

**OXFORD HISTORICAL AND
LITERARY STUDIES. VOLUME 6,
KEIGWIN'S REBELLION (1683-4):
AN EPISODE IN THE HISTORY OF
BOMBAY**

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By RAY & OLIVER STRACHEY

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at

P R E F A C E

THE authorities for the events connected with Keigwin's Rebellion fall naturally under three heads ; manuscript records, contemporary travellers or writers, and later historians.

I. *Manuscript Records.* These, as might be expected in so unexplored a field, are by far the most important sources of information. The old East India Company kept most careful records of the correspondence to and from India, and also of the Consultations of the various Councils in the East, and of the letters that passed between the different factories ; and enough of these remain to give a very complete picture of the affairs in Western India during the period we have to deal with. They may be divided as below :

1. *Original Correspondence*, known as the O. Cs. These are a series of MS. volumes containing the originals of a vast number of letters received by the Court from its servants, together with their enclosures, and are certainly the most important material available for the period.

2. *Factory Records of Surat and Bombay.* The factory records are arranged according to factories ; thus there is one series of volumes for Surat, and another for Bombay. They contain copies of letters both dispatched and received, and minutes of the consultations held.

3. *Letter Books* containing copies of the letters sent from England by the Company to their various factories, arranged according to date.

4. *Court Books*, which contain the minutes of the Court meetings in Leadenhall Street.

5. *Miscellaneous Factory Records*, among which is one volume (No. 16) devoted entirely to the struggle between John Child and the Interloping partners Pettit and Bowcher.

6. *Manuscript Records at Bombay.* We have unfortunately not had the opportunity of consulting the original records, but

the most important documents are available to the public in Forrest's *Selections from the Bombay State Papers*, a publication of the utmost value to the student, and one to which we are much indebted.¹

7. *Orme's MSS.*² This is a collection in the India Office comprising a large number of invaluable extracts in that historian's holograph from old records of the Company, of many of which we have been unable to find the originals; they have probably perished in the interval, so that only Orme's copies survive.

Outside the Company's records in the India Office the material is not very great. In the Record Office the State Papers for this period have not yet been calendared, so that it is possible that we may have missed interesting documents; apart from duplicates of India Office records, we are chiefly indebted to this Office for some interesting letters from Dr. John St. John, the Bombay Admiralty Judge, and for the logs of the *Phoenix*, sent out by the King to put down the Rebellion, and of the *Assistance*, the ship in command of which Keigwin met his death.

In the Bodleian Library, among the Rawlinson MSS., are duplicates of several papers referring to the rebellion, and a few notes written by Sir Josia Child.

The Heralds' Office and Somerset House have supplied us with information about Josia and John Child that has been most unaccountably overlooked by previous historians, seeing how easily accessible it must always have been. The Heralds' Office records, too, are the only authority for the previous life of Sir Thomas Grantham, already brought to light by Yule in his edition of Hedges' *Diary*.

II. *Contemporary Writers.* The most important of these are Fryer, Hamilton, and Ovington. The last named came to India as a chaplain in 1689, and his *Voyage to Surat* is useful only as giving an excellent account of the conditions of

¹ Our references to 'Forrest', in this work, are to vol. i. of the 'Home Series' of these Selections.

² Robert Orme, 1728-1801, was Historiographer to the East India Company from 1769 till his death.