

**RULES OF INDIA.  
EARL CANNING**

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**SIR H. S. CUNNINGHAM**

**RULES OF INDIA.  
EARL CANNING**



# Rulers of India

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EARL CANNING

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# RULERS OF INDIA

## Earl Canning

BY SIR H. S. CUNNINGHAM, K.C.I.E.

*Tu ne cede malis*

Oxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS: 1891

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### NOTE

The orthography of proper names follows the system adopted by the Indian Government for the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. That system, while adhering to the popular spelling of very well-known places, such as Punjab, Lucknow, &c., employs in all other cases the vowels with the following uniform sounds:—

*a*, as in woman: *á*, in father: *i*, as in police: *í*, as in intrigue: *o*, as in cold: *u*, as in bull: *ú*, as in sure: *e*, as in grey.



# *EARL CANNING*

## *FIRST VICEROY OF BRITISH INDIA*



### CHAPTER I

#### THE ARGUMENT

INDIA has added a thrilling chapter to the Englishman's national romance—a chapter which more, perhaps, than any other in our annals, abounds in interest and pathos—in dark, tragic scenes, strange episodes—the success of splendid daring—the supremacy of the constant mind over adverse fate—the determined mood which gains reinforcement from hope and consolation from despair. It has been the arena in which the qualities which Englishmen most prize in themselves and their fellow-countrymen have been exhibited on a grand scale—the iron will—the unwavering purpose—the practical aptitude for the management of human affairs—long-enduring fortitude—devotion to duty—the generous contagion of self-sacrifice, when courage glows into heroism and the commonplace becomes sublime.

With no original design which looked beyond a mercantile profit, the warding off of imminent danger, or the coercion of a troublesome rival, the English found themselves, after a century of unexampled

vicissitudes,—the import of which they were unable, at the time, to comprehend,—the paramount power among the unstable governments and shattered nationalities of Hindustán.

Destiny had driven them—much against their will—to discard their counting-houses and ledgers for an Imperial task. Dupleix's bold conception of employing one set of natives to subjugate another had been employed to good effect. Again and again Indian troops, drilled and led by Englishmen, had triumphed over an Indian foe. One great State after another had succumbed, and—effete, prostrate, moribund—had been converted into component parts of a living organisation. The robber communities—'jackals tearing at the carcase of the Mughal Empire'—had been tamed into order or scared to flight. There had been fierce struggles in which Maráthás or Sikhs had tested the prowess of the Western conquerors to the utmost—dark hours in which it had seemed doubtful whether those Western conquerors were destined to hold their own. But their ascendancy was now complete. Dalhousie's masterful will and firm hand, had crushed the last serious effort of the fiercest of the races who had ventured to contest it. The Sikhs, after a crushing defeat at Gujarát, had bent in submission to the fated conqueror, and their Afghán allies had fled cowering through the Kháibar Pass. From the Himálaya to Cape Comorin no power questioned the supremacy of the English Ráj.

On such a theatre it was inevitable that the idiosyn-

crasies of individual character should stamp themselves on particular epochs, and give a special colour to the area of their influence. The progress of the English Empire was, in one sense, continuous; for it was the result of great causes which transcended alike human insight and human will. But its rate varied with the convictions and temperament of the ruler, who, for the time being, embodied the policy of England in the East.

One powerful character after another swayed the growth of Empire this way or that, gave it a momentary check or urged it with new-born impetus on its onward course. One school of rulers emphasised a policy of forbearance, cautious abstention, sympathy with the venerable fatuity of Eastern beliefs and the picturesque ineptitude of Eastern institutions. Another favoured a forward policy, and made no secret of the creed that the regeneration of India was to be found in unflinching application of Western methods and the prompt and vigorous infusion of Western ideas.

At the close of the eighteenth century the Marquess of Wellesley exhibited the programme of conquest and supremacy in its most imposing light, and with bold hand traced the lineaments of a British Ráj which should be paramount in India. Hastings gave daring realisation to Wellesley's dreams, crushed the Pindáris, tamed the great Maráthá Confederacy, and proclaimed England as an Eastern Power by sending an Indian army to co-operate in Egypt against an European foe.