

**RULERS OF INDIA.
LORD
WILLIAM BENTINCK**

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Rulers of India. Lord William Bentinck by Demetrius C. Boulger

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DEMETRIUS C. BOULGER

**RULERS OF INDIA.
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RULERS OF INDIA

Lord William Bentinck

By DEMETRIUS C. BOULGER

AUTHOR OF 'THE HISTORY OF CHINA,' ETC.

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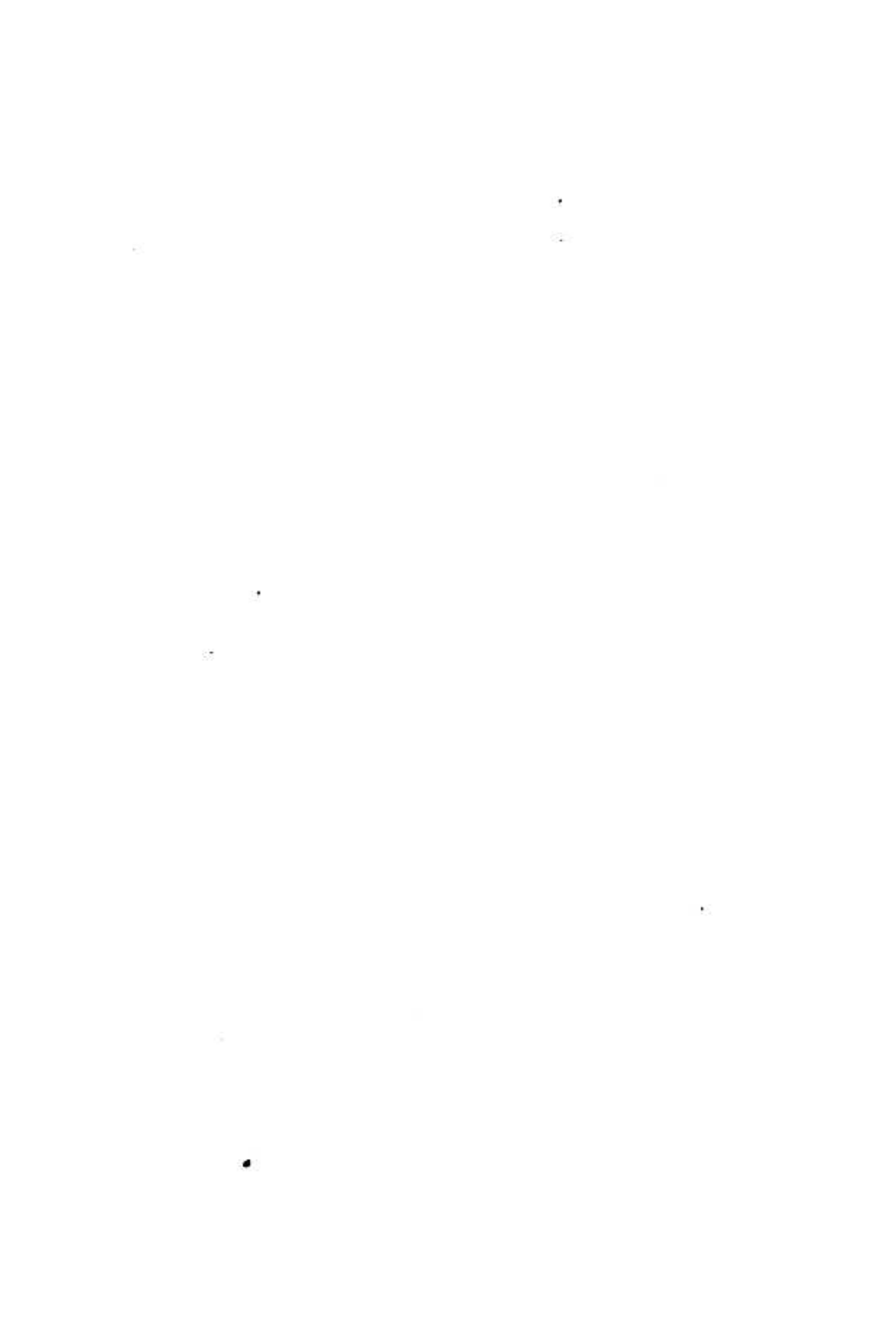
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NOTE

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: d, as in father: f, as in police: g, as in intrigue:
o, as in cold: u, as in bull: s, as in sure: e, as in grey.



LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

THE administration of Lord William Bentinck was one of peace. Following the administrations of Cornwallis, Wellesley, Hastings, and Amherst, and preceding those of Auckland, Hardinge, and Dalhousie, through the absence of foreign adventure and territorial conquest his Governor-Generalship may seem commonplace in comparison with conquerors who crushed the Mysore and Maráthá confederacies, planted the banners of the Company on the Indus and the Irrawaddy, and put forward the right of the rulers of India to exercise a controlling influence over Afghánistán. But the very contrast between the character of Lord William Bentinck's administration and that of the other British Governor-Generals whom we have named serves to bring into stronger relief the importance of the work he accomplished in the making of the India of to-day.

The youngest student of the growth of the British power in India does not need to be told that we first went to that country as traders, and that our only representatives were merchants who thought nothing about the politics of the country or of interfering with the Native Powers, and who were exclusively engaged in their counting-houses. That condition of things went on for nearly 150 years, and when the competition with the French, who would have expelled all other European traders if the programme of Dupleix had been realised, resulted in our unexpected triumph, accomplished by the genius of Clive, the East India Company—still cherishing above territorial possessions and military glory the commercial monopoly granted by Elizabeth and extended by Anne—preserved its character as a society of merchants, esteeming its annual investment in country goods, whether in Bengal, Bombay, or Madras, of far higher importance than matters of administration.

The East India Company, true to its origin, clung to its pacific vocation to the end, in spite of every temptation to play a sovereign part. Greatness was forced upon it by the many remarkable men who appeared in its service for sixty years after Clive had pointed out the easy and attractive road to wider dominion. It regretted the diversion of money from the legitimate pursuit of trade to the maintenance of armies, and it only reconciled itself to the course because Warren Hastings proved that the execution of a great policy in India did not necessarily entail the

payment of a smaller dividend in Leadenhall Street. The conquest of a fresh province was for many years the cause of as much anxiety as satisfaction to the Honourable Court.

When the Charter of the East India Company was renewed by Parliament in 1793 those feelings were in full force, and if it had then been renewed with any serious diminution of its commercial privileges it would have been deprived of half its value. Very much the same feeling was prevalent when it was again renewed in 1813, although on this occasion the Company was deprived of the monopoly of the trade with India. It retained however the most favoured position for carrying on this trade, and it preserved the monopoly of that with China. Lord William Bentinck was sent to India when the renewal of the Charter had again become imminent and formed the burning question in Anglo-Indian circles, but a great change had passed over the spirit of the Directors of the East India Company. Certain facts had become patent to even the most prejudiced minds in Leadenhall Street, and it was recognised that a change was at hand. The maintenance of any commercial monopoly was in antipathy to the free spirit of a trading people like the English. That certain gentlemen trading with China should be privileged, and that the bulk of the nation attempting the same thing should be denounced as interlopers, outside the law, and little better than pirates, was nothing more or less than an anachronism. The Court had begun