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A
BOOK OF BOMBAY.

BY
JAMES DOUGLAS.

BOMBAY :
PRINTED AT THE BOMBAY GAZETTE STEAM PRESS.

1883.

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SEVAGI.

THIS
BOOK OF BOMBAY,
AN ATTEMPT
TO ILLUSTRATE
THE HISTORY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF THAT CITY
AND NEIGHBOURHOOD,
IS
RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED
TO,
THE PEOPLE OF BOMBAY,
OF
EVERY RACE AND CREED,
BY
THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

BOMBAY MARRIAGE TREATY.

	PAGE
Article XI.—Instrument of Possession	3—20

CHAPTER II.

WESTERN INDIA IN 1583.

The Man about Town—King of Ballagat—The Master-Mariner—Decline and Fall—The Inquisition—Miscellanea—Archæological Note on Linschotten	23—46
---	-------

CHAPTER III.

BOMBAY BEGINNINGS.

Mortuary Returns—Exchange—Profits of Trade—The Cotton Trade—The Imports—Freights—Jovial Times—Bombay Green—Never Taken—A Sneaker of Bombay Punch—A Home in Bombay in 1694	49—78
---	-------

CHAPTER IV.

GERALD AUNGIER, GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY.

Who he was—What he did—Traits—His Silver Chalice—Where he lived—His House—Conclusion	81—99
--	-------

CHAPTER V.

SEEVAJEE.

	PAGE
His Country—His Birth—His Person and Character —His Accomplishments—Part Second—Traits Bad and Good—His Two Great Crimes—His Master Passion—Seevajee's Coronation—His Death	101—124

CHAPTER VI.

KANOJEE ANGRIA AND THE PIRATES OF WESTERN
INDIA.

Early Navigation—Angria's Kolaba—Fleet of See- vajee—The Commerce assailed by the Pirates— What he cost us—His Crowning Achievement— Vengeance—The English Pirate—The Police of the Indian Seas—Their Cruelties—The Last of the Angrias—Their Old Haunts—Conclusion— Supplementary Note	127—156
---	---------

CHAPTER VII.

BOMBAY, 1750.

Grose's Account—When Grose Landed—Mr. Grose asked to Supper—A Few Ladies—Subjects of Con- versation—The Government House—A Colossal Sundial—The Bombay of 1750—Hornby's Vel- lard—The Fort—The Dockyard—Cartography of Bombay—The Towers of Silence—First Parsee in Europe—A Plucky Woman—Elephants—His Portrait of Kanojee Angria—Raighur—Bullion and Exchange—Native Character—Malabar Hill, 150—194	150—194
--	---------

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BOOK OF GOMBRON, 1752-53.

	PAGE
History not Antiquarianism—Mortality Bills—The Inkstand—Etcetera—The Lord of the Hot Countries—Four Gradations of Service—People were here before us—The English Surnames of Bombay	197—214

CHAPTER IX.

Horatio Nelson : or Bombay 1775	217—226
---------------------------------------	---------

CHAPTER X.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE AT SUEZ, 1798.

Suez—His Visit and Schemes—Crosses the Red Sea—State of Feeling in Bombay—The Suez Canal—The Forbes' Loans—Conclusion	229—246
---	---------

CHAPTER XI.

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON IN BOMBAY.

A Love-passage—The Duke's Nose—The Duke of Wellington in Bombay and Western India—The Duke in India—The Bombay of his Period—A Great Dearth of Materials—The Duke's Triumphal Entry into Bombay—The Condition of the People—Why was Arthur Wellesley here—His Celebrated March to Poona—Duel ; Discipline at Nagar—Native Opinion of the Duke—Traits—Here are Two Notabilia—Was the Duke at Matheran—The Duke of Wellington's Bombay Residence	249—280
--	---------

CHAPTER XII.

MOUNTSTUART ELPHINSTONE.

	PAGE
Items—His Popularity—Portrait—Political—Eccentricities—His History of India—Governors of Bombay—Religious—Character and Accomplishments—Biographical	283—302

CHAPTER XIII.

SIR JOHN MALCOLM.

Priliminary—Calf Country—The Soldiers' Return—In Paris—A Big Day—Dinner to the Ettrick Shepherd—Governor of Bombay—Reductio ad Absurdum—Vi et Armis—Person—Conclusion	305—326
---	---------

CHAPTER XIV.

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH ; OR BOMBAY 1804 TO 1812;

Bombay a Dull Place—The Diary and Letters of Mackintosh—He did Good Work in Bombay—A Quiet Day at Parell—A Noisy Day at Taralla—Calls—On the Judgment Seat—An Unspoken Bombay Sermon—Mackintosh and Wilson	...329—352
--	------------

CHAPTER XV.

POONA AND THE PESHWAS.

A Retrospect	355—363
--------------------	---------

CHAPTER XVI.

SEEVAJEE'S FORTS.

TORNA	371—381
THE FORT OF RAJMACHEE, NEAR KHANDALA.	
The Bombay Forts—The Road to it—The Look-out—Condition of the People—Streams	382—397

THE FORT OF RAIGHUR.

	PAGE
Raighur Ho—View of Nagotna Creek from Bombay—Pachad and the Staircase—Position—Descriptive—Architecture—A View from Raighur—Why Seevajee Chose Raighur—The English Embassy—Nil Desperandum—The Burst of the Monsoon—The Coronation—Portrait—How they Spend the Time—A Transaction in Piece-Goods—Seevajee and the English—Its Memories	398—434

CHAPTER XVII.

BEEJAPOOR.

Meadows Taylor—The Accommodation—Tombs—Doves—Sheep and Dogs—Famine—The Country about Beejapoor—Globe-trotters	437—456
---	---------

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MARTYRS OF TANNA.

Note on the Gold of Ophir.....	459—470
--------------------------------	---------

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HON'BLE E. I. COMPANY'S FIRST SHROFF IN GUJARAT.

Trawadi Shri Krishna Arjunji Nathji of Surat.....	473—482
---	---------

CHAPTER XX.

JAMES FORBES.

His Book—Arrival in Bombay—Ways and Means—His Library—James Forbes and the Ladies of Bombay—Diana and the Cobra—The Execution of Gassi Ram—Natural History of Bombay—Notable Things—The Oriental Memoirs—The Apostle—His Attachment to Bombay—Home—Forbes's View from Malabar Hill	485—516
--	---------

CHAPTER XXI.

	PAGE
Dr. Wilson	519—542

CHAPTER XXII.

BOMBAY DIRECTORY—1792.

The Honorable Mayor's Court—The Honorable Court of Appeals—List of Merchants	545—550
---	---------

CHAPTER XXIII.

TWELVE VIEWS OF BOMBAY.

The Doctor, 1673—The Philosopher, 1804—The Tra- veller, 1812—The Soldier, 1818—The Bishop, 1825—The Governor, 1830—The Geologist, 1855— The Cicerone, 1859—The Presbyter, 1866—The Editor from a Balloon, 1877—The Agriculturist, 1879—Sir Richard Temple, 1879	553—558
--	---------

CHAPTER XXIV.

BOMBAY, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL, TWELVE VIEWS.

An Eye-witness, 1690—The Muslim, 1694—The Statesman, 1707—The Political Economist, 1775 —The Civilian—Ces gens la, 1765-83—La femme Anglaise—Mackintosh's Bombay, 1804-11—The Missionary, 1811—The Persian—The Chota Sahib, 1830—L'Inde Occidentale Poona, 1832— The Censorious, 1854—Excelsior.....	561—566
--	---------

PREFACE.

WE make no apology for presenting these sketches in a collected form to the reader. They have already been kindly received through the press by the Bombay public; and the Bombay Government and the Director of Public Instruction have generously awarded their patronage to the publication, for which I thank them. They are the work of an unprofessional pen, during intervals of leisure.

“I am a plain man, and I think if I had pitted my materials into better hands, I would have done better.”*

No doubt of it; but they must now go forth as they are to the public, with all their sins upon them.

They have been written in the interests of good government.

They do not aspire to the dignity, the philosophy, or even the rigid accuracy of History, and

* Elliot Warburton in *Darien*.

pretend to no special sources of information, but what are open to the public.

They presume, however, by way of endeavour, to illustrate one of the noblest episodes in the Colonial History of England, the rise and growth, amid many difficulties, of a great city on the shores of Asia, with some account of the men who have distinguished themselves in its History.

Why do men, after a long residence in a foreign country, set such store on their place of abode? The answer is *Patria est ubicunque bene est.*

But Bombay over and above this has special and great attractions.

For beauty of situation it is "the joy of the whole earth," unrivalled, at all events, in the Eastern dominions of Queen Victoria.

Its geographical position is also unrivalled. When Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH resided in Bombay, it was considered the most obscure corner of India. The Suez Canal has now made of it the key of Asia.

The Time in which we live seems to bridge two vast eras, and we stand midway between the old and the new. We have witnessed the end of one era, and are now the spectators of another, the era of steamers, railways, and telegraphs, and

have seen what no generation has seen before, nor will ever see again.

It is at such a time that one sits down to remember that Bombay has a history before the opening of the Suez Canal, and I have written to little purpose if these essays fail in conveying to the reader an exhibition of moral strength and a tenacity of purpose unexampled in the History of Colonisation.

The spectacle of this lone and isolated community, battling for existence for a hundred years, and upholding the banner and the honour of England, is a noble one, and not devoid of moral grandeur. Strange to say it attracted little or no attention at home.

In the Diary of JOHN EVELYN, one of the most accomplished men of his day, and who was in the thick of politics, 1660 to 1705, that is, during the reigns of Charles II., James II., and William III., and which embraces every notable event of his time, there is no mention of Bombay, and yet this was the time during which were laid the foundations of our dominion in Western India.

One word more. The writer has kept steadily before him the condition of the people. Are the subject peoples better or worse off than they were under the former native governments of

Western India? A question of much import, and of more import to the native populations of these countries, than it is even to the ruling class. The answer which is contained in these papers is this, that the Governments we supplanted in Western India were unequal to the task of guaranteeing life and property to their subjects; that they were out of the pathway of human progress, and did not assist in any way the onward march of Civilisation. This is not an English view of the subject, but is and must be the view of every man who can distinguish right from wrong, or the difference between a good government and a bad government. It thus resolves itself into a matter of fact, not a matter of conjecture. The writer has no interested motive to serve in these essays. He is not a servant of the Government of India.

According to the verdict of History it was perfectly open to him in view of the facts to write either one way or the other.

The facts left no other course open to him, than to denounce these Governments as the enemies of mankind.

What destiny is reserved for this great community of Bombay, God only knows. Population and opulence have increased, and may increase

with giant strides, but we can scarcely imagine a time when the story of its early history will cease to interest, or its example be without effect upon future generations.

I write this from the Bay of Naples, which recalled to Sir JOHN MALCOLM, the glorified image of his beloved Bombay.

June 10th, 1882

