Part I

MARATHA SOURCES

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R. P. PATWARDHAN, B.A., I.E.S.

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One of the earliest resolutions passed by the Indian Historical Records Commission, which met for the first time Bombay in 1919, was to the effect that the Bombay Government should bring out a comprehensive Source Book of Maratha At the third meeting, held in Delhi in January 1921. History. the Commission received the assurance of His Excellency Sir George Lloyd, that the matter was receiving attention, and the subject was again broached at Calcutta in 1923, by Professor B. K. Thakore, M.A., I.E.S., with whom the proposal had originated. The Government of Bombay thereupon appointed a representative committee consisting of Mr. G. S. Sardesai and Professors Jadunath Sarkar, B. K. Thakore, V. D. Potdar, the late Rao Bahadur Parasnis, and myself, to take the business in hand without more ado. The committee had a series of meetings in the cold weather of 1924-25 : a list of select documents was provisionally drawn up, and the work divided among the members. It was decided that Professor Potdar should undertake the translation of the Marathi passages, with the assistance of Mr. Sardesai; Professor Sarkar should be responsible for the Persian sources; Professor Thakore for foreign sources other than Persian; while I should act as general editor. Unfortunately, our schemes, as even the best-laid do, went astray. The members of the original committee quickly found themselves immersed in official duties in widely separated parts of India. Professor Potdar, at the end of two years, was forced to abandon his portion of the undertaking owing to overwhelming pressure of work. Professor Thakore was appointed to a Professorship at Baroda College. Mr. Sardesai was lecturing in Patna University. Professor Sarkar was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University. Under these circumstances, I was compelled to make the best of a perplexing situation. Rather than allow the scheme to drop through altogether, I sought and obtained the permission of Government to entrust the editing of the Marathi sources' to Professor R. P. Patwardhan, B.A., I.E.S., Professor of History at the Elphinstone College, Bombay, while I endeavoured to take the responsibility for the foreign sources upon my own shoulders. To this the Committee agreed. We leave our readers to judge of the success of our attempt. We would like to point out, however, that this book does not pretend to be exhaustive. An exhaustive work on such a theme would fill, not one but many volumes of extracts, and the NO NO 21----

result would defeat its own ends. The reader would, as the saying goes, fail to see the wood for the trees. Our endeavour, therefore, has been to prepare, for the use of the student of Maratha History, a representative selection of the best authenticated documents bearing upon this period. In European and American Schools and Universities, the study of original sources, even at an early stage, is becoming increasingly popular. Students are trained, not to take their opinions ready-made from text-books, but to draw their own conclusions from contemporary documents. It is in this training of the judgment that the educational value of the study of history so largely lies. The study of the "Source-book" may be described as the first stage in historical research, the second being, of course, where the student learns to search for and select original material for himself.

Now that Indian Universities allow candidates for the M.A. degree to submit a thesis in lieu of papers, we trust that a work of this kind may have some value, if only as a sign-post, pointing the way to the prosecution of further researches into the originals. We trust also that such a volume may be of value to the large and ever-growing number of students of Indian History, both here and abroad, who wish to obtain an insight into contemporary documents, but are debarred from doing so by want of knowledge, say, of Marathi, French or Persian. This volume is intended to be the first of a series, bringing the history of the Maharashtra down to the time of the British conquest in 1817. We hope therefore that it will receive the support and encouragement necessary for the continuance of the undertaking.

POONA, 1928.

H. G. RAWLINSON.

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A little over a century ago Grant Duff's "History of the Mahrattas" was given to the world. It at once superseded the older works of "the indefatigable Orme" (1782) and Scott Waring (1810), and established its reputation as the standard and authoritative account of the rise and decline of the Maratha power in India. Grant Duff had enjoyed, indeed, unrivalled facilities for the accomplishment of his self-imposed task. Earlier writers had relied, as a rule, on Persian and European sources; Grant Duff, on the other hand, was in a position to command and utilise a vast mass of Marathi documents as well. Some "Bakhars" or Chronicles were known to exist in Marathi; in the very year of Orme's Fragments, for instance, the great Maratha statesman, Nana Fadnavis, had a "Bakhar of the Peshwas" written for the instruction of the then boy-Peshwa, Madhavrao II. Scott Waring tells us that he used some of these chronicles-he says he used four Shivaji period-and pronounces a well-known for the eulogy on them.⁽¹⁾ Grant Duff not only utilised the Bakhars, but obtained access to the State papers of the Peshwas, which were made over to him by Mountstuart Elphinstone after the overthrow of the Peshwa's Government in 1818. Many papers in the possession of the Raja of Satara, the existence of which was unknown even to the Peshwa, were confided to him by the Raja. There were, in addition, many other papers such as records of temples, family legends, and documents brought forward at that time of resettlement by descendants of old families either to substantiate their just claims, or to set up unfounded pretensions. Copies of some of these papers were lodged by Grant Duff with the Literary Society of Bombay, the predecessor of the present Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Towards the seventies of the nineteenth century, the first: note of criticism of Grant Duff's work was sounded in Maharashtra. By this time the introduction of English education, and the establishment of Universities, had produced scholars well fitted, by their acquaintance with

^{(1)&}quot; "Their historians write in a plain, simple, and unaffected style, content to make passing events in apposite terms without seeking turgid imagery or inflated phrasoology. Victory and defeat are briefly related. If they pass over the latter too hastly, they do not dwell upon the former with unnecessary minuteness. They do not endeavour to bias or mislead the judgment, but are cortainly greatly deficient in chronology and in historical reflections."

the great English historians, to carry on research in Indian history. And though the papers lodged by Grant Duff with the Literary Society had been lost, a few Marathi bakhars were known in manuscript. Men who turned from Gibbon and Macaulay on the one hand and the "Bakhar of the Battle of Kharda," and "Malharrao Holkar's Despatch to Peshwa Balaji Bajirao about the Battle of Panipat" on the other, to Grant Duff, saw much reason to be dissatisfied with the latter. They missed in Grant Duff the enthusiasm and patriotic fervour of the bakhars. the art and the philosophic depth of Gibbon. Grant Duff's work, they felt, instead of being named "A History of the Marathas," ought rather to have been called "An account of some of the campaigns of the Marathas." This was the point of Mr. N. J. Kirtane's "Criticism of Grant Duff's History of the Marathas (1868)," and later, of Mr. Rajwade's introduction to the first volume of his "Materials for the History of the Marathas (1898)." The latter pointed out, by means of an examination of the letters published in this volume, how Grant Duff's account of the period 1750-1761 was wrong in some points, and in need of supplementing in others.

About 1870, therefore, several scholars in Maharashtra devoted themselves to the search for documents. The fruit of their labours was the Kavyetihasa-Sangraha, a monthly magazine devoted to the publication of old poems and historical documents, under the editorship of K. N. Sane (1851-1927) and J. B. Modak. The magazine continued for 12 years, and was then stopped for want of support. It had published some thirty volumes of historical materials, mostly bakhars, together with some letters and other documents. The work of the Kavyetihasa-Sangraha was continued by Mr. Parasnis (1870-1926) in other magazines, viz., the Bharata-Varsha (1898-1900) and the Itihasa-Sangraha (1908-1916) and by Mr. Vasudeo Shastri Khare (ob. June 1924) in the Aitihasika-Lekha-Sangraha (1897-1922). Mr. Khare's work, which had run into 12 volumes when it was cut short by his death. consists of selections from the papers of the Patwardhan Chiefs of Miraj, with valuable Introductions, and is of great value to students of the later 18th Century history.

But the most outstanding personality in the field of historical research during the last 40 years—the most indefatigable in the collection of documents, most daring in their interpretation—was Mr. Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade (1864-1926). Early in life he devoted himself to this cause, "went on foot from village to village, tracing old Maratha families of sardars, clerks and priests, and examining their stock of papers, over which he pored with a concentration and devotion hardly to be met with in ordinary life. Without heeding hunger or thirst, feeding on charity and accepting from kindly people money and expenses just enough to satisfy the bare needs of his travel, he roamed about for years, throughout Maharashtra and through many parts outside, with heavy loads of old manuscript papers on his back, which he has now stored in different centres with friends and pupils whom he collected round himself."* Twenty-two volumes of these papers have been published under the name of Marathyanchya Itihasachin Sadhanen (Materials for the history of the Marathas). In 1910 Rajwade, with a few others, founded a society at Poona to carry on the work of historical research. This is the Bharata-Itihas-Samshodhak Mandal (Indian Historical Research Society), a flourishing institution, which, through its Quarterly magazine, reports of its fortnightly and annual meetings, and other publications, has done and is doing valuable work towards the fulfilment of its object.

It may be said, then, that now we need no longer look upon Grant Duff as a "primary source." So far as the period covered by the present volume is concerned, it must be admitted that though the devoted search of nearly half a century has resulted in the discovery of a great many private papers, it has not brought to light any State-papers worth mentioning. This, however, is only what is to be expected from the chaos into which Maharashtra fell after 1689. At the same time, for precisely the same reason, Grant Duff too could not have had access to any Statepapers which are now withheld from us. From the materials at our command we can infer, for the most part, what authorities he has been following. And on the other hand we now possess some materials of the existence of which he does not seem to have been aware. The private papers themselves, besides being valuable for the social history of the period, give sometimes important, and occasionally interesting, information about political transactions.

At the same time one cannot help expressing the wisha vain one, perhaps-that the originals of the papers which

* Sardesai-Main Currouts, pp. 40-41.

the devotion of Mr. Rajwade and other workers has succeeded in bringing to light, were to be stored in some central institution, and thus made readily available to students. The reader of these papers is haunted by a lurking fear that the documents on which he has been building his conclusions may possibly have been inaccurately transcribed or deciphered, or may even have been forgeries. Mr. Raiwade himself noted in the case of a very few papers that they appeared to him to be forgeries; and many of them were transcribed from the originals, not by Mr. Rajwade himself, but by clerks. Many of the papers, again, purport to make grants of rent-free lands to individuals, and one can imagine the temptation there would be to forge such papers at the resettlement in Shahu's reign after the storm and stress of the last twenty or twentyfive years. It may be that the proportion of doubtful papers among the total number published so far is infinitesimal: still it is desirable that the authenticity of every single published paper be placed absolutely above suspicion. The danger of building the edifice of history on foundations not absolutely firm has been strikingly illustrated in a recent case, which may be mentioned here. In Rajwade (Vol. XV) there is a letter of Shivaji's, with his well-known seal, bearing the date Shake 1561 (A.D. 1639). The late Prof. Limaye argued from this that Shivaji's ambitions were encouraged by his tutor Dadaji Konddev, and even by his father Shahaji, for obviously a boy of 12 would never have dreamed of having a seal of this description made for himself! From Prof. Limaye's article this view found its way into Edwardes's notes on Grant Duff (Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 102, note). It has recently been pointed out by the learned Chief of Aundh, however, that the date was wrongly deciphered by Mr. Rajwade, and that it ought to be Shake 1570 (A.D. 1648). Thus the whole bottom is knocked out of Prof. Limave's argument. This case illustrates the necessity of making our foundations absolutely firm, and it would be a great gain to Maratha history if the idea referred to above is realised.

In preparing these Selections, I must acknowledge with gratitude the assistance I received from Principal H. G. Rawlinson, Sardar K. C. Mehendale, and Mr. S. M. Divekar. All these, particularly Mr. Divekar, generously supplied me with Looks which it would have been very difficult to procure

PREFACE

within a short time. To Principal Rawlinson I am further obliged for looking over the proof-sheets and suggesting in several cases a happier phrasing than I had thought of. The translations are in most cases my own, but I have derived much help from Prof. Sen's "Shiva-Chhatrapati" and the "Shivaji Souvenir" edited by Mr. Sardesai. Above all my thanks are due to Mr. D. V. Apte. I owe a great deal, not only to his scholarly published work, but to some personal discussions I had with him—if those could be called "discussions" in which I for the most part was a silent hearer.

R. P. PATWARDHAN.



SHIVAJI

COPIED FOR MANUCCI, FROM AN ORIGINAL IN THE PALACE OF SHAH ALAM, CIRCA 1686

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