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Lord Curzon as Viceroy of India.

INDIA UNDER CURZON & AFTER

BY LOVAT FRASER



TO ME THE MESSAGE IS CARVED IN GRANITE, IT IS HEWN OUT OF THE ROCK OF DOOM—THAT OUR WORK IS RIGHTEOUS AND THAT IT SHALL ENDURE Lord Ourson at Mansion House July 20, 1904

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

MCMXI (1911)

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This book was first planned in 1905, while Lord Curzon was still Viceroy of India. My original purpose, now much expanded, was to write an account of some of the more permanent and enduring features of his Administration, which seemed likely to become obscured in the public mind through special causes. I was unable until last year to begin the task I had set myself, and even then was almost immediately stopped by more imperative duties. This summer it became evident that I must choose between rapid completion and indefinite postponement. The choice was not difficult, for the materials were collected, I knew my subject, and my views were already formed, although in some respects they have undergone revision. I decided to undertake the work at once, though time was pressing; I was about to journey forth again; and even as these words are being printed I shall be pursuing once more the familiar pathway to the East.

It is necessary to say that Lord Curzon is in no sense responsible for this book. He did not suggest it, nor has he seen a line of it. It is in no respect a reflection of his opinions, and he has neither authorised nor inspired a single statement that it contains. Probably there are portions of it with which he will disagree. I have had no access to any private documents or correspondence. For any inaccuracies I am alone to blame.

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If the narrative reveals a certain intimacy with events. the explanation is simple. I was in India during the whole of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty. I saw him land, and saw him depart. During the greater part of the time I was Editor of The Times of India, and the Editor of an Indian newspaper has unusual opportunities for acquiring knowledge. I had many sources of information, generally unsolicited. visited many of the places mentioned, and have some acquaintance with other Asiatic countries. I knew personally most of those who figure in these pages, both Englishmen and Indians, and some of them are my friends. Such knowledge of India as I possess did not begin with Lord Curzon's arrival, nor has it ended with his departure. I may add that I never met Lord Curzon, save once for a few minutes at the Delhi Durbar, until long after he had left India, nor did I ever have any communication with him, directly or indirectly, upon public affairs during his Viceroyalty. The contrary has sometimes been alleged, but the suggestion is unfounded.

I have noticed that in books of this description, dealing for the most part with contemporary politics, it is customary for the blushing author to appear for a moment. upon the threshold, in order to avow that he has no intention of anticipating the verdict of history. I shall make no such superfluous declaration. This is simply a description of certain phases of British rule in India as I saw them; my views are based upon actual experience, and what history may say is no concern of mine. I have tried to write neither history nor biography, but rather the sketch of a period in which Lord Curzon was the central figure. In so far as the book partakes of the character of biography, I claim exemption from the admonition that it is inadvisable

to write a biography of a man still living. The Viceroyalty of India is an episode in a statesman's life which has no direct relation to the rest of his career. It may colour or sadden the whole of his remaining years, but as a piece of work it is finished for ever when he relinquishes office. The guns have hardly roared forth their final salute when the sculptor is busy upon the memorial statue. The verdict may be written, for India will see him no more. In such cases, there are still reticences to be observed, and I trust I have not been unmindful of them; but there can be no impropriety in examining the achievements of a Viceroy of India six years after his Viceregal existence has ceased.

I have endeavoured to be impartial, and know I have been sincere. I have not the slightest personal interest to serve. I occupied at the time, and still occupy, the position of a detached spectator. I believe the period I have described to have been a memorable epoch in the British control of India, and see no reason why it should be left to some one fifty years hence to say so. We are nowadays all so anxious to be thought "judicial" that we fear to praise great deeds worthily done before our eyes. Moreover, British rule in India may be subjected to severe tests long before fifty years are over, and my ultimate object has been to interest English and American readers in some of the Indian problems of to-day.

I am advised to explain, with reference to an expression I have frequently used, that the Government of India are wont to announce their decisions to the public, and sometimes to expound their policy, in the form of "Resolutions." I have occasionally made use of brief passages from articles which I have contributed to various newspapers and reviews,

but such extracts are so infrequent and fragmentary that they do not require specific acknowledgment. With regard to persons upon whom titles have been bestowed in the course of the events here narrated, I have sometimes referred to them by their new, and sometimes by their old designations, as seemed convenient. I have used the expression "native states" and "native army" because I know of no suitable equivalent; when I say "Anglo-Indians," I mean the class of Englishmen who have always borne, and always will bear, that designation, and not the estimable community to whom the Government now seek to apply it; and in the spelling of Oriental place-names I have followed common practice without regard to rules which are never heeded outside a Government report.

L. F.

September 1911

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