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SELECTIONS

FROM THE

LETTERS, DESPATCHES; AND OTHER STATE PAPERS

PRESERVED IN THE

BOMBAY SECRETARIAT.

HOME SERIES,

VOL. I.

EDITED BY

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PREFACE.

THE last volume of the Selections from the State Papers preserved in the Bombay Secretariat comprised all the documents regarding the history of the Maráthas from their founder Shiváji to their defeat at Assaye. The present volumes comprise all the important documents regarding the internal administration of the Bombay Presidency from the foundation of the Factory at Surat to Wellington's great victory which made the English masters of India. In the letters and narratives of the chief actors we have here related the earliest domestic history of our Indian Empire. In these volumes we can trace the gradual change in the servants of the Company from factors to soldiers and rulers of men. The papers have been printed, letter for letter, exactly as they are in the original manuscript; and each proof has been carefully collated with the original to see that no change has been made. Occasionally words have occurred not easily to be accounted for, and hence it is also likely to occur that, when a reader thinks he has alighted on a blunder, he has on a word that has been transferred from the manuscript with unusual care. In a country like India, where manuscript records are liable to so many perils, something approaching to facsimile was thought desirable. Owing to the decayed state of the paper and to the ink having spread, considerable difficulty has been experienced in deciphering the early documents. Some leaves unfortunately crumbled to pieces the moment they were touched. Considering that these documents have lain neglected for a century in a small damp room, it is a matter of congratulation that so many have escaped destruction. Even where the dangers just adverted to have been escaped, the difficulties presented to a modern reader by manuscripts no doubt perfectly intelligible to those for whose perusal they were intended, are by no means inconsiderable. An average specimen of the early correspondence is given in facsimile at the beginning of the Surat Letters.

At the end of the second volume are published the earliest treaties made with the Portuguese. The treaty of marriage between King Charles II and the Infanta Catherine of Portugal, dated 23rd June 1661, by which the Crown of Portugal ceded and granted to the Crown of England the Island and Harbour of Bombay in full sovereignty is given together with the Secret Article, regarding which there has been a considerable amount of unnecessary mystery. From the eleventh article of the treaty it will be seen that Bombay was not given merely as part of a dowry, but granted to the English Crown to enable the two nations to guard their respective dominions and interests against the aggressions and encroachments of the Dutch. By the secret article of the treaty the King of England bound himself to "exert his whole strength and power in order to establish a solid and lasting peace between the most serene King of Portugal and the States General of the United Netherlands," and, if the States General refused to make peace, Charles bound himself "to defend and protect the possessions of the Portuguese in the East Indies," and to obtain restitution to the Crown of Portugal of such Portuguese settlements in the East Indies as the Dutch might, subsequent to the treaty, obtain possession of. In the appendix is also published the treaty or articles on which Antonio de Mello e Castro delivered up the island of Bombay to Humphrey Cook, 14th January 1665. After the Portuguese treaties is now printed for the first time the famous convention made and entered into between Gerald Aungier and the people of Bombay.

After the papers relating to our first connection with Bombay will be found "Selections from the Bantam Letters." The earliest letter is dated Syam, Nov. 15th, 1679. The writer states—"They now make gr^t quantities of porcellain in Japan. I have seen some p^ticular pieces comparable to any made in China of late yeares, but generally 'tis not altogether soe good, & extraordinary abundance y^t came y^r last year rendered it very cheape." The Bantam letters are followed by the Journal of Nadir Shah's residence at Carmania, which gives a vivid picture of the atrocities committed by that cruel and capricious tyrant. The writer Mr. Gray describes the greatest warrior Persia has ever produced as "about five foot ten inches high and very well set, and notwithstanding his age and fatigue of life he has gone through, was very strong and upright, and to appearance, if no accident happens to him, may live this twenty years." The last document printed in the second volume is a Diary of Transactions on the Embassy to Borneo Proper by order of John Herbert, Esquire, Chief, Balambangan (1771). The island of Balambangan off the north of Borneo was granted to the English in 1761 by the Sultan of Sulu and remained in their possession till 1775 when the Council and establishment moved to Labuan. The notes to the Diary have been kindly supplied to me by the Hon. Mr. Treacher, Governor of the possessions of the British North Borneo Company.

In order to make the Selections more intelligible to the general reader I have thought it advisable to prefix to them a short historical introduction. In the introduction I have supplied the gaps in the Records by information derived from old books of travels from which the most accurate and complete picture of manners and the state of society can be drawn.

It affords me much pleasure to offer my best thanks to Mr. Javerilal Umiashankar for his notes on the land tenures of Gujarát, and to again acknowledge the valuable assistance rendered me in the preparation of these volumes by Mr. Purshottam Balkrishna Joshi, whose services were placed at my disposal by Government.

G. W. FORREST.

*Secretariat, Bombay, }
August 1887.*

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