CHAPTER II

THE MAKING OF A HISTORIAN

Modern Indian historiography on Medieval period owes its inception to the European and British historiography of the 19th century. The growth and development of British historical writing on Medieval India is reflective not only of its co-relation with the course of contemporary expansion of British rule in India but also of the progress of British historiography. The political activities of the East India company hastened the tempo of British interest in India's past. In 1770's when the startling reports of the Company's mismanagement were pouring in, Horace Walpole had remarked, "We shall lose the East before we know half its history". The prediction did not prove correct. The Company had no desire to lose what it was fast acquiring and it was not in its interest not to know its history. History of medieval India held special attraction for being the history of the predece-
The impact of the contemporary British schools of thought, at the same time divided most of the British historians on medieval India as representatives thereof. Thus, if Alexander Dow, Jonathan Scott and John Briggs represented the School of Enlightenment on Medieval India, Evangelicals found in Charls Grant, Marshman, Peggs and James Vaughan, the supporters of 'the introduction of light'. Utilitarianism as a practical philosophy found elaboration in varying degrees in the works of James Mill, Pringle Thomson, Henry Elliot and Henry George Keene among others. Romantic School found in David Price, Gligg and Elphinstone some of its most prominent British historians on medieval India. There was however, a significant unifying idea, in British historical writing on Medieval India, irrespective of the different schools, the historians belonged to.


No British historian failed to justify British rule over India or to assert its superiority over the Muslim rule that preceded it. At the same time, the earlier growth of historiography of Medieval India also presents a parallel to that in Europe. Analogous to the Medieval chronicles of Europe, there were chronicles of ruling Muslim dynasties. The majority of the writers confined their attention to one form of source material - the court chronicles and one form of history - the political. The early British historians, far from attacking it, stuck to the general native tradition of turning exclusively to the work of their predecessors as historians. Such an 'inherited' historiography also reflected Persian rather than the Arabic historical conspectus; the former aimed at writing the history of rulers, the latter aimed rather to cover the entire range of society. Certain changes in methodology of history writing during the British period, however, were apparent. Dow, writing

4 R.C. Majumdar, Historiography in Modern India, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1970, p. 25.
in the middle and later part of the 18th century was more than content to base his work on records of European travellers or by translating a few Persian works. Other British historians writing in the early and mid nineteenth century, on Medieval India were fast becoming aware of other sources and themes for different phases of Indo-Muslim history of India.

Historiography in Europe, apart from the development of its methodology, had been changing its nature from time to time. Thus, Gibbon and Macaulay evidence the concept that it was historian's burden to pass judgements in the light of the current ideals and morals. The narrative was also to be a piece of literary flavour and frills. Meanwhile Ranke infused historiography with a new spirit. He stands before us as a great founder of the Objective School. He decided effectually

to repress 'the poet, the Patriot' or 'the religious and political partisan' and to 'banish himself from his books'.

Ranke started with that classic pronouncement of having found 'truth more interesting and beautiful than romance', when he was not yet thirty; that he did not presume to sit on judgment on the past; that he only wanted to show "what had really happened". History, to be above evasion or dispute, must stand on documents, not on opinions. Such a history, he sought "to grasp in its unity". The greatest representative of this School in England was Lord Acton, for whom the main thing in history was not the art of collecting sources, but the

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12 In the Preface of Quentin Durward, he writes, "I found by comparison that the truth was more interesting and beautiful than romance. I turned away from it and resolved to avoid all invention and imagination in my works and to stick to facts"... and again his statement that has become classic for depicting the spirit in which the book was written, "History has had assigned to it the task of judging the Past, of instructing the present for the benefit of the ages to come. To such lofty functions this work does not aspire. Its aim is merely to show how things actually were" quoted from G.P. Gooch's History and Historians in the 19th Century, p. 73.

'sublimer art of investigating it, of discerning truth from falsehood and certainty from doubt.  

The concepts of nineteenth century European and British historiography inspired Indian historical scholarship on its Medieval history too.  

Infact Indian historiography came to challenge British historiography on Medieval India with the latter's own apparatus belli. Towards the end of the 19th century a reaction against the accepted British histories of India began among Indian scholars. Among them was also the one who has been well regarded as the father of modern scientific historical scholarship in the medieval and early British Periods of Indian history - Sir Jadunath Sarkar. When in 1891, he began his "apprenticeship in the history workshop" and 'set his hand to the plough', as he himself admitted, "Research (except in Sanskrit) meant only the pirating or translating of modern English or French books".  

Jadunath was the pioneer of a tradition and a School that grew up as an

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14 Lord Acton, Lectures on Modern History, p. 15.
outcome of his unique devotion to Clio for more than six
decades. His insistence on the search and use of first hand
original documents and on learning the language of the source
material was proverbial. By his wide travels and arduous tours
to spot the past scenes of action, by his unsparing scrutiny
of the evidence, by a thoroughness and unsurpassed accuracy
in checking details before 'composing a single page',
by separating the study of the past as much as humanly possible
from 'the passions of the present' and making his works
'readable for the excellence of its manner of presenting facts
and of its style', Jadunath applied the scientific methodology
of Niebuhr, Ranke and Mommsen to Indian history. It was a
Titanic will and matching energy that made him dedicate him­
self to the double task of collecting material as well as
bringing out a prodigious corpus in History.

17 Sir J.N. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire. Vol. III, 3rd ed.,
1964, (reprinted by Orient Longman, Calcutta, 1975), Preface,
iii.

18 For the scientific methodology of Niebuhr, Ranke and
Mommsen see: G.P. Gooch, History and Historians in Nineteen­

19 Even Lord Action, who founded a School of History, akin, in
many respects, to the German School, after delving into the
archives of European States all his life, was not able to
write any history 'as he failed to reach the obsolete
truth', See: Bisheshwar Prasad's "Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan"
in Historians and Historiography in Modern India, pp. 146-147.
However, according to Anales Tripathi, "Lord Acton" did not
find time to write his projected "History of Freedom", see,
The Statesman (Calcutta), December 10, 1970, "Columbus of
Mughal History" - An Assessment of Sir Jadunath Sarkar's
Works".
was the apotheosis of modern critical Indian scholarship reflected in his genius that what Gooch said about Ranke can be well said about him too:

When he began to write, historians of high repute believed memoirs and chronicles to be the best authorities. When he laid down his pen, every scholar with a reputation to make or lose had learned to content himself with nothing less than the papers and correspondence of the actors themselves and those in immediate contact with the events they describe. 20

Sir Jadunath had himself revealed some of the forces that went into the making of the historian. 21 Bengal through ancient and middle ages had been the land of poetry, jurisprudence and logic but not of historians. 22 Sandhyakar Nandi's Ramcharitman a panegyric in metaphor is the only work to

20 G.P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century, p. 97.


Bengal's credit in this respect. A tremendous change however, overtook Bengal under the impact of British civilization, expressed in the popular saying 'what Bengal thinks today rest of India thinks tomorrow'. It became the seed plot of the 'Indian Renaissance, Reformation and the Revolutionary Current'. The historiography of modern India too was infused with the current reawakening under the British impact. *Rivaz-us-Salatin, Tarikh-i-Bangala, Hamidullah Khan's Tarikh-i-Chotgan, Ram Ram Basu's Bengali biography,* were some of the earlier attempts; before Jadunath Sarkar entered the scene towards the end of the nineteenth century.

While there is no doubt that his father was one of the major moulding forces of the young Jadunath's mind towards the study of history, Sir Jadunath in his radio talk, also admitted that it was the study of English literature and of Western history that brought him to the portals of historical research in Indian history; that to understand Dante better he had to read the Italian historian Sismandi.

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Besides the study of European history was an essential ancillary to English literature. It had also been one of the subjects of the Honours course of the University of Calcutta, in which Jadunath had distinguished himself. At the same time his cultivated literary talents along with the broad base he acquired in the study of history explain his detached outlook as well as excellent manner of the presentation of historical material. To him the history of India was but a chapter of the different eras of world history.  

Another potent force in the moulding of the genius was his intellectual discipleship to some of the great pioneers of scientific historiography in Europe of the nineteenth century. Ranke and Mommsen being the most prominent among them. He always impressed upon his pupils that truth and not passing utility should be the aim of honest research; he warned them against narrow specialization or 'scissors and gum bottle' type research, such a kind of work could at best have only transient, Pro-tempore value.

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26 Ibid., pp. 55-57.

27 K.R. Gamungo has recorded that the first book Sir Jadunath Sarkar gave him to study when the former went to reside with the Master at Cuttack was Gooch's "History and Historians of the 19th Century", meant to cure Gamungo of his raw patriotic base.
Such a historiographer remains our greatest historian after more than hundred years after his birth. His powers of work coupled with the span of his life enabled him to produce a larger number of master pieces than any other historian in the field can claim. His transformation of the craft into a scientific study of material is equally remarkable. In fact his vast and varied output makes his methodology a fascinating subject in itself.

The methodology of the Master has often been summed up in four words. Collection of material, identification, Chronology and corroboration, though to have a complete idea of any of his works, his style, his idea of objectivity and the 'presence' of the historian can hardly be missed.28

Sir Jadunath was the first historian on Medieval India to insist on the hunting from all original contemporary source material in various languages - letters, diaries, newsletters, court bulletins apart from chronicles and biographies.29


Though well versed in Sanskrit, he chose Muslim and early British periods, perhaps to suit his literary genius and a spirit that welcomed challenges of the vast terra-incognita of historical literature and other source material. He may have found archaeology, epigraphy and numismatics of ancient India that was comparatively barren of bonafide political history, too prosaic. One of his earliest pupils who had found a very large collection of works of the Mutiny in the Master's library and ventured to inquire whether the owner had any special interest in the topic, he was told that initially Sir Jadunath had a mind to carry on research in modern Indian history but had soon realized that it was not possible to do full justice to the topic that lay so close as a historical phase. Hence, the final choice of Muslim and early British

30 Though the historian mastered several modern Indian and foreign languages, particularly Marathi, Persian, French and Portuguese, none stood nearer to his heart than Sanskrit. He would occasionally withdraw himself from the fatigue of Mughal Akhbarat into the company of Kalidas and Shav bhuti. Cf. Sardessi's "Jadunath Sarkar As I Know Him", Life and Letters of Sir Jadunath Sarkar, p. 23.


periods of Indian history. The 'Columbus' of medieval Indian history found the 'sea uncharted, the instruments primitive, the ship unfit for distant navigation and the sailors inexperienced and untrained'. With a will and energy that were legendry, he dedicated himself to the double task of searching material and writing scientific history on a magnificent scale.

A thorough search and acquisition of all contemporary material in all the languages concerned with the period of his research was in his view the first indispensable requisite for the researcher. He combed the libraries of India and Europe and ransacked numerous archives from Patna to Berlin and Paris. He did not travel abroad but through the catalogues of these institutions, coupled with his own instinct to spot the required source material, he secured these by transcripts, rotary bromide prints, photostats as well as microfilm copies. In his quest for contemporary material he was no doubt helped by kindred souls like Irvine, C.R.Wilson, Sir Edward Gait, G.S.Sardesai. Ultimately, it was his own super-human tenacity


that brought to light public and private records. No effort was stinted and no expense spared, in fact it was one item on which Jadunath spent lavishly.  

The account of the discovery of various news sources reads like a romance of historical pursuit. His own report of the discovery of Haft Anjuman is quite thrilling. Another discovery that created sensation was Mirza Nathan's Baharistan-i-Ghalib from Paris Library. The book had been

35. G.S. Sardesai, "Jadunath Sarkar As I Know Him", Life and Letters, p. 33.

36. N.K. Sinha, "Sir Jadunath Sarkar", Bengal Past and Present, Vol. Lxxxix, July-December, 1970, Part II: Serial No. 166, 173. Earlier Mirza Raja Jai Singh's successful Purandar campaign was known only from the Persian official history- Alamgir-nama. The Maratha stories relating to this defeat of Shivaji were unacceptable later traditions. The historian felt that there was a lacuna. In 1904, he traced a Persian Mss. in the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris which gave Aurangzeb's correspondence with Jaisingh but ended abruptly in the midst of the Purandar Campaign. This correspondence could not be found even in the Jaipur archives. The despatches of Jai Singh were kept in charge of his Secretary Udiraj Munshi, who, after Jai Singh's death became a Muslim. His son put these drafts in a volume entitled Insha-i-Haft Anjuman as a model of epistolary style. But the Ms. could not be traced anywhere. A long quest began. The historian succeeded at last in 1907 in discovering a copy of the Ms. in Benares. The leaves of the volume had stuck together and had made it into a sort of cardboard. The leaves were loosened. The letters which Udiraj had drafted for his master thus became known to the world after two centuries and a half. A more perfect copy of the Ms. was later found in Lucknow.
entered in the catalogue as a novel and it was the Master's keen eye for the sources that spotted it. It proved to be a history written by a Mughal Military Officer fighting in Bengal under Jahangir's Viceroy. Among the most conspicuous manuscripts in his Persian collection are the Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Muallah or the imperial gazettes of the Mughal Government, the Araiz-o-Faramin or the petitions of the nobles and military officers to the kings and princes and Rugaat and Maktubat, i.e. the correspondence of the emperor themselves and the correspondence of the princes, governors of provinces, commanders, nobels, rulers of independent and semi-independent territories and foreign dignitaries. Another great discovery was that of the importance of the archives of Jaipur Darbar. Though he secured the transcripts and wrote a History of Jaipur, still lying in manuscript with the royal family of Jaipur - the historian refused to 'revise' it to make History of Jaipur acceptable to the Darbar.

37 An English translation of it was published later by M.L. Borah of the University of Decca. See K.R. Qamungo's "Jadunath Sarkar As a Historian", Life and Letters, pp. 67-68.
38 S.M. Hasan, "Jadunath Sarkar's Collection of Persian Manuscripts", Bengal Past and Present (January-June, 1971), Vol. XC, Part I, Serial No. 169, p. 120.
39 It has now been edited by Raghbir Singh, who is also proposing to have it published through the Director, Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur, vide Raghbir Singh's reply to an enquiry, dated Feb. 10, 1982.
In his mission of collection of source material the historian faced hurdles of other kind also. Shia agents had to be employed for getting access to the manuscripts in the library of Sir Salar Jang at Hyderabad. Many news letters had to be obtained through the agency of British officers and scholars. One Maratha family of historical lineage in Malwa did not allow anyone to peep into their family records, much less let any historian copy them, but the historian would not take no for an answer in this respect and went alone in the guise of an orthodox Hindu in dhoti and chadar, 'a tilak on his forehead and a choti' (tufft of hair at the back of the head), to placate the owner enough to make his mission successful. He also paid a visit to the home of the historic Jedhe family that possessed the priceless chronology of Maratha history, known as the Jedhe Chronology. All these labours produced momentous results. In what the historian said about

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40 e.g. Private Papers, records and Persian manuscripts in the Raipur ruler's library were procured through the agency of Sir Edward Gait then in England, who wrote to a British Commissioner in U.P., the latter received as present from the Nawab, the records beautifully copies out, the transcript of the manuscript was first sent to Sir Edward who forwarded it to the historian. See Dharma Bhama's "Jadunath Sarkar", History and Political Science Journal, Vol. VI, Jan. 26, 1959, p. 29.

41 Ibid., pp. 29-30.
his collection, he did not exaggerate. No serious research in Medieval or early British Indian history is possible without consulting his collection that now honours the Buhar Section of the National Library, Calcutta. One could find in his collection transcripts from more than a dozen libraries from India and abroad. On account of its collections, it has become the nursery of research in Indo-Muslim history for three generations.

The historian was as zealous about learning the language of the original sources. Many of the sources of his chosen field were in Persian and Marathi, both of which he did not know. He began Persian from the alphabet and learnt enough

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42"My collection of Persian manuscripts and Marathi printed sources are indispensable to the students of our medieval history as it has brought together in one place the necessary works which are scattered in many towns of India and famous public libraries of Europe". Requoted from S.M. Hasan's "Jadunath Sarkar's Collection of Persian Manuscripts", *Bengal Past and Present*, January–June, 1971, Vol.XC,Part I, Serial No.109, p.118.

to tackle the Persian chronicles in manuscript. The way he mastered Marathi, was a marvel to many. It was not only reading of Marathi historical prose but learning of verse as well so that he was able to grasp the works of its masters like Tukaram and Ramdas, to quote appropriately from them. In fact, he had mastered the language to the extent that he was able to detect the possible mistakes of Modi reading. Modi being the script of Marathi in which most of the historical documents were written. He was indeed a polyglot; when richness of Portugues material was revealed, he started learning it at the age of sixty according to Chevalier Pissurlencar. French he could very well read and write.

In the Collection of the Master, are some of the large scale maps hardly found elsewhere. Such maps and gazetteers were a must for the minute details of topographical description which forms a special feature of Sir Jadunath's

44It was not his second language at School or College. See S.R.Tikekar's, *On Historiography*, p. 21.

45Though inbecile jealousy and resentment at inroad into the Maratha preserve a bold Northerner have not been wanting, See, G.S.Sardesai, "Jadunath Sarkar As I Know Him", *Life and Letters*, p. 23.

works. Here are some of the places indicated by him in
Military History of India. 47

Taraori = 9 miles north of Karnal city, 12 miles south
of Thaneshwar station (Karnal District
Gazetteer, 1884, pp. 27 and 264).

Talav = 20 miles north east of Panetha, but on the
northern bank of the Narmada.

To identify places of historical narration was
a complex task. The official maps used the Roman script and
anglicized pronunciation, while the Persian chronicles used
the Arabic script for the Persianised way of pronouncing the
Indian names. Sir Jadunath was aware of it and had himself
explained the Persian characteristics of writing Indian names. 48
Thus, in one Persian manuscript Paithan on the Godavari in
Deccan turned Patan and the Godavari was called the river of
Patan; whereas the Godavari, the Krishna, the Bheema all are
mentioned as Ganga by the local people. A different kind of
confusion could arise often because of the different names
given to the same hill fort or places. Whereas Shivaji intro-
duced Sanskritised names; the same were again changed into
Persian when they passed into Mughal hands. Thus, Khelna near

47Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Military History of India, 1st edition,
Kolhapur was known as Vishalgad, Rangna as Prasiddhaad, Rohida was known as Vichitragad. Kondana near Poona was Sinhagad and when the latter passed into Mughal empire, Aurangzeb, called it Buxinda Bux. Premgad, Premgad, Shimgad and Shahgad are the names of one and the same fort in Ahmednagar district. Panhala near Kolhapur is called in Sanskrit Parnal Parvat while the Mughals called it Nabi Shah Durg. After considerable quest the historian came to known that Prabhanvalli, Prabholi and Prabhavali were names of the same place.

Not content with maps or written records, he would often visit historical sites to ascertain the topographical aspect, apart from thus having an insight into the character of common people. Sardesai has recorded the keenness with which the historian visited Sakharna and spent the night there, a village near Vishalgad which in the original text he had misread as Shankarpett. The works of Sir Jadunath give ample proof of the pains he took, and of his mastery as a


50 Sarkar-Sardesai Correspondence in Life and Letters of Sir Jadunath Sarkar, H.R. Gupta (ed.), p. 150; Sir J.N. Sarkar, Shivaji and His Times, pp. 84-85.
surveyor of the topography of places connected with his narration of history. We find a vivid description of places—whether it is a military scene, a military route or the guerrilla tactics of the Marathas. 51

Chronology was yet another aspect of history to which Sir Jadunath paid thorough attention. Chronology the 'backbone of history' was an extremely complicated problem of Indian history. Not only were there many calendars in vogue, there were variations in the method of reckoning the day and the year. The Islamic dates were of two types Solar and Lunar and birth days of emperors were celebrated according to both Solar as well as lunar calendars. Julius years, Suhur San, Fasli years, Hijri are some of the reckoners of Islamic years; while some of the Hindu eras are the Vikram, the Gupta, the Shaka, the Kalachuri and nearly all of them had some local variations! The day according to Hindu calendar begins with the rising of the sun, even though the date is dependent on

51 G.S. Sardesai, "Jadunath Sarkar As I Know Him", Life and Letters of Sir Jadunath Sarkar, p. 20.

the phase of the moon. In some Islamic calendars rising of the moon marks the beginning of the day. For the lunar Hindu calculations there are two fortnights: Shukla and Krishna, the bright and the dark. The month in the northern regions ends on full moon day instead of ending on the Amant (Amavasya) as it does in most of the southern regions. Thus for one fortnight of both the calendars the name of the month remains the same. This difference of calendars is hardly ever explained by the writers of the two regions. In the Selections from Peshwa Daftar for a report from Jaipur, the date given was Poush Vadva 12 and Sir Jadunath could easily make out that this date was according to the Northern calendar. The way in which he arrived at this calculation speaks of the Master's minute eye for details and accuracy:

Poush Vadva 12 acc. to Southern calendar is 13th Jan, 1751; this is impossible, as Ishwari Singh (whose suicide is reported in that document) died on Dec. 12th 1751. Therefore, Poush Vadva is Northern way of reckoning. That is Margashirsha Vadva 12 = 14th Dec. 1750.

The way the historian worked on a detailed chronology of the period he was studying, helped not only to clarify the movements of the person whose life was under study, the gaps in it could also be detected and what is more, it made one see the achievements and exploits of the historical characters in proper perspective and focus. Thus, on the strength of chronologies prepared by himself, the historian could declare against the general assumption of those days that the meeting between Shivaji and Aurangzeb took place in Agra and not at Delhi, on the basis of the imperial movements which were settled in his chronology.54 Again contrary to popular supposition, he proved on the basis of the chronological evidence, details of the return journey of Shivaji from Agra. Thus, he could prove that Shivaji took only 25 days to reach his home fort Rajgad; on 19th August he escaped from Agra and on 12th September he was back in Rajgad.55 His revelations of chronology made heroism glorious. When we know that Janakji Scindia undertook campaigning in the North before he was sixteen. When Viswas Rao died a hero's death

55 Ibid., pp. 150-151.
at Panipat he was in his teens, that Raghoba crossed the Indus at Attock before he was twenty five, the exploits get altogether a different colouring.  

The historian would make his own method of following chronology absolutely clear to the reader, thus he appended to his chronology of Shivaji:

All the dates in this book are given in the Old Style or unreformed calendar which continued in use in England till 1752. The New Style Dates (usually 10 days later for Shivaji's life time) which occur in the French, Portuguese and Dutch Writings, have been reduced by me to the Old Style. I have followed the conversion tables in Swami Kanna Pilai's *Indian Ephermeris*.  

He has invariably given exact Christian dates equivalent to Hijri dates of the manuscripts, which is very helpful to the research scholars in the absence of any ready reference for conversion purposes.

After collection of material came corroboration, the critical evaluation of each source. What he believed and


practised about this aspect of his scientific methodology, to quote him, was - "Writing history that will live, requires not mere industry (a copyists' industry in collecting material), but what is far higher - extensive reading, (not narrow specialized study) power of deep thinking and connecting together the near and the distant, things Indian and foreign (by way of comparative estimate and liberal interpretation... The true historian's function is that of the stomach in digesting and extracting the vital juice from the raw food stuff passed down the throat:"

The historian never took the chronicles, court historians, other documents and even historical letters at their face value. He subjected each to a scientific scrutiny for ascertaining first, its authenticity and then even separate facts from uncorroborated truth which for the Master was only a 'surmise or an inference approximating to a highly probably truth. He depended on as many sources as possible even for description of a single event; not only comparing the many versions, but also putting them all under his 'X-ray'

59 N.G. Chapekar 'Forward' to On Historiography by S.R. Tikekar, viii.
treatment. Thus, he exposed that Factory Records were not records in the modern terminology but were for the most part a daily report of the *bazar* gossip and that the Factories of those days were just godowns in the modern sense of the word. An incident like the death of Shivaji had been reported to London four years earlier, i.e. in 1676 by the factories at Surat and Bombay. He agreed with Ranke that History depends "on the relation of eye-witness and the original documents". The partiality of many Persian documents was seen more in remaining silent over episodes which were not flattering to the throne. Thus, the raid on Shaista Khan or the escape of Shivaji from Agra, have been reported in only one sentence each, as observed by Sir Jadunath. He put the Marathi records also under his scrutiny and science of evidence before declaring most of the *Bakhars* as bogus, to the chagrin of many Maratha scholars. However, he has quoted from *Sabhaasad* and 91

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60 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
62 "I am now convinced that the Shiva Digvelava is a modern forgery probably based on some old materials", he wrote to G.S.Sardessai from Darjeeling on 12.6.1917 - See Sarkar Sardessai Correspondence, *Life and Letters*, p.136.
Qalmi Bakhar as in his opinion, these two have some elements of truth and were not written as late as the rest were. The Dutch and Portuguese documents, the records of the Missionaries all had to be critically examined before acceptance. He used to weave the historical narration out of the tangled bits of thread collected from multilingual sources. What is more, he never made a secret of what sources he used. Thus, for Shivaji's night attack on Shaista Khan in Poona (1663) the sources given are:

1. **Factory Records**: (Vol. 103 Surat). Gyffard to Surat 12th April, 24th May, 1663.
3. **Alangir-name**: 819 (only one sentence)
4. Manusci's *Storia*, ii, 104-06.
5. **Sabhagi**: 35-37
6. **Nuskha-i-Dilkasha**: 44-46 (Bhimsen Burhanpuri).
7. Khafikhan: ii - 172-75 (narrates the story as told by his father, who was serving Shaista Khan, but wrote after 1730.
8. **Jedha Shakavali**: 1618-1697 A.D.
9. **Qalmi Bakhar**: 46-47.

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Thus to narrate a single event, nine authorities were consulted. The comment on Khafi Khan's statement is significant. The suggestion is that the narrator, i.e., Khafi Khan's father, though a contemporary eye-witness, has lost some of the importance because the narration was put on paper more than 66 years after the event. Such minute appraisal reflects his great passion for truth. Such a methodical citation of authorities was his valuable gift to the researchers in the field. Sir Jadunath himself believed in eternal progression being the soul of research and always kept abreast with the latest; ever ready to improve on his own works, evidenced by the many editions of his works, e.g., the first edition of House of Shivaji was first published in 1940 and the third in 1955, with notable corrections and additions.64

The study of English literature not only had led him to the doors of history, it also distinguished him

64 In the second edition (May 1948), Chapter II (Life of Malik Ambar) and Chapter XI (Shivaji's Poet Laureate) were added. In the third edition the book was much enlarged by seven new documents on the Shahji - Adil Shahi relations. The account of Shivaji's poet laureate was completed by adding notes on the fragments then newly discovered in Kolhapur. Thus the third edition included all the material acquired by the historian till that time (1955).
for sheer presentation of it even in an era of eminent British scholars on the subject. In fact the manner in which Sir Jadunath brought out the fruits of his research is a delight in prose reading, so that the interest of the reader never fags even if the subject may not be his favourite. The historian was a master of good English and though he had started his career as a teacher of English literature, he rose above the temptation of a flowery style. History to him was first a scientific inquiry and then a piece of literature. He appreciated it with the meticulous accuracy of scientist and expressed it like a literati. Indeed he held a judicious balance between the two. His advice to G.S.Sardesai on the matter was, "The surest means of acquiring a good style is (i) to read aloud the best English prose – avoiding ornate and involved authors... to pause and revise frequently one's own writing and again 'don't crowd your canvas by going into details... the elements of a good prose style include not merely the choice of apt phrases, but also the judicious and

65 While Beveridge hailed Jadunath as 'Bengali Gibbon', V.A. Smith called his essays 'Charming and authoritative, miniature ivory caskets of fine literary workmanship'. See K.R. Qanungo, "Sir Jadunath Sarkar As a Historian", Life and Letters, pp. 63, 71.
most effective marshalling of the facts ... Roget can be of use when we are stuck for a suitable word but can give us no help in mastering a style".  

All his writings bear the mark of flawless English, originality of thought, extensive reading and his way of refreshing the subject of adding parallel illustrations from other periods of world and Indian history. Thus, when Shivaji at his visit to Aurangzeb's court, was made to stand behind Jaswant Singh, he flares up, "Jaswant, whose back my soldiers have been seen!"  

In a footnote a famous interview of a similar kind is quoted between Wellington and Louis XVIII of France, when the French Marshalls turned their backs at the entrance of Wellington, pretending not to see him. To Louis' apologies for his generals' rudeness, the British hero calmly replied, "Your Highness need not worry. It is by their backs that I have generally known them". Similarly he compares Jijabai to Queen Gautami Satkarni who prided herself in her son's glory. Such illustrations enliven what other wise might be 'dry details'. For the depiction of his

67\textit{J.N.Sarkar, Shivaji and His Times}, p. 143.
68\textit{Ibid.}, p. 145.
characters and personalities too he was remarkable. Under his touch the shadows of the dead seem to pass before the reader, whether it is Baji Rao I 'a younger Prime Minister than William Pitt the younger' or Nana Fadnis the 'Chitpavan Machiavelli - the spider spinning his web sitting at Poona' ... "who saw the things at Delhi Empire through his ears"69, all owe their photographic realism to the skill of the Master craftsman. It is however, his portrait of Aurangzeb - the ruler who 'was free from vice, stupidity and sloth', whose 'intellectual keenness was proverbial... whose patience and perseverance were as remarkable as his love of discipline and order', who 'in private life was simple and abstemious like a hermit... and yet the result of fifty years' rule by such a sovereign was failure and chaos'70 His portrait of a decaying man holding the reins of a decaying empire is unsurpassed in Indian historical works. Here he touches the genius of Greek tragedy.

The soul of history for the Master craftsman, however, lay in search for truth and objective interpretation of history. All his works bear testimony to his message, "I would not care whether truth is pleasant or unpleasant and in consonance with or opposed to current views. I would not mind in the least whether truth is or is not a blow to the glory of my country. If necessary I shall bear in patience the ridicule and slander of friends and society for the sake of preaching truth, but still I shall seek truth, understand truth and accept truth. This should be the firm resolve of a historian". The juristic equanimity of the stern historian and his impartial treatment often aggrieved Hindus as well as Muslims. If he acquitted Shivaji of the charge of murder of an invited guest, he made Marathas unhappy by evidencing a more heinous crime of Shivaji, the occupation of Javli 'by a deliberate murder and organized treachery on the part of Shivaji'. But the facts spoke too clearly to be hushed up

71 Speech as the Chairman of a Historical Conference in Bengal, 1915, published in Prabasi of the same year. The above is the literal translation of a part of his message. Quoted by R.C.Majumdar in Historiography in Modern India, p. 56.

72 J.N.Sarkar, Shivaji and His Times, p. 43.
by partisan historians and laity. His III volume of the History of Aurangzeb (1919) which included moral and religious regulations of Aurangzeb, Jihad and Jiziyah, temple destruction and the Hindu reaction, were highly inflammable topics. Especially at the time of the publication of the volume, when communal feelings ran high. The interpretation of Islamic institutions by a Hindu may in itself have offended the orthodox Muslims. The testimony of Aurangzeb himself, the evidence of equally pious Muslims as brought to light by the historian, however, created a 'desperate' situation for the champions and apologists of Aurangzeb. If on the one hand the historian seldom complimented 'half-informed critics' by a reply, his patience with genuine criticism was tremendous and it set him hunting afresh on the subject. Thus when A.F. Rehman questioned Sir Jadunath's view that Afzal Khan's murder was a 'preventive murder' when authorities on the issue were 'almost evenly balanced', Jadunath pursued the matter for the next twenty years and produced the testimony, in an appendix to his fifth edition of Shivaji, of a good Muslim, Mir Alam, the famous Wasir of Nizam-ul-Mulk and historian who says "... the Khan intoxicated with the pride of being a hero... gripped Shivaji very hard in the act of embracing and struck him with his belt-dagger". 73

Yet in his mission to interpret history objectively he does not 'banish himself from his books'\(^74\); the expression Lord Acton used for Ranke, could be as much questioned about Sir Jadunath as it has been about Ranke.\(^75\)

Though morally neutral and a follower of Ranke's motto, *Die es eigen tlich gewesen* ('the past as it actually was'), there could not be the 'objectivity of the eunuch'.\(^76\) His measured accuracy and objective tone is not the result of indifference. When judgement is pronounced, it is more weighty on account of its rarity. The historian had, it would appear, his own idea of intelligibility and purpose in history. He felt, "History when rightly read is a justification of Providence, the revelation of a great purpose fulfilled in

\(^74\) Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 19.

\(^75\) Pieter Geyl, *Debates with Historians*, p. 3.

time. He believed in human destiny but equated it with character when he wrote, "Destiny is only another name for character and Shah Alam's character alone was responsible for the fate that now overwhelmed him and his house". His belief in divine mercy as well as divine justice is apparent at many places.

The above in general are the characteristics of the Master's methodology he applied to his vast and varied subjects covering Topography and Statistics, Biography and History, Government and Economics, Essays and Surveys, Religion and Art, Corpuses and Military history. To call him

79 In Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol.I, 3rd ed., 1964, Orient Longman reprint, Calcutta, 1973, p.3, he writes, while describing the condition of India after Nadir Shah's departure, "Heaven seemed to have taken pity on the sorly afflicted people of Northern India. In the next season, there was adequate and timely rainfall, the earth yielded a profuse harvest and all food stuff became cheap and plentiful, as if to make amends for the people's recent suffering. Nature is not half so much the cause of a nation's misery as man"; In his "Fall of the Mughal Empire".Vol.III,p.311, while writing about the punishment given to Shah Alam's Nazir, Manzoor Ali, who assisted Ghulam Qadir Rohilla in the latter's insulting the aged emperor, he says,"One almost feels a grim satisfaction that divine justice did not sleep over the prime cause of these princely sufferings".
an 'imperialist' or 'political' historian as is sometimes the case, would be missing altogether his conception of history. He conveyed, while writing about certain exclusions from his long period under survey: "A more serious defect is that the social and economic history of this long stretch of time has been crowded out of the present series, though I have made many short excursions into that field in my major works and essays".80 Thus, the consciousness of a vast hinterland of 'cultural' history was there, but 'the first thing came first'. In the field of historical research, India is in the 'beginning of nineteenth century',81 as compared with West. Here the historian is primarily a digger and a stone dresser and not exclusively an architect, as Howorth in the introduction to his History of the Mongols held. His view however may be true in case of many western countries like Rome, Greece, Germany and England where diggers into the

80 J.N.Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, 1st ed., 1950, Orient Longman reprint, Calcutta, 1972, Preface, iii. The historian wrote to Raghubir Sinh of Sitamau on 3rd March, 1936, "Special care should be taken to avoid giving the chapters on literature and art in Malwa to a mere dry as dust scholar, there will be 'Go-hatyā' (Cow-slaughter) of Kalidas if these chapters are not given to a truly gifted literary man", Making of a Princely Historian, V.G. Khobrekar and S.R. Tikekar, editors, Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay, 1975, p. 193.

original sources have been working for generations. It seems Sir Jadunath was fully aware of the evolutional aspect of history. In 1957, he distinguished between two types of research, an exhaustive study of a king or a general and second, 'Studies of the Supreme type' which (comparable to Bryce’s *Holy Roman Empire*) have not been produced in India as yet. 82 We get the answer to it from Sir Jadunath himself.

"We have yet to collect and edit our material and to construct the necessary foundation, the bed rock of ascertained and unassailable facts on which alone the superstructure of a philosophy of history can be raised". 83

Thus he wrote and inspired and coming generations to write history that will 'endure'.
