Chapter Five

POLICY OF ACTIVE INTERVENTION

I. Formation of a 'Peace-Ministry'

The absolute ascendancy of the 'war-party' under Ranjeng Pande led to aggravation of troubles for the British. The war-party's hostile policy was now manifested in four ways; first, oppressive measures against the Indian merchants at Kathmandu; second, non-cooperation with the British in the suppression of Thagge and dacoity on the border; third, intrigues with Indian states, especially Lahore; and lastly, encroachment on British territory.

Oppression of Indian merchants

The Indian merchants at Kathmandu were subjected to fines, extortions, designed delay of justice and even arbitrary punishments. They found it hard to recover their loans given to the local merchants, through the Nepalese Courts of law. Hodgson made a stern remonstrance with the Durbar on this score, and succeeded in eliciting from it an undertaking that the interests of the Indian merchants would no longer be harmed.

(1) S.C., 5 February 1840, 56, 64; 25 May 1840, 89-91; 6 July 1840, 92; 7 September 1840, 73; A Narrative of Principal Events in Nepal from 1840 to the end of 1861, by Capt. Nicholetts, Assistant Resident, F.C., 11 November 1863, 23.
Thagée and Dacoity

Suppression of border crimes was an abiding problem for the British government, who found it impossible to tackle it without the effective cooperation of the Nepal government. This cooperation was extended to them by Bhim Sen, during whose able administration, the incidence of border crimes was far lower than ever before. He rightly realised that these crimes were as much a menace to the law and order of British India as that of Nepal.

After his fall the Durbar evinced increasing reluctance to cooperate in this matter. Far from surrendering the Thagée and dacoits on the border of Oudh and the Lower Provinces, the officers of the Nepal government, presumably at the instigation of some parties in the Durbar, gave asylum to these malcontents. All sorts of obstacles were put in the way of their seizure by the British authorities, who were never permitted to follow up these outlaws into the territories of Nepal. The Nepalese officers showed scant deference to the requisitions of their British counterparts, and even to the orders of their own government, enjoining cooperation.

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and help. They were mostly lukewarm; some of them encouraged the dacoits to plunder the British districts, with a view to sharing in their spoils. Little wonder, the Nepalese Tarai, bordering on the British territory, soon became a safe sanctuary of these evil characters, thriving in the hospitality and protective wings of the Nepalese officers. Remonstrances of the Resident did elicit the Durbar's acquiescence in tardy cooperation, but such acquiescence was mostly short-lived, and pledges of help were soon violated in practice. Thus two big gangs of dacoits under Mangal Singh and Dallip Singh carried on depredations on the Oudh border from the Nepalese Tarai till October 1840, when the Durbar was obliged to surrender them after the personal remonstnce of the Governor-General to the King of Nepal.

(3) S.C., 23 March 1840, 117; 27 April 1840, 112-3; 25 May 1840, 92; 29 June 1840, 83-4; 3 August 1840, 133-4; 7 September 1840, 73-4, 82; 21 September 1840, 123, 157, 152; 14 September 1840, 102-3; 5 October 1840, 148-9; 26 October 1840, 123; 9 November 1840, 164.

B.J.P.C., 18 August 1840, 23, 25; 25 November 1840, 17; 3 September 1840, 12-5.


(4) S.C., 7 September 1840, 82; 31 August 1840, 76; 26 October 1840, 130-3; B.J.P.C., 3 November 1840, 2; P.C.E.R., Vol. 29.
Yet, while the conduct of the Nepalese officers was justly open to blame, it should not be forgotten that the police organisation of the British in the Lower Provinces, particularly on the frontier, was "extremely bad". The Superintendent of Police himself frankly admitted that with such police organisation he could hardly cope with the increasing crime on the border.

Intrigues

Nepal had earlier undertaken to desist from intriguing with the Indian states in order to stir up their disaffection towards the British. But far from honouring this undertaking she indulged in these activities with renewed zeal, though under more delusive pretence. News of Russian advance to Khiva was hailed with delight; the British hostility with China was a welcome development, and the widening rift between Lahore and Calcutta animated the hope of alliance with the former. Emissaries continued to pass from one Indian state to another with invitations, matrimonial in appearance but political in intent. Attempts were

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made to temper with the Gurkhas in the Indian army, as
also to sow disaffection among the Rajas and Zemindars of
Bihar and the North-Western Province. Repeated appeals were
made to China and Tibet who, however, evinced no inclination
to respond favourably.

In obvious alarm, the Magistrate of Champaran asked
for garrisoning the borders of Tirhoot and Champaran as a
precautionary step.

**Encroachment on Ramnagar**

His fright was not baseless. On 12 April 1840, a
band of Gurkha soldiers, allegedly at the instance of the
Nepal Durbar, broke into the Ramnagar estate (in Champaran
district Bihar), recently escheated to the British Government,
and held as many as 91 villages by forcible occupation.

As a result, "a large tract of country, eight or nine
miles broad by twenty or twenty-five in length had been

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(7) S.a.C., 5 February 1840, 55-62; 31 August 1840, 80;
10 August 1840, 69-92; 6 July 1840, 95-6; 18 May 1840, 265;
17 August 1840, 80; 2 August 1840, 4-6; 27 April 1840, 121;
12 February 1840, 48, 79; 23 March 1840, 110; 14 September
1840, 90; H.E.P., 4 May 1840, 16-8; 16 June 1840, 1; The
Asiatic Journal, XXXIII, New Series, September-December 1840

(8) S.a.C., 12 February 1840, 79-80.

(9) "Whatever violence or injury has been committed,
has been with the permission, knowledge and assistance of
the Nepal authorities and of no middle man or body of men
whatever." Jt. Magistrate, Champaran to Resident and
entirely cut off from the British dominions. The British sternly remonstrated, but to no purpose. The Durbar sought to justify the occupation, by pleading that the lands belonged really to Nepal, though they were wrongly shown in maps to be in the British territory, and that the demarcation of Indo-Nepal frontier near the Ramnagar estate was faulty. Besides, it was further claimed, that some of the lands occupied were given by the King of Nepal, as a jagheer, to Raja Tej Pratap Sein, the late Raja of Ramnagar, when he married a Nepali princess, and that since the Raja had died, the jagheer should lapse to the grantee.

Before the demarcation of Indo-Nepal boundary near the disputed estate in 1817, Tej Pratap Sein, the Raja of Ramnagar, had married a Nepali princess. The King of Nepal gave some lands as jagheer to the Raja. Some of the lands fall on the Nepal side after the demarcation of the boundary, which was fixed at the Someshwar range of hills. Tej Pratap died in 1832. Soon after, the Nepalese resumed a part of his jagheer. Gradually they took possession of the fort and pass of Someshwar, lying south of the Indo-Nepal boundary. In March 1840, Ramnagar estate was escheated to the British Government, when the last Raja died leaving no legitimate heir for succession. An illegitimate son of his, by a Nepali woman, however, claimed the jagheer. The pretender, Ram Hardan Sein, invoked the aid of Nepal Government for the

(cont'd. on next page)
Scouring these claims, the British Government sternly demanded the instant vacation of the occupied lands, satisfactory explanation of the outrage, condign punishment of its perpetrators and full pecuniary compensation to the sufferers. If the demands were not immediately complied with, the British government threatened to wrest the lands by force.

The Durbar prevaricated. Lord Auckland realised that his threat did not work. He was in a quandary. The Rannagar estate was "one of the finest and most improvable estates seen in this country" and the Someshwar fort, which too was occupied by the Gurkhas, was strategically of "immense value", as it commanded the only pass into the valley of Rapti from the north-west part of Champaran district. It was clear that the outrage was a feeler of British reactions, an experiment on their forbearance and firmness, "that was exceedingly undesirable to put an end decisively to." The outrage could never be winked at, for it would then aggravate the presumptions of the war-party, and compromise the prestige of the


(12) Note of Resident to Durbar, 30 July 1840, S.C., 17 August 1840, 71; Government to Resident, 17 August 1840, ibid., 78.

(13) S.C., 24 August 1840, 105.
British government; this outrage would be but a prelude to others, eventually creating a situation just before the war of 1814-16, a product of "nibbling aggressiveness" and "systematic encroachment" of the Gurkhas on British territory. Yet to wrest the lands by force was out of the question, when the rains had started, and the rivers were in spate, and the whole region having become a deadly miasmic swamp. There was no other way to bear the provocation "with gentleness rather than put troops under canvas at this season of the year."

The army incited

The war-party, seemingly determined to hostility, continued to parry the demands of the British on the Ranmagar issue, stepped up preparations for war, and incited the army against the Residency. It was given out that there would be general reduction in the soldiers' pay to enable the war-party to raise money for the war against the British. The army, already excited on account of their pay

(14) S.C., 27 July 1840, 93; 17 August 1840, 76; 31 August 1840, 78-80.

(15) Auckland to Elphinstone, 28 July 1840, Private Book, Vol. 11, 141; Colvin to Hodgson, 18 July 1840, Ibid., 126; Auckland to Hobhouse, 10 July 1840, Ibid., 103, [B.N.A.M.], 37700. Hodgson advised the Magistrate of Champaran to "suffer" the Gurkha possession of the lands and avoid collision with them at this season. Hodgson to Wilkins, 20 May 1840, B.J.P.C., 11 August 1840, 70; S.C., 22 June 1840, 71.
being long held in arrears, broke out in a frenzied revolt. They ransacked the houses of the nobles, surrounded the Residency, vowing war with the British government and vengeance on their representative. The pent-up energy of the soldiers seemed to burst forth on the helpless Resident, who was the most effective check to the Durbar's free indulgence in machinations with the Indian states, "preparatory to conjoint hostile movement" against the British. Wild cries as:

"Down with the chiefs, down with the Feringhees, we will be chiefs ourselves, we will have back our old territories, we will conquer to the Ganges", reverberated throughout the Capital. (18)

Hodgson was calm, patient, imperturbable, refusing to be scared by the frenzy of the mutinous troops, when their instigators chuckled with malignant glee. The King himself was alarmed, and hastened to pacify the infuriated soldiers by an assurance that their pay would not be reduced. (19)

(17) Notes on the Services of B.H. Hodgson, collected by a friend (1883) 12.
(19) Proclamation of the King to the Army, 1897, Asadh Sudi 6, Raj I, Foreign Office, Kathmandu.
Hodgson realised that the mutiny was a ruse of the Senior Queen, calculated to scare the King to abdication in favour of her son, the Heir-Apparent. It was, besides, a pretence to cover premeditated violence on the Resident, the strongest restraint on the war-party.

The Queen's violent and provocative deeds drove the King and many nobles to the natural apprehension that the British would be provoked to retaliate immediately with arms. Yet they were too weak to restrain her on her party. Nothing but strong remonstrance and intimidation, Hodgson realised, could deter the war-party from persevering in its hostile policy. He urged that Lord Auckland himself should hold out a stern admonition to the King, committing the life and honour of the Resident to his sole responsibility. Such admonition should be backed by demonstration of arms at the military posts of Titalia, Betteia and Mullye, bordering on Nepalese territory. These measures "would at once confound the machinations of our most active enemies in the Durbar and give us security during the coming eventful year or two."

(20) The Queen tried to "keep the King in perpetual distress and anxiety", so that, disgusted, he would abdicate. S.C., 15 June 1840, 57.

(21) Resident to Government, 3 July 1840, S.C., 20 July 1840, 58. Previously General Oglander's troops had "almost brought the Raja to our /British/ feet." Ibid.
They would, above all, frustrate the queen's schemes to crush the peace-loving nobles, to compel the King to abdicate in favour of her regency and to expel the Resident. This would convince the King that his Pandé advisers were utterly obnoxious to the British; he would, hence, be inclined to be away from them, "with the joyous approval of the expectant chiefs."

Military Preparations

Lord Auckland was naturally uneasy, poised between two opposing considerations, the imperative need for, and the grave risk of, a decisive action in regard to Nepal. So long he had bided his time, had temporised, had even reproved Hodgson's "acrimonious and dictatorial" behaviour with the Durbar, thinking all the while that the Nepalese menace was not as immediate or grave as it was suggested by the "alarmist" reports of the Resident.

But the attitude of Nepal, viewed in the context of Ramnagar outrage, attempts on the Residency and the bellicose demeanour of the war-party, showed that she was bent upon

(22) Ibid.

(23) Government to Resident, 4 May 1840, S.C., 4 May 1840, 221. "Mr. Hodgson writes so strongly upon slight impressions that I have always looked at his communications with some reserve ..." Auckland to Robertson, 3 March 1840, Private Book, Vol. 8, 52; Same to Hobhouse, 25 January 1840, Ibid., II, B.M.A.M., 57638.
hostility. Realising this, Lord Auckland strongly warned the King that if in one month's time he did not fully comply with the demands of the British government, the latter would (24) resort to armed measures.

Pending the King's reply, the British government made active preparations for the recovery of the Nepalese-occupied lands. Anxious deliberations were set afoot in the Supreme Council to formulate such a plan of campaign as would bring the anticipated war to "a most prompt and successful issue." All sides were seen, all considerations duly weighed; the geographical features of Nepal, the character of her people, brave, warlike and patriotic; her military strength and economic resources. It was planned to organise a direct attack on Kathmandu with a mixed corps of European and native regiments, numbering in all twenty thousand regulars, moving from Tirhoot and Sarum frontier. Another mixed corps of five to six thousand regulars was to penetrate through Dotee in western Nepal, whose people, when assured of British protection, were expected to submit without resistance. A smaller contingent would guard Darjeeling, or if needed, thence move into Eastern Nepal. The resourceful Nepalese Tarai would be held by a mixed corps of artillery and cavalry as a base of supply and provisions to the invading army, and, if needed, serve as a post to resist Gurkha swoopdown. Such

"a most ample and efficient force" could effect "the entire subjugation of the Nepal territory," particularly when the Court of Nepal was rent with discords, and her army devoid of veteran generals. The cantonments of northern India were to be garrisoned as precaution against any mischief from Lahore, reportedly friendly to Nepal.

The objects of the war were not to crush the nation; for it was feared that

"a delenda est carthara war might so rouse all parties and the whole armed people against us as to protract hostilities beyond the time at which we could without danger keep our forces locked up beyond the Tarai."

It was difficult to retain the state under British hold, even if occupied. Geographical obstacle was as great as that of the dogged resistance of the martial and patriotic people. To keep them subdued, a large British force would have to be retained in Nepal at a "serious addition" to its (British government's) straitened exchequer. Communication through the wall of hills and stretch of swamps was not easy, nor was acquisition of mountainous tracts profitable. Hence, a quick termination of war by massive military action, followed by the pacification of the peace-loving section of the people, by offering them liberal terms, could

(25) Governor-General to Commander-in-Chief, 31 August 1840, S.G., 31 August 1840, 86; Commander-in-Chief to Governor-General, 7 September 1840, S.G., 14 September 1840, 1-2; 25 September 1840, 2-6; Auckland to Bayley, 15 August 1840, Private Book, Vol.II, 25, B.M.A.H., 37701.
be the best object of the war. It was contemplated to set up after the war a peaceful regime which would undertake to keep the army limited to five thousand regulars. It would also be obliged to pay a heavy war indemnity to the British, as also to surrender arms and warlike stores to them. A strip of Tarai lands and some forts in the lower ranges of hills would be retained by the British. To ease the burden of martial tribes on Nepal, the British would enrol them in their own army.

Peace and war, thus, seemed to hinge on the King's compliance with the demands of the British government. The councillors were eager, the press was fretting, Hodgson himself was expectant, only Lord Auckland was calmly anticipating a timely submission of the Nepal Durbar. The clink of arms excited all, but Lord Auckland heard in it an ominous ring. He still held that war could be avoided.


(27) "We have put our differences with Nepal fairly to an issue of peace or war, and that a few days will decide them ... it will be peace, but I am prepared for the other alternative." Auckland to Bayley, 18 September 1840, Ibid., 126.

(28) Hodgson to Parents, 4 September 1840, H.E.B.I., Vol. 9, 11. The press was almost certain of a war now. Agra Akhbar (Agra), 4 June 1840, 23 August 1840, 5 September 1840; Delhi Gazette (Delhi) 9 September 1840; Samachar Darpan (Scrapore) 26 October 1840.
"I fully expect that the Durbar will not hold out but will give all the reparation and disavow subordinate agents. But in the meantime we count regiments and examine maps and form plans of campaign," he wrote home. (29)

His hope was not too sanguine. His military preparations and grave admonitions had telling effect on the King. Thoroughly alarmed, the Durbar recalled its troops from Rammagar, vacating the occupied lands. The immediate casus belli was gone; Lord Auckland was greatly relieved. He saw that the Durbar was still evasive in regard to his other demands, viz., satisfactory explanation of the outrage, compensation to the sufferers and punishment to the offenders. He knew that it was but a "hollow peace", a climb-down effected by the fear of British bayonets. Yet if this alarm could achieve results, why risk a dangerous war, and at such a time? Auckland was confident that Nepal would fully submit, if by and by; he was prepared to wait till she did so, even beyond the time limit, i.e., one month. He was certain that Nepal would not push matters to extremity. Yet as a precaution as much as admonition the show of military preparations


(31) Auckland to J. Carnac, no date, Ibid., 187; Colvin to Hodgson, 28 August 1840, Ibid.
on her frontier was kept up. It served as an effective scarecrow to cow Nepal to quiescence. To Hodgson, as much as to the Press, however, the issue of war still a live one, in spite of Lord Auckland’s views to the contrary.

Intrigues with Lahore

Meanwhile the Durbar was frantically trying for an alliance with Lahore, still a desideratum. Hodgson strongly suspected that the Durbar was shilly-shallying with the demands of the British government, with a view to gaining time; once the projected alliance was forged, Nepal would break with the British. The Lahore Durbar nursed sullen ill-will towards the British; it hatched intrigues; the question of the passage of British troops through the Punjab further embittered Anglo-Sikh relations. Kunwar Nao Nihal Singh and Raja Dhian Singh, the strongest men at the Lahore Durbar, seemed more in favour of an alliance with Nepal than Ranjit had ever been. The latter was, generally speaking, cautious in regard to such a project; he dallied with it, but he was "much too shrewd to trade the advantages of a British alliance for the

(32) Colvin to Hodgson, 28 August 1840, Same to E.C. Havenshaw, Magistrate of Chuprah, 13 September 1840, Ibid., 196.

(33) Agra Akhbar, 19 September 1840; Delhi Gazette, 30 September 1840.

dubious guarantee of a connection with Nepal." After his death, missions were exchanged between Lahore and Nepal more frequently; Lahore seemed eager to employ the Gurkhas in the Khalsa army, and Nepal ready to supply them. Mata bar Singh was brought out of his erstwhile "obscurity", and Nao Nihal Singh settled a stipend on him, hoping to utilise his great military talents for the Sikh army. Raja Dhien Singh, Devi Singh, Lehna Singh and Bhai Ram Singh, principal nobles in the Lahore Durbar, were busy spinning the web of intrigue with Nepal through her agent Mata bar Singh. Captain Wade, the British Political Agent at Ludhiana, was worried; the conduct of the present rulers of Lahore was inconsistent with the earlier promise of good faith given by Renjit Singh to the British.

Lord Auckland was not panic-struck. He was alive to the intriguing propensities of the two courts; he realized, too, that they should be restrained.

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Yet he regarded it unwise to press the Sikhs too hard to abandon their coquetry with the Gurkhas; the former were uneasy and scheming; the persuasive diplomacy of Macnaughton seemed unavailing to coax the obdurate Sikhs to quiescence.

Auckland was opposed "to attach undue weight" to Lahore-Nepal intrigues, for they were "occurrences which are to be expected in an Asiatic Court." It seemed to him, for a time at least, that in spite of all her efforts, Nepal had not succeeded yet in her project. He knew that the war-party in Nepal, in its own interest, had given a wide publicity to Lahore's willingness to align with Nepal. The war-party thrived in an atmosphere of excitement which they kept up by an exaggerated account of the reception which the Nepalese emissaries enjoyed in Lahore. He felt, too, that Hodgson's suspicions were overdone, and his reports were 'alarmin'. The eagerness of Nepal was far more than the response of Lahore; the latter had toyed with the project, had even kept alive her (Nepal's) hope; but there was a streak of mingled


misgiving and hesitancy in her (Lahore); the risk of an anti-British alliance seemed to balance the temptation it offered. The importunity of Nepal seemed to founder on the caution and prudence of Lahore. Hence, a mild warning alone was given to Lahore,

"that the maintenance of any close intercourse with the Sovereign of Nepal would therefore ill accord alike with the duty and the interest of the Lahore State." (40)

Nepal made one more effort, a more daring one, to win Lahore to the much-desired alliance. In August 1840, Karbeer Khattree, an experienced Nepalese emissary, was sent with a draft treaty of alliance, written by the King himself, to Benaras. There he was to meet Attar Singh, an influential Qanadar of Lahore. The treaty was to be finalised by both these persons. Should Karbeer be detected by the British, Attar Singh, provided with a similar draft by the Lahore Durbar, would go to Kathmandu. The plan, however, miscarried. Karbeer and his followers were arrested at Benaras, and Attar Singh was so closely watched as to deter him from the risk of a like misadventure to Kathmandu. The circumstantial evidences were

(39) S.C., 20 July 1840, 61; 26 October 1840, 139; 17 August 1840, 79-81; 27 April 1840, 115; 12 February 1840, 67; 14 September 1840, 24; 21 September 1840, 96; 31 August 1840, 71.

(40) Torrens, Offg. Secretary, Foreign Department to Clerk, 1 June 1840, 4 June 1840, E.B., Vol. 11, 12, 30, B.M.A., 37700.
too strong to suggest Nepal's extreme eagerness for an alliance with Lahore, defensive in letter, but offensive to the British in spirit; the extent of Lahore's complicity to the Nepalese schemes was also patent as never before. Hodgson reported that,

"The whole circumstances of the embassy of viator [Hodgson's pseudonym for Karbeer] as now revealed satisfy me that this mission was got up by the Durbar in prosecution of a deliberate purpose of decided hostility to our government and that his purpose must have had the distinct sanction and encouragement of the Court of Lahore." (42)

Lord Auckland, too, had to look more sharply to such intrigues. While he was still averse to attach "too great an importance" to them, he was constrained to

"believe much more in an inclination at Lahore to intrigue with Nepal; for there is far more sympathy in politics, habits and religion between the two nations, and it is difficult to believe that the letters which were seized upon Karbeer Khattree at Benares were not looked for by Attar Singh and written to meet the known inclinations of some of those to whom they were addressed at Lahore." (43)
Matabar is weaned

The Government were, hence, awakened to the need for some decisive step. The first move was towards Matabar. He was the arch-spinner of intrigue; his favourable reception at Lahore and its wide publicity at Kathmandu, had kept the prospect of Sikh-Nepal alliance so long alive. Both Nepal and Lahore had so long realised fully his great diplomatic and military talents; both seemed desirous of using these talents adversely to British interests. All these suggested the propriety of weaning him away from the loyalty of his own country, as also from his adherence to some parties in the Lahore Durbar. He was a valuable political weapon, which could be profitably used against Nepal, if ever such a contingency arose. He was an inveterate enemy of the Pandes, the ruling party of Nepal; he was ready to serve any cause which would destroy them. The Pandes were always afraid that he would go over to the English to wreak his vengeance on them (Pandes). They had kept his family as hostage at Kathmandu. Matabar was fearful of the fate of his family, and had earlier repeatedly implored the Resident, through his agents, to save them from the wrath of the Pandes, and

(44) Matabar to Clerk, no date, S.C., 21 September 1840, 100.
even to help smuggling them out of Nepal. He was in financial straits at Lahore, in spite of his stipend and earlier favours. He had even appealed once to the British Political Agent at Ludhiana to help him get an allowance from the British government. His later days at Lahore were far from easy, he had incurred debts; the Lahore Durbar became gradually indifferent to him, although the Jammu Rajas consoled him with occasional favours. Matabar was getting low in spirits; at such a time the British made a move to win him over to their side. Hodgson had already suggested that

"in the too probable event of a war with Nepal, Matabar Singh's services would be of extreme value to us ... for not to mention the energy of his character, he is now looked upon as in some sort, the head of his late exiled Party [the Thapas]." (48)

(45) Matabar to Clerk, 12 Jlyt 1840, S.C., 29 June 1840, 85; Matabar to Hodgson, 31 May 1840, Ibid., Clerk to Matabar, 15 August 1840, S.C., 21 September 1840, 100.

Matabar's prestige in the Lahore Court waned when he failed to forge the Lahore-Nepal alliance. The Sikhs clearly saw that the Nepalese were just beating in the air and that their government was rent with discord.

(46) S.C., 29 June 1840, 85; 21 September 1840, 100.

(47) The Pandes were neither known nor esteemed in Lahore. They had to acquiesce in the King's dependence on Matabar to effectuate the alliance. Though "disliked"; he was "indispensable". S.C., 21 September 1840, 142. Matabar, fearful of his family's fate, had to show the Nepalese that he was sincerely trying for the alliance. Matabar to Clerk, no date, Ibid., 100; S.C., 29 June 1840, 85.

He had intimate knowledge of the passes and routes of Nepal; his popularity was great in the army.

"Such a man being merely shown in front of our ranks or being but known to be there would half paralyse the army of Nepal in the very act of striking." (49)

At any rate, the knowledge of Matabar being an ally of the British would, it was hoped, greatly restrain the Pandes from persistent sniping at the British.

Matabar was assured that Hodgeon would take special interest in his family. He was asked, in his own interest, to actively help the British against his hereditary enemies, the Pandes; for this the British promised him suitable reward. Assurances of a secure living and the above temptation led Matabar to accept the British overture. He lived hereafter at Ludhiana, with a handsome stipend, though under strict surveillance. His debts at Lahore were paid off by the British. On the latter's representation, the Nepalese agents were dismissed from the Lahore Court; and Maharaja Kharak Singh asked the King of Nepal to desist from keeping up intercourse with Lahore except through the British government, to whom the Sikhs were attached by "a firm friendship and alliance." (51)

(49) Ibid., S. of S., 29 June 1840, 85.

(50) Ibid., 85-7.

(51) Khareeta from Maharaja Kharak Singh to Raja of Nepal, 21 October 1840, S. of S., 23 November 1840, 64.
The Durbar submits

The miscarriage of Karbeer's mission chilled the zeal of the war-party, as it alarmed the King of its consequences. The Pundes tried to screw the King up by leading him to believe that the Governor-General was but "half offended", and that he was too busy elsewhere to look closely to Nepal. But the chicken-hearted King could not be gingered up; the fear of British arms and forced abdication by the Queen had caught him between the devil and the deep sea. Hodgson and the peace-loving nobles persuaded him that it was as much safer to salve the British wrath by belated compliance with their demands as it was ruinous to adhere any more to the illusory schemes of the war-party. They sought to influence the King to dismiss the Pundes from power and to set up an administration, peaceful and friendly to the British government. The ruling party's unpopularity was now widespread; the Residency "seems to be popular in proportion to the perverseness of the Durbar." The Gurus and the Chautarias were "the bulwarks of the Residency", and in consequence, were the constant targets of Pande tirades.

(52) Nepal Summary of Events; September, 4-17 January 1840; S.C., 26 October 1840, 123.
(53) Nepal Summary; 18 April - 1 May, August, 1840.
The pressure of the Resident, the persuasions of the peace-loving nobles, together with his own fear, obliged the King to submit to all the demands of the British government, so long evaded. A deposit of five thousand rupees was made to the Resident, as compensation to the sufferers of the Rannagar outrage; an undertaking was given to the Resident to evacuate the Someshwar hill fort, and recognize, in future, the Someshwar range as the boundary between the two States; the King pledged to abide by the engagement of 6 November 1839, and to desist from having any intercourse with Lahore or any other Indian State. He publicly declared that the Resident had no part in the contemplated reduction of the soldiers' pay. The offenders of the Rannagar outrage were publicly flogged, with their faces painted. But still, the fear of British invasion in the ensuing winter, hung on in the King's mind.

Hodgson urges for Change of Ministry

Hodgson advised the Government to take full advantage of this fear. The King, in utter panic, was even disposed to dismiss the Pandes, who had incurred great unpopularity

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(54) S.G., 5 October 1840, 153-4; 26 October 1840, 128, 135; Auckland to Hobhouse, 19 October 1840, P.B., Vol. 13, 11, B.H.A.M., 37702.

(55) The Queen and Ranjang Pande had declared that the Resident had pressed the King to slash the salary of the soldiers. Hunter, Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson (London, 1896) 185.
and whose provocative policy seemed certain to entail British arms against Nepal. Hodgson reported that,

"A change of ministry is talked of and with it a change of external politics, calculated to satisfy all the reasonable expectations of our government. Fear alone can accomplish that change." (56)

Situation for such change had already been created, partly by Hodgson's influence on the peace-loving nobles; the head of the Chautarias, Fateh Jang Shah, and the head of the Gurus, Rangnath Pandit, were allies of the Resident, (57) eager to dislodge the war-party from power.

Hodgson, hence, urged the Government to ask the King to remove the Pandes from power and set up a friendlier administration. A change of administration was essential, when wars with Afghanistan and China had entered their decisive phases. If Nepal could not be reduced by arms, she could now, without risk, be subdued by the Resident's growing influence. That influence could be strengthened by the British government's open support to the party allied to the Resident. It amounted to interference in the internal

(56) Resident to Government, 3 October 1840, S.C., 26 October 1840, 128; Nepal Summary of Events: 26 September -10 October 1840.

(57) Ibid., 1-15 August. They were the "ablest and best disposed men in Nepal." Hodgson regarded the establishment of Rangnath's influence, as "the strongest guarantee of Nepal's pacific relations with the British." S.C., 5 October 1840, 153. cf. Hodgson's attitude towards Rangnath in Chapter Four, page 110-11.
politics of a foreign independent Court, but it was politic and justified, Hodgson pleaded, in view of the "unparalleled conduct" of the war-party. The interference would act just as a coup-de-grace to the regime, already unpopular, influential nobles being eager to cooperate with the Resident for its overthrow. "No result could be more fortunate" than the fall of the hostile party, "the abominable devils."

"With such a change [Hodgson urged] the Governor-General might rely upon the conduct of this State, without it he cannot do so .... I will venture confidently to assert that the change I have spoken of ... must and will take place quietly and by internal influence, with good promise of being gradually accompanied by such further change as, alike to its immediate authors, i.e., the anti-Pande and pro-British nobles, and to the British government, might seem expedient to protect the best interests of both ...." (58)

Open interference was not risky now, "when the palace is yet more divided, the chiefs far more openly disgusted (59) and the army, half disorganised;" besides, ....

(58) Resident to Government, 3 October 1840, S.C., 26 October 1840, 128; same to same, 25 September 1840, ibid., 125.

(59) Same to same, 3 July 1840, S.C., 20 July 1840, 59. "People say that Governor-General has now Nepal at his mercy and may take it if he will with little or no resistance." Nepal Summary of Events: 25 September - 10 October 1840.
"there being a large and distinguished portion of the chieftaincy which would be now glad to find honourable safety under the aegis of the predominant influence, though not of the direct dominion of the British government." (60)

A helping push was all that was needed to bring the unpopular regime crashing down. Hodgson further suggested that a corps of British troops should move close to the Nepal frontier. This would protect the pro-British nobles from the wrath of the war-party, as much as it would serve the impression of reconnoitring army, sent in advance of the forces about to invade Nepal. The King would then hasten to depose the war-party and elevate to power a party agreeable to the British. (61)

**Change of Ministry**

The belated submission of Nepal in October 1840, was received by Lord Auckland with manifest relief. It provided him with a golden bridge to withdraw from an untenable position, which he had perforce taken with utmost reluctance.

(60) Resident to Government, 22 September 1840, S.C., 5 October 1840, 153.

(61) "... if they [these nobles] stand we shall always have various means of precaution and of adjustment at command, but if they fall, we shall have neither, except through a war of extremity." Same to same, 3 October 1840, S.C., 26 October 1840, 126.

(62) Ibid.; S.C., 5 October 1840, 153; 26 October 1840, 126.
The fractions Nepal Durbar had almost forced him to a
show-down which he was eager to avoid all the while. The
vigorous pleadings of the Councillors for reducing Nepal
by arms, the persuasions of Hodgson for strong political
pressure, and the open criticism in the press of his
temporising policy, had led him to think how long, if at
all, his policy of peace and patience would hold good. He
himself held that "... sooner or later we must, it seems,
have a campaign in these hills. I am however, prepared for
war." All the while the issue of peace and war hung on a
delicate balance.

He had been obliged to make large-scale military
preparations, as a measure of precaution. A huge but idle
army, with no occupation beyond whetting the bayonets for
an uncertain campaign, was telling heavily on the straitened
military and financial resources of the Government. More
forces were needed for the north-west, particularly for

(63) Auckland to Hobhouse, no date, P.B., Vol. 12, 117,
B.M.A.H., 37701.

(64) "... our own deliberate opinion is that Nepal
ought to be converted into a British territory .... Lord
Auckland will not at present be ruled by that united wisdom
(of his Councillors) but means to do the magnanimous, and
spare the offenders." The Englishman (Calcutta) 2 October
1840; Bombay Times (Bombay) 21 October 1840; The Friend of
India (Calcutta) 16 January 1840; Agra Journal, 16 October
1840; Bengal Hurkaru, 6 August 1840; Notes on the Services
overawing the hostile Sikhs.

No wonder, then, that Lord Auckland was happy at the news of submission of Nepal. He was happy to "abandon the idea of a Nepal campaign during the coming season." In obvious relief he wrote to Hobhouse:

"It will be convenient to us to say upon all this that though ill satisfied and yet mistrustful, we will not make war. You know that even under more favourable circumstances, I should not be eager for a war with Nepal in which with every success we might gain but an unsatisfactory position in the midst of a very warlike and national people, and where, without war, it is just possible that the division of parties may do much for us." (67)

When "discussions with Nepal may be considered as close, and honourably, and satisfactorily," and "having obtained the substantial admissions we required, we do not desire at this time to widen the breach with Nepal," He was aware that Nepal was but quiescent, and that her submission was but temporary. Yet he took it as a sufficient justification to dispose off a fair share of the army, apportioned for

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(65) Same to same, 19 October 1840, E.E., Vol. 13, B.M.A.M., 37702; Auckland to Clerk, 26 September 1840, Colvin to Clerk, 1 October 1840, Auckland to Robertson, 11 October 1840, Auckland to Elphinstone, 15 October 1840, Ibid.


(68) Auckland to J. Cuney, 20 October 1840, Ibid., 29; Colvin to Hodgson, 4 October 1840, Ibid., Vol. 12, 160, B.M.A.M., 37701.
a Nepal war, to the North-West and the Punjab.

Lord Auckland breathed more easily, but he could hardly be smug and complacent. He realised that short of war, active intervention in Nepalese politics was the only means to restrain that hostile Court. The Resident had already established his influence through a party allied to him; the party was opposed to the warlike policy of the Pandes, and was eager to set up a regime friendly to the British. Besides, there was no risk in intervention now when the majority of the nobles were in its favour in order to overthrow a rule, which they feared would invite a perilous clash with the British.

All these suggested to Lord Auckland the expediency of accepting Hodgson's suggestions, viz., active intervention in Nepalese politics in order to remove a hostile party from power, and to set up a friendlier regime instead. The Resident's influence would work through this regime to keep Nepal quiet in the troublesome times, when neither military measures nor drastic political pressures at every step, were feasible.

(69) "The promise will not be kept, but I am glad to be able to suspend my quarrel, for I wish to have as much force disposable to the North-West." Auckland to Elphinstone, 13 October 1840, Ibid., 185.

(70) "It seems most wise to allow Mr. Hodgson to pay his game amidst the discussions of party and that we should endeavour rather to establish a friendly government than to crush the nation. We shall probably not succeed, but the contending parties may, for a time, occupy each other." Auckland to Hobhouse, 20 November 1840, P.R., Vol. 13, 99, B.N.A.L., 37702.
Accordingly, with warm congratulations on his "marked ability, firmness and judgement" during "a long course of adverse and evasive negotiations" with the Nepal Durbar, Hodgson was formally empowered to effect such a change in Ministry, "as shall conduce to the prosperity of the Nepal state itself, while giving security to the adjoining territories." (71)

In a sternly worded Khareeta, Lord Auckland chided the King for his deliberate dilatoriness in complying with the just demands of the British government. The King’s evasive, insincere and inimical conduct veiled under occasional delusive cordiality, had deepened the British Government’s distrust and estrangement towards him. Lord Auckland warned him,

"Until it shall be seen that an entire change has taken place in the spirit of the counsels, by which your Highness is guided, these feelings cannot be removed." (72)

Another Khareeta, with vigorous insistence that the change of Ministry should be effected immediately, scared the


(72) Lord Auckland to Raja of Nepal, 26 October 1840, S.C., 26 October 1840, 134.
King to complete submission. To add to his fear, a corps under Colonel Oliver, was moved close to the Nepal frontier, as an army of observation. That dished the lot.

Ranjang is deposed

On 1 November 1840, Ranjang Pande was deposed, and Chautaria Fateh Jang Shah, a prominent member of the Peace party, invested with Ministership. The setting up of a Minister, firmly attached to the Resident, by exerting political pressure on the King, was a novel feature in the history of Indo-Nepalese relations. The British policy in Nepal had now swung from one extreme of "passive abstinence" to the other extreme of active interference. The Minister, through Hodgson's help, soon set up a régime, under the "moral aegis" of the British Government and the protective influence of the Resident, - a régime amenable to British wishes and conducive to their interests.

II. Working of the 'Peace Ministry'

The Change is nominal

The British government's open intervention thus

(73) Same to same, 2 November 1840, F.B., Vol. 13, 60, B.M.A.K., 37702.


(75) Nepal Summary of Events: November 1840. In S.C., 23 November 1840, 130, the date of the change of Ministry is given as 5 November 1840.
compelled the war-party to step down from power. The Peace-party was in the saddle, but it was still uncertain as to how long it would be there. The war-party seethed with smothered ill-will. The new Minister, Chautaria Fateh Jang Shah, clung on precariously to his office, amidst incessant assaults of the Senior Queen. The latter was openly contumelious, while the King was evasive. In consequence, the Minister could hardly do "any act of material authority." The secret influence of the Pandes continued to offset the pacific counsels of the new Minister. The queen constantly upbraided the King for having set up a pro-British Minister. The soldiers were incited that the King was appeasing the British and even contemplating to surrender the country to them.

Hodgson realised that the change of Ministry had not brought immediate improvement of affairs in the Court; the Pande had been deposed, but his influence still worked. Hodgson was uneasy, and naturally so. "Having myself foreseen, foretold and as it were effected the change," he was naturally concerned over the efforts of the Queen to

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(76) S.C., 21 December 1840, 108; 23 November 1840, 130; Colvin to Bawley, Chairman of the India House, 20 November 1840, P.B., Vol. 13, 102, B.M.A.M., 37702.

(77) Resident to Government, 8 November 1840, S.C., 23 November 1840, 130.
render the change nugatory in effect. A product of the combined interests of the British government and a section of the Nepalese nobles, who formed the Peace-party, the new regime under Fateh Jang was the keystone of Hodgson's policy of keeping Nepal quiet during the critical times. He was convinced that nothing but his influence and active intervention could restrain Nepal, and that in no way, but through the régime he had helped set up, could this influence work. Hence, to preserve Fateh Jang in power, was his first care, to strengthen him, his foremost attention. And the only way to achieve this end was to screw more pressure on the King. "A firm and severe policy" was needed to give "validity" to the change in Ministry. Hodgson took upon himself the task of counselling Fateh Jang and his party. Whenever the Minister's nerve failed, Hodgson "pressed upon him the necessity of firmness, decision and promptitude." He encouraged him to widen his influence among the peace-loving nobles, and constantly reminded him of his pledges of good behaviour and vast obligations to the British government. A subtle hint was dropped that if he evinced "want of energy, of talent or of sincerity", the British government would look to some one else in the peace-party for Ministership, for "want of power might prove of as injury to my British government as want of will."  

The King was urged to shun the Pande advisers, to give real power and responsibility to the new Minister and thus facilitate the "virtual establishment of a responsible administration according to the law and constitution of Nepal." He was threatened that if he did not do so, the British would wrest the Nepalese Tarai. To alarm him all the more, Hodgson suggested to the Government to move up Colonel Oliver's force closer to Nepal frontier and to warn him with annexation of the Tarai. "Such a threat would operate very favourably and beneficially."

Lord Auckland felt a little disheartened at this unfavourable development. He realised Hodgson's difficulties. The Durbar was again warned that unless the Pandes were dismissed ("really as well as in name") the continued wrath of the British Government would culminate in the use of force against Nepal. Hodgson was asked to "decline all national and personal courtesies and civilities" and confine himself "strictly to the form of transactions of indispensable business." He was advised to be cautious and to avoid too high a language with the Durbar, in order to escape violence and injury to himself. Much as it was desired to establish a "trustworthy administration," it was wiser to effect it gradually by a proceeding "not prematurely and unduly

(79) S.C., 21 December 1840, 108.
irritating to the Nepal Durbar." Circumstances were such that it was impossible to back him up to the hilt, and actual military operations cannot be thought of for this season." Nothing was said to the Durbar on the score of the Tarai, for the Government regarded it not as a "conditional tenure," but as an unconditional cession, "absolute and final".

Consolidation of the Ministry

Hodgson's remonstrances with the King bore fruit. The King showed greater deference to the Minister and the Queen too ceased, for a while, from her tirades against him. The King and the war-party realised that they could not overthrow the new Minister without incurring the certain hostility of the British, his protectors. The Minister gradually gained heart; Hodgson so recently dispirited, could now hope for "success and even complete success." He had alarmed the King to submission, at least for the present.


(81) Ibid.

"... in the meantime with the present force at her door, and the threat of a resumed Tarai, suspended by the hair of one additional wrong to us over her head, I should rely upon the state of our relations continuing as satisfactory as it has been during the year which is just closed," noted Hodgson. (83)

Early in 1841, the principal members of the late Pande regime were dismissed from their offices; some of them were punished, others removed to "honourable banishment." Their places were taken by chiefs, peace-loving and attached to the new Minister. On the advice of Hodgson, a seven-member Cabinet was formed under Fateh Jang's headship. The King was obliged to guarantee the maintenance of the new Ministry in power, with the undertaking of never restoring the Pandes to favour. In an extremely submissive and conciliatory Khoreeta to Lord Auckland, he apologised for the past misunderstandings caused by his erstwhile evil advisers, and begged him "to kindly pardon and overlook the past." He promised "to attend to anything the Resident may propose tending to the good of the two governments." Ninety-four chiefs of all parties made a solemn pledge to maintain friendship and good faith with the British Government through the Resident, for whose safety and honour, they themselves stood guarantees. Some of the posts hitherto held by the military officers were given to civilians, in deference to the Resident's advice to the Premier for moderating the exclusively

(83) Ibid.
martial character of the government. Intrigues with foreign courts, so long maintained, ceased. The new regime relieved the people of espionage, false accusations and extortions, so common during the Pande regime; people seemed happy with the new rule.

The new régime gradually gained strength. Now Hodgson withdrew himself more to the background. There was now less need for him to lead the Ministry than to act as its buttress and adviser from behind. He realised that popularity in the country was a secure and stabler foundation for the new régime than constant reliance on the Resident, however influential. He avoided giving the impression that the régime depended solely and absolutely on him, that it had no strength of its own and that it would crash, if he did not galvanize it at every step. He refrained from needless interference in the affairs of the Ministry, seeking to "limit his overt efforts within the narrowest feasible bounds."

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(84) S.C., 25 January 1841, 121-21A; Ikramnamah, signed by the Gurus, Chautarias, chiefs etc. of Nepal (in Nepali) 1897. Peas Sudi 9. Foreign Office, Kathmandu; Aitchison, n. 2, 68-9; Wheeler, n. 82, 10.

(85) S.C., 25 January 1841, 121.

(86) Ibid. "Again I pressed him to attempt nothing in which I must distinctly participate which was at all likely to fail... but though avowing his reliance on me, he [Fateh Jang] neither uncourteously nor ungenerously pressed me to share more of his burden than I am disposed calmly to take upon myself." Ibid.
The trend of events was heartening. The new régime appeared to consolidate itself, without "little or no further present and direct aid" from the Resident. Yet there remained a lurking fear as to how long Nepal would remain quiescent. Her past career was replete with pledges made in words and broken in deeds; political expediency was her policy, opportunism her guiding maxim. She had submitted, but her submission had been extorted like "drops of life blood;" it was a result less of contrition and tardy good sense, than of fear and smothered ill-will. Yet it could be hoped that the new régime would serve as a convenient pie aller till the winter months, when Nepal could be called sternly to account. The situation was, at least, a much desired breathing spell, a halcyon moment after years of storm. The combined influence of the new ministers and the Resident could stave off, for a time, the menace of a war which the Pendes were ceaselessly aiming at. Such a war would have been "a serious" and "a calamitous" issue for the British now.

(87) S.C., 25 January 1841, 122.
(88) Extract from a letter of Hodgson to Dr. Rost,
"At least however a decorous compromise has been effected to cover a fraudulent retreat until the season for further insisting, if needful, recur, and though that necessity may no doubt then exist, the powerful party which has now distinctly ranged itself on the side of good faith and friendly relations will, I conceive, suffice in the interim for its own and my protection," Hodgson reported. (89)

Meanwhile the British could rely on "the declared adhesion and reciprocal interest of the large body of chiefs" towards the Resident; these served as the "augmented safeguards" against a sudden breach of peace.

The threat to the new régime

The trouble had subsided no doubt, but there was more and worse to come; all would have gone well, but for a fly in the ointment. The frenzy of the Senior Queen, after a temporary lull, again burst forth on the hapless ministers. They were castigated as stooges of the Resident and enemies of Nepal, ready to barter away the national independence for clinging to power with British support. The army was incited to destroy these minions of the British, these Trojan Horses; and to restore the earlier régime, the zealous custodian of national interest. The King was spurred on to

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(89) Resident to Government, 4 January 1841, S.c., 25 January 1841, 121.

(90) Ibid.
overthrow the pro-British régime, and to break with the
British, now enmeshed in the coils of Afghanistan, China,
Burma and Persia. Placards, with a royal seal, bobbed upon
the walls of Kathmandu, exaggerating the British reverses
in Afghanistan and China and hailing the reported advance of
Persia and China on India. Renewed attempts were made to
coquet with China and Lahore as also to take advantage of
the latter's war with Tibet. Unable to excite the King to
the desired extent, the Senior Queen made a pretence of
leaving for Banaras, vowing never to return till the new
Ministry was changed for the old, her favourite, one. This
was too strong wine for the slender bottle; the King was
agitated, he wavered, poised by the urgency of softening the
soreness of his imperious consort and the hazard of estran-
ing the British. He coaxed the Ministers to resign or to
form a coalition with the Queen's favourites; even a threat
was held out that if they did not comply with those
suggestions, they would be compelled to do so. The old
war-horses in the army snorted with excitement, ferment
spread in the populace. The new ministers were scared of
their lives; the horrid fate of the Thapas haunted them;

(91) S.C., 12 April 1841, 125.

(92) Sikh-Tibet War, 1841-42. The Sikh army under
Zoravar Singh marched into western Tibet; his army was
sacked by the Tibetans in the close of 1842. K.N. Panikkar,
they warned the King that their overthrow would result in a war with the British and that in such a war, they would side with them. There were premonitions of a coup de force, a bloody civil war, a counter-revolution. The fate of the pro-British régime had reached a crucial stage.

**British Government's admonition**

Hodgson appealed for a stern warning of the Governor-General to the King. It was a "pressing necessity". The British Government, he urged, should take the Ministers under their "direct protection," whose "lives and honour and fortunes, they seem to have committed to my care and to have assumed the care of mine." It was inhuman to be inactive when their lives were in grave peril. It was impolitic too. They and the Resident had worked hand in hand for some time, with common objective and identical interests, namely, to keep Nepal away from war. They were "our sole rest and hope"; they were the only restraints on the war party; they were expected to render yeoman service in the days of stern reckoning with Nepal. If they were not protected now by the British, the Peace-party would crumble to pieces, and

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(93) S.C., 8 March 1841, 87-96; 29 March 1841, 37-42; 22 March 1841, 121-5; D.P.C.I., Vol. 15; Wheeler, n. 82, 3-5; S.C., 12 April 1841, 135; 26 April 1841, 74.
with it would vanish the influence of the Resident.

Every shaft of Hodgson's arguments went home. Lord Auckland sternly warned the King:

"against any further resort to insincerity and evasion in your dealings with a powerful government which is willing to be at peace with you .... A policy of that nature can only have for its end the most ominous consequences to the welfare of Your Highness and your family." (95)

The King was asked to desist from inflicting any physical injury on the ministers "who have been supporters of British alliance and anxious to maintain peace between the two States."

Lord Auckland admitted that the new régime was useful. For its retention he was ready to extend "general countenance"; he was concerned over the fate of the Ministers. But it seemed to him undesirable to take them under direct protection, for

"any expectations of direct protection ... could only ... be illusory and if held out might lead to very embarrassing consequences and expose your government [i.e., the British] to merited reproach." (97)

(94) S.C., 22 March 1841, 125; 29 March 1841, 36; 12 April 1841, 135. "... I might recover their personal freedom and protect their lives and that if I were not at least strenuously to exert myself in their favour to that extent, though at some possible risk, I should offend the moral sense even of this land and must expect all those to fall off entirely from me by whose aid as sentiment and judgement, now leaning, I could ensure my government in due season the speedy and cheap punishment of this impracticable Court." He held that the Nepalese looked with "surprise and regret" at the British Government's inactivity to save Bhim Sen's life. Resident to Government, 7 April 1841, S.C., 26 April 1841, 74.

(95) Lord Auckland to Raja of Nepal, 29 March 1841, S.C., 29 March 1841, 44.

(96) Government to Resident, 26 April 1841, S.C., 26 April 1841, 75.

(97) Same to same, 29 March 1841, S.C., 29 March 1841, 43.
Maintenance of an uneasy peace with Nepal was a far bigger stake to be lost for the dubious advantage of retaining a party in power. It was impolitic to hazard "the risk of such a collision with the Government as should bring about an actual disruption of British relations with Nepal upon a ground of this kind on whom we have not a clear right of interference." (98)

The Government warned Hodgson against too much meddling in party politics and exposing himself too much to risk.

**Situation improves**

Fortunately, however, Lord Auckland's personal remonstrance had a sobering effect on the King. From Calcutta, the Nepalese Vakeel, Lokraman Upadhya, reported that he had been warned by the British Political Secretary, Maddock, that if the King did not mend his ways, the British forces would move into Nepal in the coming winter. Colonel Oliver's force on the frontier, retained in spite of extremely

(98) Same to same, 26 April 1841, S.C., 26 April 1841, 75.

(99) "I am sometimes afraid of his involving too much with parties in the state." Auckland to Hobhouse, 2 March 1841, F.B., Vol. 15, 76, B.E.A.M., 37704; Government to Resident, 3 March 1841, S.C., 8 March 1841, 90; same to same, 22 March 1841, S.C., 22 March 1841, 121.

(100) King to Lokraman, 1898, Jyestha Sudi 4, Roj 2, Foreign Office, Kathmandu.
unhealthy climate, gave this threat an appearance of reality. The Senior Queen fell ill at this time. Hodgson's remonstrances rang ominous in the ears of the King. The King was scared. He hastened to ask Lokraman to assure the British Government of his determination to abide by the engagement of November 1839, and of his "earnest desire" to profit by the continued friendship of the British. The Ministry recovered from the shock; the soldiery subsided to calm, the hope of better days lit up. The conjoint influence of the Resident and the Ministers served to convince the King that he could not but remain friendly to the British and that he could manifest that friendliness in no better way than by cooperation with the new régime, which enjoyed their (British) support and confidence. The Indian merchants' long-standing grievances were redressed, all intrigues with China and Lahore were suspended, the sheltered dacoits were surrendered, the situation soon became easy.

(101) Oliver's force was meant to "give support to Hodgson's diplomacy." It strengthened his influence in proportion as it scared the King. It was regarded by the Ministers as the main buttress of their authority. Haddock to Hodgson, 16 February 1841, P.B., Vol. 15, 3, B.M.A.M., 37704; Colvin to E.C. Ravenshaw (Magistrate of Chunar), 12 November 1840, P.B., Vol. 15, 73, B.M.A.M., 37702; S.C., 14 June 1841, 113-5; 12 July 1841, 97-9; 2 August 1841, 114-7; 21 June 1841, 66; D.R.C.L.I., Vol. 15.

(102) King to Lokraman, 1838, Jvestha Sudi 4, Raj 2, Foreign Office, Kathmandu.
Jubilant, Hodgson reported,

"... it seems certain that the heretofore impractically arrogant and fractious spirit of the Queen and her faction is giving way to a milder vein; that the risks of the current season is passed; and that the present ministry will be enabled to resume their functions are long under more favourable auspices with little or no assistance from me." (103)

Lord Auckland heaved a sigh of relief; he was happy at the consolidation of the pro-British régime, happier at the increasing influence of the Resident, in the Court. Hodgson was again cautioned against too much meddling, but encouraged in his efforts to secure, without incurring risk, his "legitimate influence" in the Durbar. Lord Auckland desired to acknowledge the changed spirit of the King by compliments and presents, encouraging him to abide by that spirit and confirm it in his Court.

But Hodgson was opposed to "too hasty reconciliation with the Durbar." Matters had no doubt improved, and were likely to be more so in future; there was no palpable casus belli now; the ministry was going strong, and the Queen's

(103) Resident to Government, 1 August 1841, S.C., 16 August 1841, 115; 30 August 1841, 127, 130; Wheeler, n. 82, 9-10.


(105) Government to Resident, 16 August 1841, S.C., 16 August 1841, 116.

(106) S.C., 2 August 1841, 127.
acridity was only an "expiring efforts of impotent malice."

But still it was impolitic to exekew "the minatory and offensive tone," which the British government had held so long with Nepal, and with such good results. Threat, Hodgson held, was the only policy applicable to a court which oscillated between ostentatious friendliness and open hostility with easy resilience. The war-party had been but scotched, not crushed; embers of ill-feeling were still smouldering. The Ministers themselves were in favour of continuance of the British force on the frontier, for the threatening appearance it took in the weak mind of the King was a wholesome restraint on the Durbar. War with China was still raging; the danger of her goading the Nepalese against the British was still a live one. Hence

"any such sudden alteration of carriage (i.e. presents and compliments to the King) on our part would be entirely misinterpreted here by both parties, whilst it inflamed the bad with presumption would reduce the good with despair."

It was prudent to "walk warily", feeling "rightly and fully the pulse of the movement," and to defer a change of tone till a lasting settlement had been made with the Durbar and the Ministry reinvested with power for the next year. Till these were achieved, it was preferable, Hodgson held,

"to hold a middle course between that severity of tone which the Ministry seem to deem expedient and that graciousness to which Government appeared to be inclined." (107)

Hodgson was correct in his judgement. The Senior Queen, sick for a while, made again a desperate - her last - effort to overthrow the new regime. Violently upbraiding the King for his timidity, she made a pretence of resorting to the holy quiet of Banaras, vowing as before, not to return till the obnoxious Ministers were ejected from power making room for her own favourites. On 6 October 1841, the Queen died in the Tarai, suffering from the mingled rigours of fever and unquenched ambition. Lord Auckland regretted this "distressing intelligence" in a Khareesta to the King, whom he still regarded, notwithstanding all his faithlessness, "as an ally with whom no absolute breach of amicable relations has occurred."

Hodgson did not deliver this message to the King, for neither he nor the Ministers desired such "immediate resort to graciousness on the part of the Governor-General."

Consolidation of the new Régime

The Senior Queen's death robbed the war-party of its mainstay, and the King of his shield. Her violence was dreaded but so long as she lived the King could fight the ministers

(102) S.C., 25 October 1841, 94; Wheeler, n. 82, 11.


(110) S.C., 22 November 1841, 58, 60.
from under her petticoat. Her death, hence, demoralised
him as it facilitated the strengthening of the new regime.

The Ministers were soon reinvested with power,
following the Nepalese Vakeel's report that the British
Government wanted it in eighteen days' time. The King gave
a fresh undertaking both to the Resident and the Governor-
General to abide by the "suggestions and counsels" of the
Resident and to continue to be friendly to the British
(112)
government.

Now was the propitious time to eschew the erstwhile
minatory and threatening tone towards the Durbar. The
Ministers felt strong enough to dispense with the continued
stay of the British troops on the border as a buttress of
their power. The removal of the force, Hodgson and the
Ministers jointly held, would free the King from perpetual
apprehension of bad intentions of the British; it would be
a "grand concession" to him; a signal recognition of his
belated friendliness towards the British; a potent manifesta-
tion of restoration of the British Government's faith in him.
The King would realise that he regained the confidence of
the British due solely to his adherence to the policy of
peace, pursued by his Ministers. He would be impressed by

(111) King to Lokraman, 1898, Dwitia Aswin Vedi 2, Rej 7,
Foreign Office, Kathmandu.

(112) King of Nepal to Lord Auckland, 28 November 1841,
S.C., 26 December 1841, 76.
the confidence reposed in the latter by the British Government. He would feel as much obliged to them as he would be hesitant to depose them. The result would be consolidation of the pro-British régime and increasing influence of the Resident, while no more palpable interference of the British government in the internal politics of the court would be needed. Hodgson promised the Ministers to remove the forces to Ghazipur or Patna, whence they could be resummoned, if required, at short notice.

In warm terms Lord Auckland acknowledged the King's recent tender of friendliness. He also expressed his great confidence in the ability and honesty of the Ministers. The Governor-General consented to withdraw the frontier force as much as a mark of his "restored confidence" in the King as an appreciation of the "wisdom and other qualities" of the Ministers and the friendly relation between the King and the Resident. This was a clear hint to the King that he should continue to be guided by the advice of the Ministers and the Resident, on pain of losing the confidence of the British Government.

As has been stated earlier, Hodgson promised the Ministry and the King that British forces would be withdrawn

(113) Ibid., 77.
(114) Auckland to Raja of Nepal, 22 December 1841, Ibid., 72-80.
from the immediate vicinity of Nepal. But they were not
removed immediately; for shortly after the promise, the
British army was routed in Afghanistan. It was feared
that Nepal would again relapse to hostility, being stimulated
by this event.

Nothing of this sort, however, happened. A fresh
stir was seen but the Ministry successfully tackled it. The
King even made a "quasi-tender" of troops for service in
Ava and Afghanistan, but Lord Auckland politely declined
the overture. He seemed to have realised the futility of
dissensions with the English when Lahore and China were
little inclined to back him.

The continued retention of the British forces on the
Nepal frontier had made both the King and the Ministry rather
sore with the Resident. The Ministers were harangued on
this score by the King. They themselves were irritated and
captions with the Resident, charging him with breach of
promise and double-dealing; even "smothered embers of
dissension" were revealed among them.

(115) Insurrection broke out in Kabul in November.
Captain Burnes and Macnaughton were murdered. In January
1842, disaster overwhelmed the British army. Kaye, n. 34,
11, 1-218.

(116) S.C., 24 January 1842, 77-80; Wheeler, n. 82,
11-2.

(117) Lahore Durbar was repeatedly warned against
electing Nepalese intrigues, especially during the Sikh-
Tibet War of 1821-42. Auckland and Colvin to Clerk, E.B.,
(contd. on next page)
It was a disquieting development; the time was out of joint; there was need for soft-pedaling. Hodgson could hardly estrange the King, any more than he could be indifferent to the Ministry, "our main rest and hope." It needed his support, as much for its survival as he needed its, for the success of the policy of temporisation. As a sop to both the King and the Ministers, hence, the frontier force was removed, "with warm expressions of thanks and gratitude" of all in Nepal,

"thereby putting an end to the political inconvenience of our present minatory attitude towards Nepal without exposing ourselves to the least consequent risk from her enmity." (120)

Presents were despatched to the King and the Premier Fateh Jang, symbolising, formally, the change in British policy for admonition and threat to confidence and cordiality to the Durbar.


"Appearances up to the present moment give no indication of Chinese faith in Gurkha devotion nor any that the events of the war in Cabool are alone likely to urge Nepal to open rupture with us." Resident to Government, 31 January 1842, S.C.S., 14 February 1842, 82.

(118) S.C.S., 28 February 1842, 70.
(119) S.C.S., 14 February 1842, 82.
(120) The force was so long retained on the frontier, in spite of Hodgson's assurances to withdraw it. The Government wanted to be certain that Kabul disasters had had no material effect on Nepal. S.C.S., 14 February 1842, 82; 26 December 1841, 77.
Thus was brought to an "auspicious close" the anxious negotiations of Hodgson over the past thirteen months. The King was quiet and apparently cordial, the pro-British régime consolidated in power and popular; the War-party effectively subdued; the soldiers calm; peace and order restored in the Durbar. Hodgson was naturally elated; congratulations came to him freely from all.

Policy of active intervention

Lord Auckland laid down his office on 28 February 1842, after seeing the success of his policy of active intervention, tempered by judicious moderation and occasional forbearance. The policy had been adopted under the stress of circumstances, when all officers of the Government (123) pressed on him to 'do' Nepal. The Councillors were indignant at Lord Auckland's weak-kneed policy, Hodgson himself was for a time irritated, the press vociferously critical. Even the despatches of the Secret Committee sounded the stern notes of war; opinion in England hardened against the mildness of Lord Auckland. The Court of Directors were critical, if not censorial, of his policy.

(122) S. C., 24 January 1842, 77; 28 February 1842, 71; 26 December 1841, 77.

"We are not displeased with your forbearance and moderation but we consider that if the next report from your Resident ... shall not inform you that all your demands have been fully complied with, you will have no other course to pursue than immediately to advance your army to the frontier and commence those operations, which will, we trust, lead to a speedy occupation of the capital and the final submission of the Gorkha State ... We should not have been sorry to have learnt that you had accompanied your demands with the military occupation of a portion of the Nepalese territory which you might permanently annex to the British dominions."

"The conduct of the Nepalese Durbar would have fully justified that proceeding and had you adopted it, you would, we are persuaded, have received due support and encouragement from the Home authorities." (124)

To them Auckland appeared to fight shy, deliberately underplaying the menace that was Nepal, blissfully ignorant of the inevitability of war and wilfully blind to its justifiability.

But Lord Auckland would not budge. The preoccupations in Afghanistan, China, Lahore and Ava, the strained financial and military resources, the general, though widely ramified,

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(124) Secret Despatch from Court, 30 November 1840, 684. "I see that you have all in England been eager for a Nepalese war and it is talked of as if the conquest of Kathmandu were an easy achievement, and as if we had nothing else upon our hands, but under present circumstances I am glad not to have such an enterprise forced upon me." Auckland to Hobhouse, 22 January 1841, P.B., Vol. 14, 114, E.M.A.M., 27703.

The Court desired to assume "the entire government" of Nepal or to retain the state "as a native state virtually, if not nominally, dependent on the British government." Colvin to Hodgson, 17 September 1841, P.B., Vol. 17, 82, E.M.A.M., 27706. Hodgson warned against war and preferred political intervention through the pro-British party, a creation of himself. H.M.B.L., Vol. 10, 186, 128-94, 76-96.
spirit of disquiet in India, all these were to him enough justification for the policy of peace and patience. Yet these were the very reasons, which seemed to his critics, enough justification for the opposite policy of crushing Nepal to innocuity, by either overt political pressure or massive military action. These were reasons why Auckland desired to temporise and bide time; yet these were the very reasons, which his critics pointed out made the reduction of Nepal a compelling necessity. But unlike his critics, in Lord Auckland's mind, the urgency of a war with Nepal was outweighed by the grave risk of it at such a critical time. To him, his critics both in England and India, seemed overzealous and unduly panicky; to his critics he appeared overcautious and complacent. To the latter the menace of Nepal seemed imminent; to Lord Auckland it was not so. He was aware that the security of India called for prompt reduction of Nepal, yet he preferred to defer it till his hands were more free. A Drastic policy in regard to Nepal, his critics held, would disillusion many states in India of their erroneous conception of the weakness of British power. (125)

Thus the moral gain would be no less than political. But Auckland thought that a too strong policy in Nepal would

(125) Secret Despatch from Court, 30 November 1840, 684.
entail ruptures with other states such as Ava and Lahore, with whom she was known to be intriguing.

Lord Auckland, however, soon realised that mere peace and patience were not enough. It was increasingly felt that the existing state of uneasy peace could not be maintained for long. The position of Hodgson was growing precarious; he was convinced that without a stronger policy, he could hardly restrain Nepal from war.

"I found it impossible to ensure my government against a premature rupture unless I were permitted to exert my influence in effecting a change of men as well as of measures in the Nepal Cabinet; I was permitted and I did it, and by means of it solely I succeeded in preserving peace with honour," so wrote Hodgson years later. (126)

But a war now was out of the question. Hence Lord Auckland was obliged to adopt the policy of active, though limited, intervention and set up a pro-British Ministry as a (127) pis aller. It was an interim, ad-hoc arrangement, a political expedient to temporise, till in future Nepal could be


(127) "... that when I did interfere under orders of my government, it was evoked and solely as a pis aller to avert the still worse evil of rupture with Nepal at a most inconvenient season for us." Extract from a letter of Hodgson to S. L. H., H. M. B. L., Vol. 10, 284, 277.
drastically dealt with. It was the only effective bulwark of a precarious peace; also the golden mean to reconcile the drastic policy urged by his Councillors and his own (128) policy of peace, patience and forbearance. Above all, the pro-British régime relieved him of the expense of maintaining a huge force for a war with Nepal, which to him was neither unavoidable nor imminent.

He was now convinced that the Resident should increase his influence in the Durbar and assert when he felt it ebbing.

Without active intervention a break with Nepal was inevitable; and hence in permitting the Resident to intervene, Lord Auckland chose the lesser of the two evils. A large section of the people themselves desired such intervention to prevent a war, so much prized

(128) "I give you this but to prove that it is at least desirable that our arms should be free from other pressing cares if we would attempt a determined invasion of Nepal. On the other hand, there have been parties not unfavourable to peace and amicable relations to whom strength could be given by something of demonstration without alarming their national pride." Auckland to Hobhouse, 22 January 1841, P.B., Vol. 14, 114, B.H.A.M., 37703.

(129) "It is the general opinion that upon the permanence of the Ministry, the existence of the Kingdom depends." Nepal Summary of Events: 15-28 February 1841.
by the war-party. Thus a situation for this intervention (130) was created, and Hodgson took full advantage of it. With a friendly Ministry in Nepal, sustained by the Resident's strong support, Lord Auckland bowed out of office, keeping Nepal's restlessness toned, and her wings clipped for a while.

(130) "... I agreed to cover my men with the moral aegis of Britain's power ... and they agreed ..." Hodgson to Marshman, 1874, R.M.E.L., Vol. 10, 224. (emphasis added)

This change in Ministry, Hodgson admitted, was "accomplished with success by a British Resident." It was "accomplished by the rare integrity and prudence of the present Premier, cooperating with and almost anticipating my every suggestion." Resident to Government, 30 November 1841, E.C., 26 December 1841, 77 (emphasis added).