the betrayal of Ireland to the British; "The Deliverer", an allegory, on Parnell's life; "Spreading the news"-a comedy; "Twenty Five" a domestic drama. They were inspired by a mixture of nationalist feeling, sentimentality, patriotic fervour, a sense of history, emotional attachment and impregnated by the tense political atmosphere of that time with the Black and Tan, the repressive measures of the government; the martyrdom of the Irish people. As plays they reveal a good theatrical sense, a feel for idiom, plot and character and although they do not compare with the great contemporary masters

they were yet a vivid and integral part of the nationalist and cultural upsurge. Her literary genius was versatile and she was not only a playwright but a translator, annalist, collector of folklore, and biographer as well. Her biography of her nephew Hugh Lane is a sensitive portrait of a near genius. She translated Moliere's plays into the Anglo-Irish dialect and published them as "The Kiltartan Moliere". To this category of her ventures into Gaelic folklore and language belong other works like "Gods and Fighting Men", "Irish Folk History Plays", "The Kiltartan History Book", "The Kiltartan Poetry Book", "The Golden Apple", which was dedicated to Shaw. Her creativity was as prolific as it was diverse, so much so that critics are divided as to her true niche in history, whether the founder of the Irish theatre, the spearhead of the Renaissance, the discoverer of its roots, the philologist and etymologist, the popular playwright and author, the Joan of Arc like crusader for justice and dignity. Whatever the verdict there is no doubt that Shaw's description is the worthiest of them all.

Augusta Perse was a living legend in her time both in England and Ireland. Her name was synonymous with the literary giants of the time like Shaw, Synge, Yeats, Hyde, Joyce and even regarded as the mentor to some of them. Her relationship with Yeats was personal, bordering on the emotional and acknowledged by him as "my strength and my conscience". Yet her name did not outlast her life and today there are few who remember it. In Sri Lanka which should have been a scene of glory she is perhaps unknown. This relative oblivion must be attributed less to the limitations of her genius than to the attitudes of contemporaries and posterity. In her own time she aroused strong resentments, being suspected by some as a rebel and renegade and by others as an anarchist. Her own obstreperous acerbic personality did not help promote her personal image. Besides, in the malevolent, treacherous, cruel scenario of Ireland at the end of the 19th century, where her life and career was enacted which had been the graveyard of leaders and idealists, there was no room for heroines, only for martyrs. It is but natural that her memory should have met a similar fate, like that of an Irish folk hero. Her own life would have been fit material for a play by Synge. As a personality she did not lack charisma but had no conspicuous charm. With age the slight Bronte like figure with demure face and hair parted sleek in the middle had become plump, portly and somewhat stony in

expression. The widows weeds which she sported made her look like Victoria and perhaps behave like her. It is possible that she was short, tactless and impatient with people. The contrast between Yeats' painting of her in 1903 which hangs in the National Gallery of Ireland showing a bright eyed youth like an effeminate young man and the somewhat manly and serious appearance in Epstein's bust is a measure of a change of personality. Augusta Perse today is essentially a subject for students of the Irish theatre and folklore but there was a time when she was an embodiment of an emergent Ireland and by the same token of Sri Lanka the appeal of which to both her and Sir William had been as an evocation of their own beloved Ireland.

Augusta Perse marks the crescendo in the theme of Governors' wives though she herself is a case of a chatelaine who never was. She was followed by another three quarter century of Governors' wives but none of them came anywhere near her standards. The only other author was the second Lady Clifford who wrote plays which ran in the West End and novels. However as Clifford's wife this vocation was ill-chosen as his own literary reputation outshone hers and relegated her creations to oblivion. The other artist of standing was Lady Monck-Mason Moore who, according to her husband, had sacrificed painting for official duty. Some of the other wives were of interest in different ways. Information about them is very meagre indeed, the Governor's wife like Calpurnia being presumably taboo as a subject for discussion or comment. What is available are some trite stylized observations which one does not know how to accept whether as the truth or politeness. It was customary to refer them as outstanding beauties. Thus Lady Horton was a Byronian beauty, Lady Ridgeway according to Solomon Dias Bandaranaike a very beautiful woman, Lady Stanley "one of the most beautiful women of that century in any country". From such extravagant praise it would seem as if Governors made their choice at beauty contests like in a Judgement of Paris or that this was customary politeness when referring to Ceasar's wife. Lady Stanley incidentally was perhaps unique as the only Dutch South African to become a chatelaine since Dutch times. Sir William Manning made history by being the only Governor to be married locally and to risk having the ceremony at Queen's House with the Registrar-General for whom this was a rare and intimidating experience performing the ceremony. Both Lady Blake and Lady Stubbs were the daughters of Members of Parliament.

As the official residence where state guests were accommodated, Queen's House was a cavalcade of royalty and of history. There was a continuous and very diverse stream of visitors who were feted and entertained. The identity of these guests is an illuminating commentary on the Protocol of those times, the eminent personages and Britain's foreign relations. It is difficult to enumerate them all and we are indebted to "Remembered Yesterdays" for information on some. They included quite a kaleidescope of foreign royalty and personages, such as the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the King of Cambodia during whose visit there was a dance display at Queen's House by the accompanying entourage of 50 dancing girls, Prince Ferdinand of Italy, Prince Waldemar of Denmark, Prince George of Greece, the future Czar of Russia, the ill-fated Nicholas II as Tsarevitch, the German Crown Prince, son of the Kaiser. An amusing scene ensued during the visit of the German Crown Prince as his host was Governor McCallum, well known for his indelicacy. The conversation had veered to the diplomacy of Edward VII particularly his visits to Europe which were a sore point with the Kaiser who was not enamoured at all of his uncle and the latter reciprocated the dislike with gusto. Governor McCallum had thought it fit to speculate on an encounter between them and one can imagine the faces of the others present with the ADC's presumably waiting with outstretched helmets to catch any falling bricks. Among militarists there were the famous Kitchener and Lord Allenby who clearly had overawed poor Sir Solomon with his burly physique for which he was nicknamed "Bull" and commanding manner. Another interesting visitor was ex-Empress Louis Napoleon of France, then a burnt out volcano looking feeble in black dress.

British Royalty was in a separate category and their rare visits caused quite a local uproar with the ruling circles, the establishment and the locals going berserk trying to outdo each other. These visits became the folklore of colonial Sri Lanka and future generations would talk with pride of the deeds of their ancestors in feting royalty. There were jokes about the ladies who did not wash their hands for days to preserve the royal handshake intact, the beautiful highland lass who caught the roving eye of the Prince and raised some royal eyebrows, the aristocracy paying their homage encumbered with jewellery and miles of brocade, the de Soysa's manufacturing gold service to entice the Prince and the unauthenticated story coined

probably by a rival of the young prince being sternly reprimanded by his imperial mother for stooping to accept native hospitality. There were four such major visits, namely, by Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh in 1870, the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII in 1875, the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VIII in 1925 and the Duke of Gloucester with the regalia of the last king of Kandy in 1931. They all occasioned very similar scenes of festivity and patriotism. These were the glittering levees in Queen's House and King's Pavilion, the loyal toasts, the state drives, the homage and pledges of allegiance and loyalty, the sycophancy and adulation, the fawning and the courtseying. Such scenes were to be witnessed as recently as 1981 showing the addiction of Ceylonese to royalty. These events were artfully staged to elicit loyalty and flattery by skilfully contrived exposures, mixing with hand picked natives and of course the dispensing of honours and accolades to the faithful which was one of the mightiest weapons of British rule. No other power made a comparable discovery. These were essentially flag-waving operations with no political objects whatsoever as the royal visitors were on a tight brief under the watchful care of the Governor and entourage.

Life at Queen's House was not all royalty and festivity. Like in all such places of the mighty there were moments of sadness. The trappings of power did not immunize the incumbents from mortal sorrow. Several such occasions arose within Queen's House. The first was the untimely death of the first Lady Gregory at the age of 43 from sunstroke during a tour of Anuradhapura. This was a great blow to Sir William who was by nature a lonely man under a facade of bonhomie and it occasioned his decision to retire quite prematurely despite requests from the government to continue. He was a broken lonely man until his second lease of happiness with Augusta Perse. It was really in the 20th century that Queen's House experienced tragic happenings. The first victim was Governor Chalmers and his wife who suffered the grievous loss of the death of both their sons within a week in the fearful carnage on the Western front in the spring of 1915. This was followed by the local tragedy of the riots when presumably under the stress of his grief he resorted to measures which were hasty and ill advised. This led to the sequel of his recall though better times lay ahead. Sir John Anderson, his successor whose mission was to heal the wounds caused by the riots and which he accomplished successfully was unique as the only

Governor to die at his station in Sri Lanka. The actual death occurred at Nuwara Eliya but he received a funeral with full honours in Colombo. There were two other casualties among the Governors. The first signs of Clifford's breakdown appeared in Sri Lanka when he was Governor and it was not long after that, following his return to Malaya that he resigned, went home to Britain and was invalided. Sir Graeme Thomson became Governor after a term of service in Africa where he had suffered severely from malaria and gastric disorders. He was a very sick man in Sri Lanka and died on board a ship returning to Britain. Caldecott was probably a tired man when he came to Sri Lanka from Malaya where during a long sojourn he had distinguished himself. He had a slow limping gait and his choice of festina lente or in the Sinhalese translation *hemin hemin* may be attributable to this though it was not calculated to reassure a public impatient for a positive indication. During his Governorship he had to suffer the pressure of the war and later of the regime of Admiral Layton which relegated him to a side and he took refuge in musings about old age and retirement. His wife died in Queen's House in 1940 it is believed of a nervous condition.

After Independence Queen's House was a hive of activity under the Governor-General, Lord Soulbury who was a lavish host and good mixer popular in local circles. He was succeeded by Sir Oliver Goonetilleke as the first Ceylonese Governor-General in a climax to his extraordinary career where he had been successively saviour of his country, negotiator of its Independence, Ambassadorial and Ministerial representative distinguishing himself in whatever he did with his truly remarkable gifts. As Governor-General too these talents were harnessed when he stepped into an apparent breach and saw the country through the 1958 riots. This was his last great service because his career ended in 1962 when he left the Governorship. His exit was the last tragedy to be enacted in Queen's House and the end of an era.

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Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka, the foremost and richest crown colony of the British Empire, was ruled by a Governor from 1796 to 1948. The Governor's powers varied widely from virtual autocrats in the early period to persons with little power in the later years when the local legislature obtained executive powers. The Governor however throughout maintained his position of pre-eminence in deciding colonial policy. In the early period before the introduction of the telegraph and when a letter to England and back took several months, the Governor was entirely on his own and acted as he pleased. One Governor conquered the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815 without any instructions from England, while several others by their hasty actions provoked rebellions in the country. One was responsible for a disastrous invasion of Kandy in 1803.

The book deals not only with the Governors and their formulations of policy but also the colonial society of which the Governor was the centre and in which his wife also played a role. The personalities of the different Governors are discussed and their impact on colonial policy.

The author, Vernon L. B. Mendis, a diplomat by profession is one who has been interested in Sri Lankan history for many years. He was among the first appointees to the Sri Lanka Overseas Service in 1949, and served in it until his retirement in 1980. During his career, he served in many overseas missions and rose to become the Director General of External Affairs and later High Commissioner in Canada, United Kingdom and Ambassador in France. He was the Secretary General of the Colombo Non-Aligned Summit of 1976. He is now an International Civil Servant.

Vernon Mendis is the author of several other books in Sri Lanka, the most outstanding being a *History of Foreign Relations of Sri Lanka*. His *Currents of Asian History*, *The Advent of the British to Ceylon* are likewise important contributions to these subjects.

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