

RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY'S MISSION TO ENGLAND

BASED ON UNPUBLISHED RECORDS

**BY
BRAJENDRANATH BANERJI**

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TO

S. S. BOSE, Esq.

AS A TOKEN OF SINCERE REGARD

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the Imperial Record Office, Calcutta, I have succeeded in unearthing several documents relating to Rajah Rammohun Roy's journey to England. The letters, which passed between the East India Co. on the one hand, and the nominal Padi-shah of Delhi and Rammohun Roy on the other, are here printed for the first time with the kind permission of the Government of India, and they may be of interest to those who are inclined to gather all particulars about the father of modern India.

As an introduction to this last stage in the Rajah's career I have reproduced his autobiographical sketch, written just before he went to France, which is supposed to have been addressed by him to his friend, Mr. Gordon, of Calcutta. This sketch first appeared in the *Athenæum*, and in the *Literary Gazette*.

14, PARSİ BAGAN,
Calcutta, May, 1926. BRAJENDRANATH BANERJĪ

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In conformity with the wish you have frequently expressed, that I should give you an outline of my life, I have now the pleasure to give you the following very brief sketch.

My ancestors were Brahmins of a high order, and, from time immemorial, were devoted to the religious duties of their race, down to my fifth progenitor, who about one hundred and forty years ago gave up spiritual exercises for worldly pursuits and aggrandisement. His descendants ever since have followed his example, and, according to the usual fate of courtiers, with various success, sometimes rising to honour and sometimes falling; sometimes rich and sometimes poor; sometimes excelling in success, sometimes miserable through disappointment. But my maternal ancestors, being of the sacerdotal order by profession as well as by birth, and of a family than which none holds a higher rank in that profession, have up to the present day uniformly adhered to a life of religious observances and devotion, preferring peace and tranquillity of mind

* Reprinted from Mary Carpenter's *The Last days in England of the Rajah Rammohan Roy* (1875), pp. 17-20.

to the excitements of ambition, and all the allurements of worldly grandeur.

In conformity with the usage of my paternal race, and the wish of my father, I studied the Persian and Arabic languages,—these being indispensable to those who attached themselves to the Courts of the Mahommedan princes ; and agreeably to the usage of my maternal relations, I devoted myself to the study of the Sanscrit and the theological works written in it, which contain the body of Hindoo literature, law and religion.

When about the age of sixteen, I composed a manuscript calling in question the validity of the idolatrous system of the Hindoos. This, together with my known sentiments on that subject, having produced a coolness between me and my immediate kindred, I proceeded on my travels, and passed through different countries, chiefly within, but some beyond, the bounds of Hindostan, with a feeling of great aversion to the establishment of the British power in India. When I had reached the age of twenty, my father recalled me, and restored me to his favour ; after which I first saw and began to associate with Europeans, and soon after made myself tolerably acquainted with their laws and form of government. Finding them generally more intelligent, more steady and moderate in their conduct, I gave up my prejudice against them, and became inclined in their favour, feeling persuaded that their rule, though a foreign yoke, would lead more

speedily and surely to the amelioration of the native inhabitants ; and I enjoyed the confidence of several of them even in their public capacity. My continued controversies with the Brahmins on the subject of their idolatry and superstition, and my interference with their custom of burning widows, and other pernicious practices, revived and increased their animosity against me ; and through their influence with my family, my father was again obliged to withdraw his countenance openly, though his limited pecuniary support was still continued to me.

After my father's death I opposed the advocates of idolatry with still greater boldness. Availing myself of the art of printing, now established in India, I published various works and pamphlets against their errors, in the native and foreign languages. This raised such a feeling against me, that I was at last deserted by every person except two or three Scotch friends, to whom, and the nation to which they belong, I always feel grateful.

The ground which I took in all my controversies was, not that of opposition to Brahminism, but to a perversion of it ; and I endeavoured to show that the idolatry of the Brahmins was contrary to the practice of their ancestors, and the principles of the ancient books and authorities which they profess to revere and obey. Notwithstanding the violence of the opposition and resistance to my opinions, several highly respectable persons both among my own

relations and others, began to adopt the same sentiments.

I now felt a strong wish to visit Europe, and obtain, by personal observation, a more thorough insight into its manners, customs, religion, and political institutions. I refrained, however, from carrying this intention into effect until the friends who coincided in my sentiments should be increased in number and strength. My expectations having been at length realised, in November, 1830, I embarked for England, as the discussion of the East India Company's charter was expected to come on, by which the treatment of the natives of India, and its future government, would be determined for many years to come, and an appeal to the King in Council, against the abolition of the practice of burning widows, was to be heard before the Privy Council ; and his Majesty the Emperor of Delhi had likewise commissioned me to bring before the authorities in England certain encroachments on his rights by the East India Company. I accordingly arrived in England in April, 1831.

I hope you will excuse the brevity of this sketch, as I have no leisure at present to enter into particulars ; and

I remain, &c.,
RAMMOHUN ROY



Rum-mohsen Roy.

RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY'S MISSION TO ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

*Delhi Emperor appoints Rammohun as
his agent to England.*

Rammohun Roy in early life served the East India Co.—chiefly at Rangpur—for a decade and rose to the post of *Diwan*. On retirement (1814) he settled in Calcutta, where he confined his activities to social, religious and educational reforms—the dear objects of his life. He had for some time “felt a strong wish to visit Europe, and obtain, by personal observation, a more thorough insight into its manners, customs, religion, and political institutions”, and now an unlooked-for opportunity helped to bring about the early fulfilment of his desire.

Abu-nasar Muin-ud-din Akbar—a nominal successor to the House of Taimur

—was then on the throne of Delhi. The powerless monarch considered himself unjustly treated by the new lords of India. The amount of the stipend granted to him by the East India Co. was neither in consonance with the treaty entered into by his father (Shah Alam II) with Lord Wellesley, nor sufficient for the growing needs of the royal household. Insults, moreover, were added to injustice. Lord Amherst, contrary to the custom observed by his predecessors, “reduced him, in the form of communication, to the footing of an equal, and thereby robbed him even of the cheap gratification of the usual ceremonials of address, so as to humble him, as far as possible, in the eyes of all ranks of people.”* The aggrieved potentate at last decided to represent his case to the King of Great Britain for redress. He was thus on the look out for an able and experienced man whom he could send as his envoy to the Court of Great Britain. It was Dabir-ud-daula, the agent to the King,

* *Political Consultation* 13-3-1829, No. 20.

who approached Rammohun while in residence in Calcutta—having possibly heard of his contemplated visit to England. Rammohun at once signified his consent in an *arzi* to the King, dated 2nd March 1828. This was answered by the King at the end of the same month, asking Rammohun to draw up a draft appeal, both in Persian and in English, to the King of Great Britain :—

“Let our devoted servant know that his *arzi*, dated 2nd March 1828, was forwarded to the Presence by Dabir-ud-daula and its contents were duly understood.

For a long time it has been our royal desire to refer this affair first to Calcutta and afterwards to England, in order that we might discover what degree of justice really obtains with this people.

For various reasons, however, the reference has not yet taken place, and we therefore write this to instruct our devoted servant to send for our perusal a correct draft in Persian, together with translation of the same in English.

Although, on account of the good services rendered by your grandfather to His late Majesty, at the time of his residence in the

Eastern Provinces, we had entire confidence in you, now that we have learnt from the conversation of Dabir-ud-daula the extent of your zeal and fidelity, we have become more fully satisfied that the arrangement of the affair which we have at heart, will be entirely effected by you ; and we expect that, as consistent with your duty, you will exert yourself to the best of your ability in this business and act agreeably to our orders.

Further we apprise you that Dabir-ud-daula has submitted several copies of English papers, and two or three recently, and has represented that these documents will most essentially further the royal cause. We therefore send them to our servant, and direct him to retain them in his possession, if he considers that they will be useful.*

Rammohun wanted to have copies of certain documents which should accompany the representation to the King of Great Britain against the Company's Government. The King accordingly sent his *wakil*, Mirza Afzal Beg, charging him

* Translation of a Persian letter from H. M. the King of Delhi, to Rammohun Roy Bahadur.—*Pol. Con.* 26-3-1830. No. 97.

with a letter addressed to A. Stirling, the Persian Secretary to Government, who replied on 7th June 1828 in the following terms :—

"... With regard to the copies required by you I, your expectant, think that it would be better if you required them from the office of the Resident of Shahjahanabad [Delhi], where all the papers are in deposit, and I am certain that immediately upon requisition being made for the same by the officers of your eminence to the Resident Bahadur of Delhi, he will forthwith grant the same to them—beyond is the limit of respect."
(*Pol. Procdgs.* 7-11-1829, No. 82).

Objection of the Government of Bengal.

On 23rd October 1828 the Resident at Delhi—Sir Edward Colebrooke—received a *shukka* from the King with a list of English papers* of which he required copies, to which the Resident answered by pleading his inability to comply. Not satisfied with this, the King transmitted a letter in the beginning of February 1829—

* For a list of these documents, *Pol. Procdgs.* 16-4-1830, No. 141.

through the Resident at Delhi—to the address of the Governor-General announcing his intention of appealing to the Sovereign of Great Britain on the subject of his claims to the whole revenue of the assigned territory and renewing in consequence his application for copies of all papers connected with that question.*

The chance of securing copies of the documents being remote, it was thought advisable to forward the original letter of complaint to the King of Great Britain,—with a duplicate of which Rammohun was to proceed to England. Commanded by the King of Delhi, Rammohun submitted the contents of the document under cover of his letter, dated 23rd February 1829, to the Chief Secretary to Government:—

“As the subject of the enclosed packet concerns the conduct of the local Government, I am commanded by His Majesty Abu-nasar Muin-ud-din Muhammad Akbar Badshah to submit its contents to you for the

* Trans. of a Persian letter from H. M. the King of Delhi, to the Governor-General.—*Pol. Procdgs.* 13-3-1829. No. 18.

information of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council, that his Lordship may be prepared to meet its statements and complaints as may be deemed expedient.

The original letter to His Britannic Majesty has been already forwarded to England and I am preparing at the request of His Majesty to proceed thither with a duplicate." (*Pol. Procdgs.* 13-3-1829, No. 19).

The Government desired the Delhi Resident to intimate to the King of Delhi its surprise at the accusation advanced by him and wished to be informed whether the King acknowledged Rammohun Roy as his Agent:

"2. The Vice-President in Council deems it sufficient for the present to desire that you will intimate to His Majesty the surprise with which Government perused the above communication and more particularly its astonishment, at the unmeasured and unfounded accusation which it advances against the Hon'ble Company of having violated its engagements with the Royal family. It is not considered necessary to deviate from the resolution before adopted regarding the papers which His Majesty demanded.

- "3. Babu Rammohun Roy, an inhabitant of Calcutta, having announced to Government that he is about to proceed to England, under the King of Delhi's appointment, as the bearer of a letter of complaint from His Majesty to our gracious Sovereign King George IV on the subject of the royal stipend, I am further directed to desire that you will ascertain from the King whether he acknowledges that person as his Agent."*

On receipt of this the Resident at Delhi requested an audience of the King, which in consequence of the *Ramzan* fast was delayed until the morning of 1st April 1829, when he attended His Majesty in his private apartments. The Resident reported the substance of his conference thus :

- "2. His Majesty acknowledged the intention of deputing Babu Rammohun Roy to England as his Agent to present a letter to our gracious Sovereign and mentioned that the individual in question had been originally proposed for this service by Farid-ud-din Khan, commonly styled Dabir-ud-daula. His Majesty at the same time made his

* Letter, dated 13 Mar. 1829, from A. Stirling, Depy. Secy. to Govt., to the Resident at Delhi.—*Pol. Procdgs.* 13-3-1829, No. 21.

munshi read to me the draft of the letter which he proposes to transmit to England, a fair copy of which under seal he informed me is already in the hands of Rammohun Roy. I expressed a wish to possess a copy of the letter with a view to my laying before Government, instead of trusting to my own memory in quoting its purport, and I was told that Rammohun Roy was understood to have already presented a copy of it to you. . .

3. His Majesty expressed much regret that any expressions in his letter to the Rt. Hon'ble the Governor-General should have been deemed objectionable, and added that nothing but extreme necessity could have driven him to such a course as the deputation of an Agent to England—that his former applications for an allowance, more adequate to his absolute wants, were occasionally met with a partial increase to the stipend but that from the state of his family, both indirect descendants and collateral relatives, those wants are daily aggravated—that in his solicitations to Earl Amherst he was content to have accepted as a boon any relief which might have been extended to his distress without reference to the amount of it as compared with what he conceives himself entitled to claim, and that

despair alone under a peremptory refusal has induced him to make this appeal.

4. In exemplification of these distresses, he observed that 25 years ago a sum of Rs. 200 per mensem had been fixed for each of his brothers and sisters, which sum was now to be divided among their children and grandchildren and that even with such further assistance as it was in his power to render them, some of them had not more than Rs. 5 per mensem and some of them nothing at all.*

This definite reply from the Resident at Delhi placed the Governor-General in a position to submit to the Court of Directors for their information, a copy of Rammohun Roy's letter, and that of the petition in the name of the King of Delhi, under cover of his Political letter dated 22nd May 1829.

*Government withhold copies of
official letters.*

Owing to his approaching departure for England Rammohun on behalf of his

* Letter, dated 2nd April 1829, from the Resident at Delhi, to the Depy. Secretary to Government.—*Pol. Procdgs.* 22-5-1829, No. 2.

master once more tried, by making a representation to the Government, to secure copies of the official papers required by the King which the Resident at Delhi had refused to furnish. But he was again unsuccessful.

"I beg leave to acquaint you that entirely relying on the assurance conveyed in an address from Mr. Secretary Stirling His Majesty Abu-nasar Muin-ud-din Muhammad Akbar Badshah had requested the Resident at Delhi to furnish him with copies of certain official papers ; but that to his great surprize His Majesty was informed that the Resident could not comply with the request. I now beg to be permitted to enclose a copy of the address alluded to with a translation in the hope that you may be pleased to lay them before the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council and to obtain an order from His Lordship directing the Resident to grant the copies required.

My approaching departure for England on His Majesty's business will make the early accordance of this favour a particular enhancement of its value."*

* Letter. dated Calcutta 26th October 1829, from Rammohun Roy, to the Chief Secretary to Government.—*Pol. Con.* 7-11-1829, No. 81.

The legislation passed by the Bengal Government in December 1829 declaring *Sati*, or the practice of burning widows alive on the funeral pyres of their husbands, illegal was mainly responsible for further delay in the departure of Rammohun. He had proved—much to the indignation of the orthodox Hindus—that the performance of this cruel rite was not enjoined by their religion as an imperative duty, and had even freely discussed with Governor-General Bentinck the best means that could be adopted for its suppression.* No wonder that this enactment proved to be a source of infinite joy to Rammohun, who found in it the fulfilment of his desire to see his researches and agitation crowned with success. But the champions of the custom of *Sati* offered a strong opposition to its abolition, and as a last measure resolved to appeal to the King in Council. Rammohun was equal to the occasion. A counter-petition to the Memorial of the advocates of *Sati*, signed

* *Bengal Criminal Jud. Con.* 4-12-1829.

by some distinguished Indians, was got ready and this Rammohun wanted to take with him for presentation to the House of Commons while there. There was a further object present in his mind, in his visit to England. "The discussion of the East India Company's charter was expected to come on, by which the treatment of the natives of India, and its future government, would be determined for many years to come", and Rammohun thought that with his practical knowledge and information regarding Indian questions, he might be of some assistance in promoting the cause of his countrymen, if he were present on the spot.

The time being propitious, Rammohun hastened to make preparations for his errand. The King of Delhi had invested him with the title of *Rajah*, in consideration of the respectability attached to the office of his envoy, and Rammohun thought it wise to get the adoption of this title sanctioned by the Paramount

Power. He thus addressed the Governor-General on 8th January 1830* :—

“I beg leave to submit to your Lordship that some months ago I was informed by His Majesty Abn-nasar Muin-ud-din Muhammad Akbar Badshah that His Majesty had apprized your Lordship of my appointment as his *Elchi* (envoy) to the Court of Great Britain, and of his having been pleased to invest me as His Majesty's servant with the title of *Rajah* in consideration of the respectability attached to that situation, etc. Not being anxious for titular distinction, I have hitherto refrained from availing myself of the honour conferred on me by His Majesty.

His Majesty, however, being of opinion that it is essentially necessary for the dignity of his Royal House, that I, as the representative thereof to the most powerful Monarch in Europe, and Agent for the settlement of His Majesty's affairs with the Hon'ble East India Company, should be invested with the title above-mentioned, has graciously forwarded to me a seal engraved for the purpose at Delhi. I, therefore, take the

* I find this letter has been printed on pages 165-66 of Miss Collet's *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy* (2nd edn. 1914).

liberty of laying the subject before your Lordship, hoping that you will be pleased to sanction my adoption of such title accordingly. This measure will, I believe, be found to be consistent with former usage as established by a resolution of Government on the subject in 1827 when at the recommendation of the then Resident Sir Charles Metcalfe in his report of 26th June of that year, His Majesty's power of conferring honorary titles* on his own servants was fully recognized." (Pol. Con. 22-1-1830. No. 51).

This was answered by Secretary Stirling on 15th January 1830 :—

"Having submitted to the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council your letter dated 8th instant, I am in reply directed to acquaint you that Government can neither recognize your appointment as Envoy on the part of the King of Delhi to the Court of Great Britain, nor acquiesce in His Majesty's grant of a title to you, on the occasion of that appointment." (Pol. Con. 22-1-1830, No. 52).

* For full particulars as to the privilege of the King of Delhi to confer titles and addresses of honour, see *Punjab Govt. Records, Delhi Residency*, i. 355-60.

Next we find Rammohun vindicating his character from certain charges and insinuations that had appeared in the *John Bull* newspaper of 25th February 1830, relative to some public documents on the subject of the royal stipend which, it was asserted by the newspaper, had been obtained by bribery from one of the public officers. In this connection he wrote to Secretary Stirling, on 7th March, 1830 :—

“It having been brought to my notice by a friend that the *John Bull* newspaper of the 25th ultimo has amongst a tissue of other falsehoods and misrepresentations connected my name with the charge of having obtained certain papers by bribery, I think it but due to myself as well as to the individuals in the employment of Government who may be supposed implicated in such a charge, to deny the allegations.

All the papers alluded to were sent to me from His Majesty the King of Delhi—many of them he must have had in his own possession as having been publicly addressed to his predecessors or himself, and others may have been procured by private favour from functionaries who were above the reach of bribery. But however this may be, I beg distinctly to repeat my assertion that as far

as I am either directly or indirectly concerned, the charge of bribery is absolutely false and unfounded.

I beg leave to submit for your satisfaction a letter of old date from His Majesty which will confirm what I have now stated. The handwriting you will readily recognize as that of the *munshi* usually employed by him, so as to leave on your mind no doubt of its authenticity." (Pol. Con. 26-3-1830, No. 96).

*False charge brought against Rammohun by the heir-apparent of Delhi Emperor—
Rammohun's spirited reply.*

Complaints against Rammohun had reached the Governor-General from another quarter also. Actuated by the desire of securing his future succession to the throne, the heir-apparent of Delhi was very unwilling to give offence to the Government by making himself a party to the mission of Rammohun, and it was quite natural that he should write against the Rajah to the Governor-General, attributing artifice to him. In his letter, written in the first week of April 1830,

to the Governor-General, the Prince remarked :

"..... In these days certain low intriguing persons conspiring together have, by unfounded assertions, gained over the King to their party and have brought about great mischief and confusion, and it is owing to them that certain improper things have taken place, from which, unless checked and rendered by the British Government and unless those false and intriguing persons receive the punishment due to their crimes, the most serious evils may ensue. On these grounds, considering your Lordship a just and wise ruler and both a faithful servant of the Hon'ble Company and a well-wisher to me, I have therefore committed to writing, under four heads, the acts and misdeeds of which I complain. . . .

Afzal Beg [*wakil* to H. M.] on his arrival in Calcutta soon evinced the evil nature of his disposition and having formed an intimacy with one Rammohun Roy, a Bengali, represented to His Majesty that the latter had formerly been a friend of the late Dabir-ud-daula Khwaja Farid Khan. The fact is that during the time of the late Dabir-ud-daula I never once heard of this Rammohun Roy, nor did I ever see any mention of him in

any *arzi* that was presented by Dabir-ud-daula to His Majesty. Doubtless therefore that letter is a forged one which was produced by Afzal Beg as from Dabir-ud-daula in which the latter's acquaintance with the aforesaid Bengali is asserted. This forgery has been committed with the knowledge of Mirza Salim by Sohun Lal, Afzal Beg and Rammohun.

Thirdly—the said Afzal Beg has been endeavouring in collusion with Sohun Lal under the directions of Mirza Salim, and with the aid of Rammohun, to effect the abolition of the Company's *Adalat* at Delhi, and to introduce the jurisdiction of the Supreme or King's Court in its place. . .”*

Rammohun was highly displeased when the Prince's behaviour came to his knowledge, but he refrained from making a suitable reply at the time. Anxious as he was to secure an early voyage to England, he became afraid lest the Indian Government should refuse him a passport.

* Extract from the trans. of a Persian letter (recd. 17th April 1830) from His Royal Highness the Heir-apparent at Delhi, to the Governor-General—forwarded by Mr. T. Metcalfe, in charge of the Palace Affairs under his covering letter, dated 6th April, 1830.—*Pol. Procdgs.* 23 July 1830, No. 98.

and the fear was strengthened by its flat refusal to recognize his embassy and title, which was followed in swift succession by the charges levelled against him in the *John Bull*, and the reflection on his conduct by the heir-apparent of Delhi.

He was, however, shrewd enough to disarm official hostility by representing to the Governor-General that, on various considerations, he had decided to proceed to England *as a private individual*, divesting himself of all public character:—

“From the kindness I have so often experienced from your Lordship, I trust to be pardoned for my present intrusion in a matter solely concerning myself, but in which your Lordship’s condescension has induced me to persuade myself that you are pleased to take some interest.

Having at length surmounted all the obstacles of a domestic nature that have hitherto opposed my long cherished intention of visiting England, I am now resolved to proceed to that land of liberty by one of the vessels that will sail in November, and from a due regard to the purport of the late Mr. Secretary Stirling’s letter of 15th January

last, and other considerations, I have determined not to appear there as the Envoy of His Majesty Akbar the Second, but as a private individual.

I am satisfied that in thus divesting myself of all public character, my zealous services in behalf of His Majesty need not be abated. I even trust that their chance of success may be improved by being thus exempted from all jealousy of a political nature to which they might by misapprehension be subjected.

As public report has fixed an early day in October for your Lordship's departure to examine personally into the condition of the inhabitants of the Upper Provinces, I take the present occasion as the last that may offer in this country for the expression of my sincere wishes for your Lordship's success in all your philanthropic designs for the improvement and benefit of my countrymen. I need not add that any commands for England with which your Lordship may honour me shall receive from me the most respectful attention, and I beg to subscribe myself your Lordship's most humble and grateful servant."*

* This letter, written perhaps in September 1830, is printed in Miss Collet's book, pp. 168-69. I have not been able to trace it in the Imperial Record Office, Calcutta.

Rammohun must have applied for passports, either at the end of September or in the first week of October 1830, as the following entries would show:—

“The Secretary reports that an order for the reception on board the *Albion* of a native Gentleman named Rammohun Roy proceeding to England was granted on the 7th instant, on an application duly made by him for the purpose.” (*Public Body Sheet*, 12 Oct. 1830, No. 95).

“Orders for reception granted to Ramrutton Mookerjee; Hurichurn Doss and Sheik Buxoo*—15th November proceeding to England in attendance on Rammohun Roy

* The Rajah was accompanied by a boy named Rajah Ram whom he had brought up as his son. But Rajah Ram's name does not appear in the orders for reception on board. Was Shaikh Bakhshu the original name of Rajah Ram, or was he the washerman who is said in *Some Anecdotes from the life of Rammohun Roy* (Bengali) by Nanda Mohan Chattarji, (Cal. 2nd end., p. 63), to have accompanied Rammohun to England? There cannot be any doubt that Rajah Ram was with Rammohun in England and that his name does not appear in the list of Rammohun's companions on board. It is inconceivable that this boy of about 12, an alleged offspring of the Rajah, went to England alone. The only solution of the riddle is to suppose that Rajah Ram sailed under the name of Shaikh Bakhshu.

on the *Albion*." (*Public Body Sheet*,
16 Nov. 1830).

Immediately before he left India, Rammohun wrote an *arzi* to the Prince, dated 10th November 1830, boldly defending his conduct and expressing his indignation at the attitude recently adopted by the heir-apparent. This *arzi* reached the Delhi Residency through the post office and was ultimately forwarded to its destination by the Resident. We quote the English translation of this highly interesting document below:—

• "My representation is that in obedience to the orders of His Majesty, having attentively perused the treaty between the Hon'ble Company and his late father with other papers relating thereto, I found His Majesty's right to the revenue of the territories west of the Jumna amounting to upwards of 30 lakhs of Rupees clearly and incontestably established by those documents, notwithstanding which the Hon'ble Company pay him only 12 lakhs.

As His Majesty after experiencing the frustration of his hopes from the Hon'ble Company in Calcutta was pleased to appeal his case to His Majesty the King of England and

condescended to require my services, as one of the humblest of the subjects of his Britannic Majesty, and being impressed with the justice and dignity of the British nation and living as I fearlessly do under the protecting influence of the British laws of justice, among the high and the low and in the hope of pleasing the great Creator and meeting the wishes of His Majesty, as well as from my own feelings of commiseration for the indigent condition of the illustrious House of Taimur, I accepted the service to the end that the rightful might obtain justice and that this august family might live in contentment in the enjoyment of an increased income. I accordingly prepared an address in Persian to His Britannic Majesty, which, with a translation thereof, I submitted to His Majesty (at Delhi) and which being approved of, I was ordered to forward it to its destination, and to remit no endeavour in my power towards obtaining justice for the Royal family. I have, however, since learned that your Highness has written a letter to His Lordship, wherein, instead of favourable mention, ill report has been made of, and artifice attributed to me. If your Highness had reflected but for a moment you would not have acted thus. The honourable of all

castes practise not artifices even for their own benefit, much less will they commit such an act of baseness for the good of others. I swear by the one and true God, that respect alone for your Royal house prevented my making a suitable communication to the Government, at the same time, allow me to conclude this representation with the following observation. Those who do not comprehend their own good or evil, cannot comprehend the good or evil of others.

May your prosperity increase." (*Pol. Procdgs.* 21-1-1831, No. 16).

This letter of Rammohun was far from being palatable to the Prince, who expressed his dissatisfaction in a *shukka*, dated 19th December 1830 (3 Rajab 1246 H.), addressed to the Resident at Delhi, an English translation of which is given below :—

"I have received the *arzi* of Rammohun Roy, forwarded by you, and am much annoyed at the haughty, petulant and audacious tone in which it has been penned. As the author of it has never had any concern with my family, nor have I ever before received an *arzi* from or addressed a *shukka* to him,

I have positively declined answering it. Candour and sincerity however required me to explain the grounds of my displeasure with Rammohun Roy, which are as follows :

- 1st. It became known to me that Rammohun Roy, in concert with Afzal Beg, the Agent of his Majesty, stated to the Government his acquaintance with His Majesty from the lifetime of the late Dabir-ud-daula Khwaja Farid Khan. This being a gross and bare-faced falsehood, that was calculated to deceive, I was prompted by a regard to truth to bring it to the notice of Government and I did so accordingly.
- 2nd. Being satisfied that the said Rammohun wished, by misleading the King regarding an augmentation of the royal stipend, to create a difference between His Majesty and the Hon'ble Company, a circumstance that I could not tolerate, I stated the fact for the information of Government with a view to their adopting such measures in consequence as they might deem proper.
- 3rd. I repeatedly heard that Rammohun Roy and Afzal Beg had thrown out base insinuations regarding me. These calumnies naturally excited my indignation to the highest pitch, but being unable to resent them, in the way that friends disclose their

distresses to . friends, I represented the circumstance to Government.

It would appear that Rammohun Roy on being informed of this, thought proper to address me on the subject, and in his own opinion he has perhaps apologized, but the style and purport of this *arzi* sufficiently vindicate the presumption and effrontery of the man. A copy of the *arzi* is herewith enclosed for your perusal.

Another motive which he had in sending the *arzi* in question was that he might intimidate me into returning a reply to it, which he would produce to Government as a proof that he was constituted Agent on the part of all, and was proceeding accordingly in that capacity to London in order that the Government might not prevent his departure. It is therefore proper that you peruse this with attention and make a suitable report to the Government, forwarding with it copies of this and of Rammohun's *arzi*, to the end, that my great regard for the Government with my helplessness on the present occasion be thoroughly manifest." (*Pol. Procdgs.* 21-1-1831, No. 16).

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Water)—an insuperable barrier imposed by the Hindu custom and superstition for ages. He sailed* from Calcutta on 15th November 1830 by the *Albion*, bound for Liverpool, and reached England on 8th April 1831 after a voyage which was anything but peaceful.

* It was suspected in official quarters that the Gwalior Queen, Baiza Bai, had appointed Rammohun to represent her case in England :

"2. From a note from Mr. Ross, received some days ago. It appears that Her Highness (Baiza Bai) has been advised by Bunsce Dhar, ex-Nazir of the Agra Court, to appoint Rammohun Roy her Ambassador in England and I suspect from Her Highness's being so urgent for a reply and sending her Kharitah through me that such is indeed her intention."—Letter, dated 8 Nov. 1833, from R. Cavendish, Resident at Gwalior, to the Secy. to Government, Fort Wm. (*Pol. Con.* 21 Nov. 1833, No. 49).

CHAPTER II

Dinner to Rammohun in London.

Public honours came thick and fast upon Rammohun while in England. His reception among the Anglo-Indian officials appeared to have brought about a change in the attitude of the East India Company, who had refused to recognize his official position and the title. On 6th July 1831 they entertained him at a dinner at the City of London Tavern, attended by about 80 distinguished guests, the Chairman of the Company presiding. It is interesting to read the account of this entertainment, published in the pages of a contemporary journal :

"It was what is called a family dinner, in contradistinction to the grand feast given upon the eve of the departure of a governor for India. . . . The Chairman said 'They had been honoured with a visit from the distinguished native of a great country. Those to whom he had the honour of proposing the health of Rammohun Roy

were aware of the virtues of the distinguished Brahman, of the vast services he had rendered to the Indian community, and of the effect such an example was calculated to produce. Like the bee, which sucked the choicest sweets from the flowers of the garden, the Brahman collected from the boundless stores of knowledge, to which from travel and study he had access, the richest intellectual treasures. The reception which the Brahman had met with would, it was to be hoped, influence other able and influential members of the Eastern community to visit England.'

Rammohun Roy rose, and in a very graceful manner addressed the company. That day was, he said, one to which he had looked forward with the greatest degree of expectation. It rejoiced him to be seated amongst a body of gentlemen who had with such humanity and kindness carried on the government of India. Before the period at which India had become tributary to Great Britain, it was the scene of the most frequent and bloody conflicts. In the various provinces of the Eastern dominions, nothing was to be seen but plunder and devastation ; there was no security for property or for life, until, by the interference

of this country, the great sources of discord were checked, education had advanced, and the example of the British system of dominion had a conciliating effect upon the natives' of the East. He felt most grateful to the various illustrious persons who had filled from time to time the office of Governor General—to Lords Cornwallis, Wellesley, and Hastings,*—ay, and to the nobleman at present in power, Lord William Bentinck, who had laid aside everything like show or ostentation, and exhibited no symptom of arbitrary authority, but, on the contrary, had done all in his power to gain the good opinions of the natives of India, and so raise them in the scale of nations. He felt proud and grateful at what India was experiencing, and he trusted that so long as she should remain amongst the nations of the earth, she would be ruled by Government equally popular and distinguished by similar acts of kindness, conciliation and humanity . . .

It was rather curious to see the Brahman surrounded by hearty feeders upon turtle and venison and champagne and touching nothing himself but rice and cold water."†

* The absence of Lord Amherst's name is significant.

† *Asiatic Journal*, Aug. 1831, pp. 236-37.

Rammohun received cordially at the English royal Court.

The Home Government, however, recognized his embassy and title. Royalty itself honoured Rammohun.

"At the levee held at the Palace, St. James's, on the 7th September [1831], the Rajah Rammohun Roy was introduced to an audience of the King [William IV] by the Right Hon. Charles Grant, the President of the Board of Control, and was most graciously received. The Rajah wore the costume of a Brahman, viz. the turban and kabah. The latter was composed of purple velvet, embroidered with gold." (*Court Circular*).

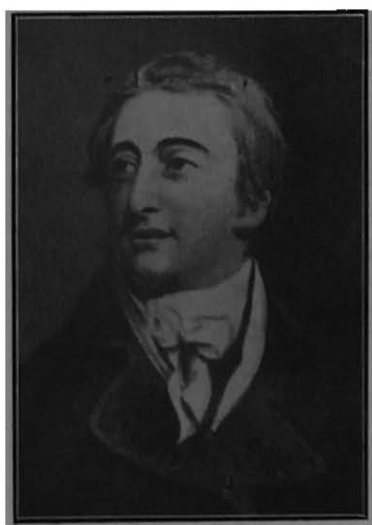
At the Coronation this distinguished visitor from India had a place assigned to him among the Ambassadors of the Crowned Heads of Europe. He was also received with the utmost consideration on his visit to France during the autumn of 1832. He was introduced to Louis Philippe, with whom he had the honour of dining more than once.* The Royal

* *The Last Days in England of the Rajah Rammohun Roy* by Mary Carpenter. (2nd edn.) p. 69.



Raja Rammohun Roy

**From a Crystal Seal now in the possession of the
family of the late Mr. A. M. Bose.**



Lord William Bentinck

Asiatic Society (of Great Britain) invited the presence of Rammohun at its 10th Annual Meeting held on 11th May 1833. The Rajah delivered a short speech* on the occasion.

Miss Collet has truly observed: "Rammohun's three years in the West form the crown and consummation of his life's work." The three principal objects which brought him to England were one by one crowned with success.

The Rajah had indeed a very busy time of it. He presented the counter-petition—brought from India†—to the House of Commons and had the satisfaction of being present when the appeal to the King in Council for the renewal of the *Sati* atrocities was rejected and the decision announced, on 11th July 1832.

Rammohun, as a recognized authority on Indian questions, was called upon to

* For the speech of the Rajah, *Asiatic Journal*, May-Aug. 1833, p. 224.

† For a copy of this petition, see *Asiatic Journal*, May 1831, pp. 20-21.

give evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons—appointed to consider the renewal of the Company's charter. Though he declined to appear before it, he by successive "communications to the Board of Control" gave his views on the Revenue and Judicial systems, and the condition of the people of India which undoubtedly evince acuteness of observation and depth of reflection. These communications between Rammohun and the Board of Control passed during the months of August and September 1831 and were embodied in the Blue-books.

*Delhi Emperor's claims urged in
England—settlement.*

The mission from the King of Delhi was ever present in the mind of Rammohun. Although he had proceeded thither as a private individual, it appears from Governor-General Bentinck's Political Despatch to the Court of Directors that he avowed himself as the Agent of

the King of Delhi after his arrival in England :

"In the course of my route from Roopur to this place I learned from various sources, as well as from the English newspapers received by the *Thomas Grenville*, that Rammohun Roy had avowed himself in England the accredited Agent of the King of Delhi."*

Rammohun delivered to the Court of Directors, and circulated before influential personages, a printed statement on the subject of the claims of the Delhi King, corresponding in substance with the letter from the King of Delhi to His Majesty, George the Fourth,† which he had framed in English and Persian.

The Court of Directors had received during 1828-1831 several despatches from the Government of Bengal regarding the claims of the King of Delhi and the mission of Rammohun, but they had hitherto remained passive. It was only when Rammohun began an agitation of

* *Pol. Despatch*, No. 22 dated 10 Dec. 1831, para 2.

† *Asiatic Journal*, Jan'y. 1834, p. 57.

this question in England* that they found it unwise to leave the matter unsettled. In their Political letter No. 5, dated London 13th February 1833, addressed to the Governor-General in Council, Fort William, Bengal, they sanctioned an addition of three *lakhs* of Rupees per annum to the stipend of the Delhi King :

"1. We now reply to your letters in the Political Department dated
 3rd July 1828, paras 66 to 79
 22nd May 1829 (whole)
 9th October 1830, paras 48-49
 14th October 1830, paras 169-171 & 334
 in which you acquaint us with the pecuniary

* In an obituary sketch of Rammohun, contributed to the *Asiatic Journal* by (according to Miss Collet) Mr. Sandford Arnot, who served the Rajah while in England as his Private Secretary, we find that :

"A short time before his death, he had brought his negotiations with the British Government, on behalf of the King of Delhi, to a successful close, by a compromise with the Ministers of the Crown, which will add £30,000 a-year to the stipend of the Mogul, and, of course, make a proportionate reduction in the Indian revenue. The deceased ambassador had a contingent interest in this large addition to the ample allowance of the Mogul pageant, and his heirs, it is said, will gain from it a perpetual income of £3,000 or £4,000 a-year." (Nov. 1833, p. 206).

claims upon your Government advanced by the King of Delhi with the application made to you by Rammohun Roy on the part of the King, and his departure for England with a view to the prosecution of these claims. And we now proceed to state the opinion which we have been led to form on the question of the augmentation of the stipend of the Royal Family founded on a mature consideration of all the documents to which you have referred us in the letters above acknowledged.

2. It is not our intention, nor do we deem it at present necessary, to enter into a discussion of the various points that have arisen out of the agitation of this question being persuaded of their tendency rather to embarrass and impede, than to facilitate a sound and satisfactory decision.
3. We are willing to sanction an extension of the provision at present fixed for the support of His Majesty and the Royal Family to 15 lakhs of Rupees per annum leaving it to your discretion to distribute the additional three lakhs among the members of the family in such manner as may appear to you most just and proper upon a consideration of their respective claims.
4. It must be distinctly understood that the further pecuniary grants which we have

now authorized are to be received by the King of Delhi in full satisfaction of all claims of every description that he may be supposed to possess.

5. We think it expedient to advert also to the representations regarding the ruinous state of the Palace at Delhi and the expense necessary for putting it in repair. If the increased annual allowance to be made to the Family would, in your opinion, be too much pressed upon by putting the palace in repair we think that an adequate sum might be granted by you for that purpose. The charge of afterwards keeping it in repair should rest entirely with the head of the family."

This decision of the Court of Directors was formally conveyed to the King of Delhi by Mr. Fraser, the Agent to the Governor-General at Delhi, in his letter dated 12th July 1833. The King, however, declined to accept the conditions proposed until he had received instructions from Rammohun Roy, his Agent in England, which were daily expected :

"I have received your petition, dated 12th July 1833, representing that the Hon'ble the Court of Directors had been pleased to sanction an increase of three lakhs of

Rupees a year on the fixed tribute (*peshkush*), but that this addition was to be understood as answering the demands made through Rajah Rammohun Roy, informing me likewise that it was left to the discretion of the Government here to distribute the sum amongst the members of the Royal Family, and that a part of the amount would be set aside for repairing the palace and its buildings. I have understood perfectly what you represent.

That the Court of Directors should have caused this addition to the annual provision (*peshkush*) has very sensibly gratified me. But as my claims, which rest upon compacts concluded with officers of the Company, are of higher nature and the Royal Agent I have sent for the purpose of prosecuting them is still in England, until I receive information from him I must decline acceding to the conditions proposed. I stated this to you when you waited upon me in person." (*Pol. Procdgs.* 2 Aug. 1833, No. 13).

Mr. Fraser forwarded a translation of the Delhi King's reply to the Secretary to Government, Pol. Dept. and remarked in his covering letter dated 18th July 1833 :

"3. I was informed the day before yesterday that letters had been received from Rammohun Roy on that date recommending His Majesty to reject any offer which might be made to incline His Majesty to forego the benefit of those claims preferred in England, which it was probable would be conceded through the exertions of his Agent." (*Pol. Procdgs.* 2-8-1833, No. 13).

The Governor-General in Council reported to the home authorities that the Delhi King had declined their offer.* The Court of Directors replied as follows:—

"2. The King of Delhi having refused to accept the increased provision granted by us on the condition annexed to it, until he should receive further information from his Agent in England, you very properly apprized him, that you did not deem yourselves at liberty to enter into any further discussion on the subject, and that the fact of his having declined the offer would be made known to us. You will apprise us if any new application should be received from him; but in the event of his hereafter offering to accept the proposed increase, with the condition annexed to it, you will

* *Pol. Letter to the Court of Directors*, No. 8 dated 2 Sept. 1833, paras 42-44.

consider yourselves at liberty to carry the arrangement authorized in our instructions of 13th February 1833, into complete effect."*

Delhi Emperor accepts the increase of his pension.

The unfortunate death of Rammohun, which occurred on 27th September 1833, sorely disappointed the Emperor of Delhi and retarded the prosecution of his claims. He was thus obliged to be content with what had already been offered to him. In his letter, dated 13th September 1834, to Mr. W. Fraser, the Governor-General's Agent at Delhi—an English translation of which is quoted below—he expressed himself willing, although somewhat vaguely, to accept the increase of his stipend by three lakhs of Rupees per annum :

"Your petition,—in reply to our letter calling for information on the determination of Government to increase the amount originally

* Pol. Letter from the Court of Directors, No. 14 dated London 1 May 1835.

proposed, viz. three lakhs of Rupees, also intimating, that in the event of no augmentation having been made, to send the amount from the date of its becoming appropriated, —has been received,—representing that no instructions have been received from the Presidency in reply to your petition [and] also suggesting that we should write a letter, in the event of having accepted the increase, agreeing to the conditions upon which it is to be made, [in order] to forward [it] with a report and to act as should be directed. In your first petition to us on the subject you stated that one of the conditions on which the increase should be made is that the part of it so disbursed should be apportioned to individuals of our House in conformity with the wishes of Government. Another condition was to abstain from prosecuting the matters entrusted to Rajah Rammohun Baboo. A third condition was that the Royal Palace and its buildings should be kept in repair by an assignment of money out of the increased allowance. Now, the state of the matter is thus: The apportionment of sums of money out of the addition proposed to those of our family who shall receive them, will be done with the knowledge of the Officers of Government. In regard to

not prosecuting claims on account of which Rajah Rammohun Roy was sent to England, this person was commissioned to obtain an increase according with the engagements and promises of the Government. If the Justice of the Court of Directors is satisfied with the increase now made, have I the power (zor) to obtain a larger increase or to enforce the engagements of the Government? Helplessly, on account of the clamor of debtors occasioned by our heavy daily expenses and the large outlay incurred by sending an Agent to England which is very great, the increase proposed is accepted. But as our claims according to the engagements of Government are greater, ascertain and report [as] to the reason of three lakhs of Rupees per annum being fixed upon, and what are the grounds of making an additional allowance only to this amount. With respect to titles and ceremonies which were subject of complaint on our part through the Rajah, I shall observe, that as our favour was increased towards Lord Amherst, by our favour also the same will continue (meaning future Governors will be received as Lord Amherst was received) and Lord William Bentinck may now address me as was before usual or in the style adopted

by Lord Amherst. In this respect I wish to please the Governor General. The repair of the Royal Palace and its buildings, I, of course, desire for my own comfort, and it will be done, a monthly amount being set aside for the purpose. Do you now, aware of the pressing claims of our debtors and the straitness of our means even for daily expenses, write quickly to Government and obtain the amount of increase of tribute from the date of its offer up to the present day." (Pol. Con. 16-10-1834, No. 22).

Mr. Fraser, however, suggested respectfully to the King to "signify in explicit terms his pleasure and the acceptance of the proposed increase to the stipend, with the attached conditions, if he thought proper to do so, by which means future misunderstandings would be obviated."* This the King of Delhi did in a letter, dated 14th October 1834.†

*What Rammohun did for the
Delhi Emperor.*

The foregoing facts can leave no doubt in a reasonable mind that Rammohun had

* Pol. Con. 16 October 1834, No. 21.

† Pol. Procdgs. 31 December 1834, No. 15.

before his death effected the object of his mission, at least in part. We are therefore surprised to read the following remarks in a letter, signed "A. B.", published in the *Asiatic Journal* (Jany. 1834, p. 57):—

"No negotiation on the subject, verbal or written, was carried on with Rammohun Roy ; neither has his mission been referred to in the Court's instructions to the Supreme Government of Bengal, as having had any influence or concern whatever in their resolution to augment the stipend of the royal family of Delhi. That augmentation was founded exclusively on a consideration of the condition and exigencies of the King and his family, as represented through the channel of the local Government, and was the result of a specific reference on that subject from the Governor General in Council to the Court of Directors, and would have taken place although Rammohun Roy had never made his appearance in England."

This attempt at saving official prestige must have emanated from some official source, and the historian cannot support it. That the impecunious Emperor of

Delhi—prior to the deputation of Ram-mohun as envoy to the Court of Great Britain—failed to achieve any redress of his grievances from the local Government, despite his repeated efforts for half a decade, will be evident from the following translation of a *shukka* which he addressed to the Resident at Delhi in November 1831:—

“.....I had invariably looked for relief from the Government in every case through the medium of the Resident in attendance at my Court, and that I had always continued to make him the channel of communicating my grievances to the Government, but that no one had ever exerted himself in any instance, in my case. Providence at length favored me with a visit from Lord Amherst, which I hailed with feelings of the fullest confidence and delight at the prospect which it afforded of securing to me the fulfilment of the pledges that had been given me and the realization of all my desires. I accordingly did everything in my power to please His Lordship, and showed him every kindness that I could possibly manifest explaining at the same time the engagements of the British Government towards me and making

a full disclosure of my wishes to him. His Lordship, however, evinced as little disposition as others to redeem those engagements, or execute the provisions contained in the regulations of Government, and, not confining himself to this, he had recourse to the novel procedure of setting aside the ceremonials and forms of address (*ádáb wa alkáb*) observed by his predecessors, thus lowering me even in respect of the style of correspondence adopted towards me,—a thing that I could have least expected.

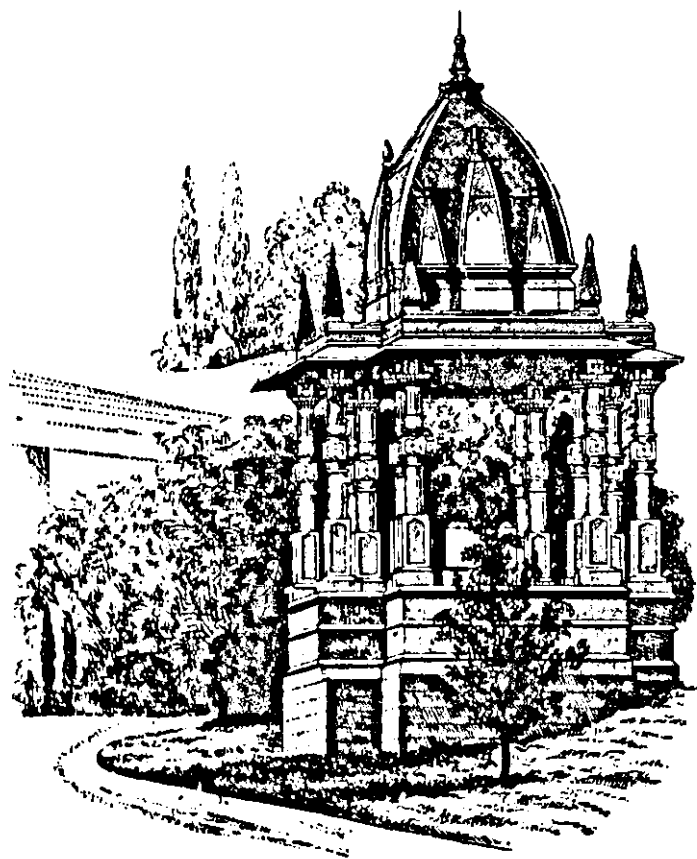
am in this place desirous of calling your attention to the fact that, when I resolved upon deputing Rajah Rammohun Roy as my agent, I fully apprized Sir E. Colebrooke of my intention, and through him transmitted to the Government copies of the several papers which I had entrusted to the Rajah, distinctly informing him at the same time that that individual was about to proceed to Europe. But, notwithstanding I had given notice of my proceedings and had furnished copies of the documents which I intended to send by the Rajah, the Government remained perfectly passive, and the whole case has now been accordingly referred to England in due order and in

conformity with the practice prescribed by the Regulations of Government."*

Justice to the memory of the venerable Rajah demands the admission that, however officially ignored his mission may have been, it was his exertions alone that impressed on the Court of Directors the need of making terms with Rammohun's master without further delay. The unhappy descendant of the Great Mughal had been petitioning the E. I. Co. ever since 1827, but without effect. The Governor-General, concurring in the opinion held by Sir Chas. Metcalfe, then Resident at Delhi, had on 3rd July 1828 counselled the Court of Directors not to increase the Delhi Emperor's allowance, and a year later he held the same view.† Nor had the Court of Directors for years before Rammohun's mission shown any inclination to do justice to Akbar Shah on

* *Pol. Procdgs.* 30-12-1831, No. 15; *Punjab Govt. Records, Delhi Residency*, i. 347-48.

† *Political Despatch to the Court of Directors* dated 22nd May 1829.



Tomb of Rajah Rammohun Roy, at
Arno's Vale Cemetery.

their own initiative. Rammohun reached England in April 1831, and the Court of Directors decided to increase the Delhi Emperor's allowances early in 1833. These dates are conclusive.

But the great Rammohun, crowned with victory as he was, never set foot on Indian soil again. He had intended to return home in 1834 *via* Turkey, Russia and Persia, but died on 27th September 1833 at Stapleton Grove, near Bristol.

"Sacred as was the spot where he was laid, and requiring to those who knew and loved him no stone to mark the spot, beneath the overhanging trees, which their hearts revered,—yet it was right that the public should have access to his grave, and should see a befitting monument erected over it. This could not be done at Stapleton Grove, which had now passed out of the Castle family. The Rajah's friend, the celebrated Dwarkanath Tagore, desired to pay this mark of respect to his memory, and it was therefore arranged that the case containing the coffin should be removed to the beautiful cemetery of Arno's Vale, near Bristol. This was suitably accomplished on the 29th of

May 1843, and a handsome monument was erected in the spring of the year following by his friend."*

* *The Last days in England of the Rajah Rammohun Roy* by Mary Carpenter, p. 160.

CHAPTER III

THE PADISHAH OF DELHI TO KING GEORGE THE FOURTH OF ENGLAND

The following petition, in the name of the Padishah of Delhi to King George IV, was drafted by Rajah Rammohun Roy, who proceeded to the Court of Great Britain with a copy of it. This well-reasoned document, hitherto unpublished, ought to have a place amongst other writings of the Rajah, by reason of its grace vigour and clearness of style.

To

His Majesty the King of the British Empire
etc., etc., etc.

Sire ! My Brother ! It is with a mingled feeling of humility and pride that I approach your Majesty with the language of fraternal equality at the very time that the occasion of my addressing your Majesty compels me to consider myself rather as a suppliant at the footstool of your Majesty's throne than as a Monarch entitled to assume the style, and claim the privileges, of royalty.

2. Sire ! I do not forget who or what I am ; I cannot forget that I am a King only in name, and that I have nothing in common with your Majesty and the other sovereigns of the earth but a title conceded to me with no other effect than to aggravate the humiliation and unhappiness in which I am involved. Yet low as is my condition I have not lost the feelings of humanity, and I claim from your Majesty that justice which is not denied to the meanest of your Majesty's subjects.

3. I do not forget who and what your Majesty is—that your Majesty is the rightful and acknowledged sovereign of a powerful, a wise and renowned people, and that, in the plenitude of your Majesty's greatness, even a small portion of your Majesty's subjects are permitted to exercise the government of these vast and populous territories which it was the glory of many of my ancestors to rule in person. But I also remember that those very subjects, although elevated to the dignity of empire, are still amenable to your Majesty for every part of their conduct, and I therefore confidently rely that your Majesty will not permit them wantonly to violate the solemn engagements of their faith and honour pledged to the once dreaded and illustrious, but now powerless, House of Taimur. In me that race is deeply humbled, but the extensive conquests, the noble action, and the splendid fame of the dynasty which I so unworthily represent, remain imperishably written on the faithful page of history.

My ancestors made a magnanimous use of the victories and conquests which their swords—not perfidy or intrigues—achieved. They disdained to trample down on a vanquished foe, even when they could crush him with impunity. The voice of the whole world proclaims that your Majesty is in an eminent degree distinguished by the same sublime and generous virtues, and I repose therefore with entire confidence in the innate nobleness of your Majesty's mind and in your Majesty's refined and exalted sense of National faith and justice.

4. I hasten to specify the wrongs of which I complain and to substantiate my allegations by the necessary proofs. In brief, then, I beg to recall your Majesty's attention to the accompanying articles of convention which were transmitted to my august father from the Governor-General in Council in conformity with the promise made by Lord Lake and which were duly recognized on both sides as expressive of the mutual obligations of the contracting parties, but of which the first and most important clause is now injuriously evaded.

5. That article provides that "all the *mahals* to the west of the Jumna situated between the west and north of mouza Kabilpoor shall be considered the crownlands of his Majesty." The second article provides that "the management of these *mahals* shall be continued according to custom in the hands of the Resident"; but in proof that the entire revenues were to be placed at the Royal disposal,

it is expressly provided in the third article that "for his Majesty's satisfaction, the Royal Mootsuddies (or civil officers) shall attend at the Cutchery to keep accounts of the receipts and disbursements and report the same to his Majesty." The memorandum referred to in the seventh article specifies a minimum of monthly stipends for the King and the Royal Household and that article provides that the sums so specified shall be paid monthly from the Public Treasury, "whether the whole of the amount is or is not collected from the Khalsah lands." The English article to which I solicit your Majesty's special attention contains the important provision that "should the collections from the above mahals increase in consequence of extending cultivation and the improved condition of the ryots—a proportioned augmentation will take place in the King's *Peshcush* or Revenue" and, finally, to shew that the royal stipend was to consist, not of the net, but of the gross produce without any deduction, the eleventh article provides that "the expense of the Troops, Police Corps, etc., employed in the Khalsah shall be defrayed by the Honourable Company." What could be more clear and explicit than these provisions? What words could have more strictly guarded against the possibility of perversion or misapprehension? Yet the first and most important point has been since rendered a dead letter, as if neither honour nor justice demanded their fulfilment.

6. In the recent communications which I have had with your Majesty's late representative in India, Lord Amherst, on this subject, there is the admission that "it was the original intention of Government to have assigned certain mahals to the west of the Jumna for the support of His Majesty and the Royal family", but it is added, "The plan was never from unavoidable causes carried completely into effect." It now seems to be tacitly inferred that therefore it ought not ever to be carried into effect. To me and to my family, to my immediate dependents, and to the numerous individuals who cannot refuse their disinterested sympathy to my fallen House, it does not appear clearly to follow, because an act of justice has hitherto been denied that it could never be performed; nor when we consider what British power and influence have accomplished, can we bring ourselves to believe that any causes would have proved unavoidable, if a disposition really favourable to the accomplishment of the object had existed. The assertion, however, that "the plan was never carried completely into effect" is essentially erroneous; for while the revenues of the assigned mahals did not exceed the *minimum* of the Royal stipends and allowances, the Royal Mootsuddies were allowed to attend at the Cutchery in conformity with the third stipulation, for the express purpose of keeping accounts of the receipts and disbursements and reporting the same to my august father and to myself. The right and title of the

Royal family to the entire revenues of the mahals were thus for a length of time distinctly and unequivocally acknowledged by the concession to the Royal Mootsuddies of the power of supervision and report, but when these revenues materially exceeded the *minimum* of the Royal stipends, then it was that it became inconvenient to carry the plan completely into effect, and the Royal Mootsuddies were in consequence directed to withdraw their attendance at the Cutchery. In like manner the practice of submitting by the Resident for my Royal decision the proceedings in cases where capital punishment was adjudged by the Criminal Court, has also long since been discontinued in neglect of the provision contained in the sixth article of agreement.

7. Even in the communication above-mentioned, insult in point of form was added to injustice. All the Governors-General who have preceded Lord Amherst in the government of the British territories in India have thought it no degradation to themselves to address me or my august father in the style that custom has accorded to Royalty. Lord Amherst, however, thought proper to reduce me in his form of communication to the footing of an equal, and thereby to rob me even of the cheap gratification of the usual ceremonials of address so as to humble me as far as possible in the eyes of all ranks of people.

8. Before, however, these derogatory steps were adopted, repeated, solemn, and public recognitions

of the claims of my Royal family to the revenues of the assigned mahals had been recorded in the code of Regulations and Laws enacted by the Governor-General in Council for the civil government of the territories under the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal. Thus at section 4th of Regulation XI of 1804, it is clearly expressed that "the revenues of the territory on the right bank of the Jumna are assigned to His Majesty Shah Alam" . and precisely the same language is repeated at sections 22nd and 35 of the same Regulation, at section 3rd of Regulation VI of 1805, and at sections 2nd and 4th of the Regulation VIII of the same year. At sections 1st and 2nd of Regulation X of 1807, and at section 1st of Regulation XI of the same year, the language is similar, although more general, for in these "the territory assigned for the support of the Royal family at Dehlee" is mentioned without specifying its locality as in the former instances, the very absence of this specification marking its notoriety and the distinctness of the purpose to which the revenues of that territory were exclusively applicable. These declarations cannot be disavowed, retracted or misapprehended. They are embodied in the code of Regulations by which this branch of the British Indian Empire is governed, and they incontrovertibly demonstrate that for a series of years the plan was carried completely into effect and the right of my family to the revenues of

the districts in question was clearly and undisguisedly admitted.

9. Even the *minimum* of the Royal stipends was at one time arbitrarily and unjustly curtailed of several items, contrary to the express provisions contained in the stipulations and without the consent of the contracting party, whose rights were thereby violated, having been obtained or even sought. It was in this way that one of the items amounting to 10,000 Rupees for support of the Heir-apparent was reduced to 7000, a second of 5,000 Rupees for Mirza Ezzud Buxsh to 2000, and a third amounting to Sicca Rs. 2,500 for Shah Newaz Khan, a connection of His Majesty, was entirely resumed at his death and his family thus left destitute. To crown these acts it has been pretended that an augmentation to the Royal stipend made in the year 1809 amounting, after several previous deductions, only to Sa. Rs. 13,200 per mensem was granted by way of commutation for the Royal claims on the improved revenues of the Khalsah lands—though so far was such an arrangement from receiving my sanction that the increase was only communicated to me as a resolution taken by the Government without the slightest reference to the pretended equivalent.

10. The original articles of agreement are either binding or they are not. If they are binding, then any alteration or commutation of any part of the Royal income made by one party without the

consent of the other, to whom it is injurious, must be null and void. If they are not binding, this must be either because they were never entered into, which cannot be affirmed, or because some subsequent voluntary arrangement between the two contracting parties has superseded their obligation. But no arrangement tending to supersede the original articles of agreement has ever been voluntarily recognized by my Royal predecessor or myself, and therefore the numerous and unauthorized deviations from the provisions which they contain constitute a series of direct and systematic violations of truth, honour and justice.

11. A relation of the particulars connected with this pretended increase of Sa. Rs. 13,200 per mensem will show to your Majesty how little real was the value of the alleged concession. When the gross and palpable infringements by the local authorities on the stipulation entered into with Lord Wellesley's Government were brought to the notice of Lord Minto in the year 1809 and the Royal claims on the then improved revenues of the Khalsah mahal set forth, that nobleman virtually admitted the wrongs that had been inflicted and the total sum of the Royal stipends including the allowances on the Princes and Princesses and every contingency, which after several deductions, then amounted to only Sa. Rs. 86,000, was raised to one lakh, the real augmentation being however considerably less in amount than this apparent one. By

Lord Wellesley's agreement the allowance to the Royal family* was paid under the following heads:—

<i>Per mensem</i>		
His Majesty's personal allowance	...	Rs. 60,000
Presents at 7 festivals	Rs. 10,000 each, ..	5,833
The Heir-apparent		10,000
His jagir in the Dooab		3,000
Princes and Princesses		10,000
Mirza Ezzud Buxsh—personal allowance	..	2,000
ditto by his jagir in the Dooab		1,000
Shah Newaz Khan		2,500

Total monthly allowance Rs. 94,333.

so that the stipend established by Lord Minto in 1809, then considered as providing an increase of allowance to the extent of Rs. 13,200 per mensem as above stated, and also alleged to be in satisfaction of the terms of the treaty, in fact added no more than the paltry sum of Rs. 5,667 to the original minimum provision. But even this augmentation was granted arbitrarily, without any reference to the amount actually due by stipulation and without my consent being asked or obtained; and it was moreover accompanied by an insulting intimation that the "sovereignty I possess is only nominal" and that the Governor General's recognition of it is merely "Complimentary." Does "the complimentary recognition of a nominal sovereignty" authorize or

* Cf. Secret letter to the Court, dated 2 June 1805, para 8.

justify the arbitrary infringement of direct and positive obligations, or denude myself and family of the common rights of men and society? Because the Governor General in Council condescends to recognize in me an empty title, is it therefore that the solemn faith of the British nation and Government may be wantonly broken? Do I become less entitled to the performance of the contract that has been entered into with my family, because my ancestors were great and powerful and I am feeble and helpless, held down by those who make my weakness and degradation the excuse for their injustice? I cherish the confident persuasion that your Majesty will not sanction the principle that in my case a National contract ought not or need not to be fulfilled, because I am powerless to enforce its obligations. What King or subject will avow such a principle, except in India and to the injured and unhappy House of Taimur?

12. I have now briefly explained to your Majesty the wrongs I have suffered and the rights which I demand. I claim the entire revenues, whatever they may be, of the mahals originally assigned for the support of the Royal family unjustly alienated from the rightful owner and appropriated to themselves by the Honourable Company. I claim restitution of the sums of which the Royal family have been deprived in past years, and I claim your Majesty's guarantee for the rigid fulfilment in future of the articles of convention by which a

minimum is fixed for the Royal stipend, by which the gross revenues of the mahals to the west of the Jumna are assigned to the Royal family should they exceed that *minimum*, and by which the means and opportunity of obtaining a perfect knowledge of the actual revenues of those mahals are stipulated rights. I am not unaware of the practical evil that is likely to result, according to the known principles of human nature, by imposing upon one party all the toil of superintendence and all the expense of improvement, and bestowing upon another all the fruits of his labour and sacrifices. I am therefore willing to submit to any reasonable compromise of my rights, either by assuming for a fit compensation all the trouble and outlay attending the government, police, and cultivation of the territory in question, or by receiving a fixed monthly sum in lieu of all further claims. In the latter case the present gross annual revenues of the mahals would form a proper standard, and, if they do not fall short of 30 lakhs, I hereby offer to commute all my prospective claims under the articles of convention for that yearly stipend.

14. If I were to regard merely your Majesty's personal character, it might be sufficient to show, as I have done, that my claims are just. But your Majesty has also a public character to sustain and a public duty to discharge, and it behoves me therefore to satisfy your Majesty that the concession of my undoubted rights may be rendered perfectly

consistent with sound policy and a just regard to the safety and permanence of the British rule in India. The largeness of the sum I have mentioned, considered by itself,—without any reference to the numerous regular, and increasing demands upon my exhausted treasury, might seem to indicate a wish to accumulate money for some concealed and hostile purpose : I utterly disavow every such object as alike dishonourable to the race from which I have sprung and inconsistent with the open course which I have ever pursued. Some of my ancestors have fallen victims of the disloyalty of others, but they never betrayed those who confided in their honour, and in imitation of their noble examples, while I have not hesitated and will still continue to complain of the injustice I have suffered and vindicate the rights that belong to me, I will not disgrace them and myself by secret machinations against a Power which I dare not combat in the open field. As a complete security against any such attempt, I will cheerfully agree not to retain more than 12 lakhs of Rupees in my treasury at any one time, to invest the surplus, should there be any, in the loans opened by the British Government ; and to forfeit to the Honourable Company any sum found in my possession in excess of that amount not so invested. If any other check can be suggested which shall not subject me to a degrading inquisition in all the minutiae of my expenditure, I shall willingly accede to it.

15. But to a Prince of your Majesty's enlarged and magnanimous views it will be obvious that the most just and generous policy must also be the most wise and provident. For on what firmer bases can the duty and tranquillity of the subjects of a distant and conquered country be founded, or the confidence of surrounding States, naturally jealous of their independence, be established than on the irresistible evidence continually presented to them of good faith and moderation displayed in the strict observance of engagements even if burthensome and although spontaneously entered into with one bereft of the power of dictating terms or of effectually resenting their violation.

16. Should, on the other hand, a conspicuous example subsist of broken compact on the part of your Majesty's Vicegerents towards me, because no longer in a condition to vindicate my rights by an appeal to arms—if contempt and indignity be measured out to the representative of a once mighty monarchy in proportion as he is powerless to enforce respect, your Majesty's acquired subjects, once amongst those of my ancestors, now with anxious fears observing the conduct of their new rulers, the neighbouring Princes who have beheld with alarm the progress of your Majesty's arms, nay the whole civilized world, will assuredly sympathize with my griefs and look on my oppressors with the feelings and wishes which their conduct must infallibly inspire.

17. If I had any doubt of the justice of my claims, I might still rest them on an appeal to your Majesty's known generosity. I might remind your Majesty of the time when my ancestors ruled supreme over these countries, where their wretched descendant and the sole representative of their dynasty is compelled to drag on a dependent existence in a dilapidated palace, exposed to the contempt or receiving the sympathy of the different classes of society, both Europeans and Asiatics, who resort to Dehlee, with means utterly inadequate to support the dignity even of a nominal sovereignty or to afford a scanty subsistence to the numerous branches of his family who look to him as their only stay. But I will not resort to such a plea. I will not condescend to accept, and your Majesty will disdain to confer, as a favour, that which is due as a right. I rest my cause on your Majesty's high-minded sense of honour and justice. I cannot permit myself to suppose that your Majesty will lend a deaf ear to my complaints. I address by this letter not only your Majesty but the world at large and I anticipate the plaudits which present and future ages will bestow on your Majesty's benevolent and enlightened sympathy with the unworthy representative of the once great and illustrious, though now fallen, House of Taimur.

18. To your Majesty what need I say more?*

* *Political Proceedings* 13-3-1829, No. 20.

APPENDIX

GOVERNOR-GENERAL BENTINCK ON RAMMOHUN TO THE COURT OF DIRECTORS.

HONOURABLE SIRS,

We have the honour to submit for your information copy of a letter and its enclosures from Rammohun Roy, a native inhabitant of Calcutta of distinguished literary repute, announcing his intention of proceeding to England in the capacity of Agent to the King of Delhi, and as the bearer of a letter from His Majesty to the address of the Sovereign complaining of the violation by the Hon'ble Company of their engagements with the late Shah Alam.

2. On the receipt of this communication we directed the Resident at Delhi to intimate to His Majesty, the surprise with which we had perused it, and more especially our astonishment at the unmeasured and unfounded accusation which it advances against the Hon'ble Company of having violated its engagements with the Royal Family. We further desired Sir E. Colebrooke to ascertain from the King whether he acknowledged Rammohun Roy as his Agent.

3. Your Hon'ble Court will find in the Resident's reply, copy of which is submitted, both the King of Delhi's distinct recognition of Rammohun Roy as his Agent, and his explanation of the grounds on which he has thought proper to adopt the extraordinary procedure of deputing that individual to England as the champion and advocate of his pretended wrongs.

4. The subject of the King of Delhi's claim to an augmentation of stipend which is the chief point at issue, is fully discussed in paragraphs 66 to 75 of our General Letter dated 3rd July 1828, and we have nothing to add on this occasion to the complete and detailed examination of the merits of the

question, contained in Sir C. Metcalfe's dispatch recorded as per margin [Pol. Con. 27th July 1827, No. 7], the substance of which is exhibited in the paragraphs above cited.

5. With respect to His Majesty's complaint of the insult offered to him by the alteration of style adopted by the late Governor General Earl Amherst, in his correspondence with the Court of Delhi, we solicit the attention of your Honourable Court to paragraph 64 of our letter already referred to, and the papers therein cited, as containing the fullest explanation of the grounds and occasion, on which this change was introduced.*

Sd. W. C. Bentinck
W. B. Bayley
C. T. Metcalfe

* *Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, dated 22nd May 1829.*

RAJAH RAM

The following incident of the employment of Rajah Ram at the Board of Control, which Sir William Foster was the first to recall in an article read before the Royal Historical Society on 10th November 1916, will be found interesting to the reader:—

"After his father's death, Rajah Ram came to London and applied to Sir John Hobhouse, who was then President of the Board of Control, for an appointment in his office, 'requesting that the opportunity may be afforded him previously to his return to his native country of acquiring an insight into the mode in which the public business is transacted in England.' He was appointed in August 1835 for one year as an extra clerk on a salary of £100, but a writership in Bengal was refused to him. In *Alexander's East India Magazine* for July to December 1836 (vol. 12, p. 568) the following extract from the *Hurkaru* may be found—

'We hear that the Court of Directors have refused to confirm the nomination to a Bengal writership by the President of the Board of Control, of the adopted son of the late respected Rammohun Roy: and that the refusal of the Court will be brought before Parliament.'

Rajah Ram, however, retained his post in the Board's office for nearly three years: and when he then expressed a desire to return to India, he was allowed to draw his salary to the end of the third year and received in addition a donation of £100 'in consideration of his

diligence in the discharge of his duties and the circumstances under which he accompanied his father to this country.' Details of his subsequent career are wanting." (*Bengal Past & Present*, Oct.-Dec. 1925).

THE BENGAL HERALD

G. SWINTON, Esq.,

Chief Secretary to Government.

SIR,

I have the honor to inform you for the information of Government that Rammohun Roy and Rajkissen Sing have ceased to be proprietors of this newspaper, entitled the *Bengal Herald*, from the present date.*

I have, etc.,

CALCUTTA,

30th July, 1829.

(Sd.) R. M. MARTIN,

Principal Proprietor of the *Bengal Herald*.

* Public Proceedings, 4th August, 1829, No. 52.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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