PARRY'S OF MADRAS

A STORY OF
BRITISH ENTERPRISE IN INDIA

BY

HILTON BROWN

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MAP OF PARRY INDIA

TO DELHI

TO CALCUTTA

THOMAS PARRY
FREE MERCHANT 1765—1824

ARABIAN SEA

BAY OF BENGAL

DARE HOUSE

MADRAS

CEYLON

INDIAN OCEAN

16 JUL 1958

1. Madras
2. Ranipet
3. Bangalore
4. Pondicherey
5. Villupuram
6. Tiruvennallur
7. Kallakurichi
8. Nellikuppam
9. Cuddalore
10. Bandepollium
11. Porto Novo
12. Neiveli
13. Chidambaram
14. Salem
15. Kumbakonam
16. Tanjore
17. Trichinopoly
18. Pugalur
19. Madura
20. Tuticorin
21. Tinnevelly
22. Thuckalay
23. Nagercoil
24. Kulasekara-patnam
25. Kurnool
26. Guntur
27. Bezwada
28. Nidadavol
29. Rajahmundry
30. Samalkot
31. Vizagapatam
32. Vizianagram
33. Aska
34. Russellkonda
35. Sucunderabad
36. Hyderabad
37. Trivandrum
38. Tiruvalla
39. Cochin
40. Chowghat
41. Palghat
42. Feroke
43. Kallai
44. Calicut
45. Baliapatam
46. Wynaad
47. Tellicherry
48. Cannanore
49. Mangalore
50. Ootacamund
51. Mettupalayam
52. Coimbatore
53. Bombay

PARRY'S OF MADRAS

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Novels

Dismiss!
Dictators Limited
Susanna
Ostrich Eyes
Locust Food
Torteval
The Hare of Cloud
That State of Life
Humbug Hall
Stands My House
Asylum Island
Warm or Very Warm

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Potter's Clay
Maya

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Rudyard Kipling; A New Appreciation
There was a Lad. (Robert Burns)

Anthology

The Sahibs

Miscellaneous

The Civilian's South India

THOMAS PARRY IN 1806

"A small portrait of myself in pencil for my mother . . .it is supposed to be very like."

—*Thomas Parry to Gilbert Ross 8th July* 1806.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

All the real work on this book was done by Christopher Mainprice of Parry's. By his patient excavations in the vast quarry of Parry's archives—which I hope and believe he really enjoyed—he provided me with a wealth of material, judiciously selected; all I had to do was to boil this down, and go on boiling it down, till it was reduced to the compass of this volume. To Mainprice therefore my first acknowledgments must be made. Secondly, I must express my indebtedness to Mrs. Patricia Haskew, without whose very competent secretarial work my labours would have been trebled. And thirdly, to Parry's own people, from the Directors downwards, who were asked many things, great and small, on many occasions, but never in vain.

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In all the technical work relating to the illustrations I was fortunate in having the skilled assistance of Spencer Gore of Parry's, who tackled this arduous task wholeheartedly.

HILTON BROWN

Dare House, Madras
February to September, 1954

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PART ONE

PARRY AND DARE

1788—1838

EARLY in the year 1788 a young Welshman with a pale face, contemplative eyes and an exceptionally long chin waded or was carried through the last of the celebrated Madras surf and walked up the brick-and-mortar ramp and through the Sea Gate of Fort St. George. He had just completed a long and tedious voyage; some five months passed in what was by courtesy a "cabin" but was in fact no more than a sheeted-off slice of deck; unless he had been lucky, a good third of this meagre space had been taken up by a 22-pounder cannon and the whole had been subject to periodical inundations of dirty water. He must have been thankful to see the last of it and of the ten or twelve passengers who had shared his voyage, and he must have looked eagerly round the destination which he had survived these discomforts to reach. He would note with approval the decent, indeed stately architecture of the Fort, and Streynsham Master's sizeable church under the bizarre pepper-pot which at that epoch served it as a spire and which a few years later was to be hotly debated as a possible pedestal for Madras's first lighthouse. With less approval—because he had come there to trade—he would survey the apparently haphazard arrangements for the commerce of this port of Madras; the heaps of miscellaneous merchandise dumped anyhow on the open beach, the merchants themselves reduced to carrying on their business in the exposed colonnade between the Sea Gate and the Governor's House with its black Tindivanam pillars that had been stolen by and recovered from the French. Yet there was stir and bustle in the place; it would seem to him—as was indeed the fact—that half the population of the Settlement had come down to greet his vessel. They were a prosperous-looking lot, well dressed and respectable; only a few were shrunken and drained by illness—or by their late session on the previous

night. There were hardly any ladies. So this was Madras!

Perhaps, pausing a moment in the jaws of the Sea Gate, the young Welshman conjured up something of the storied past; saw the fabulous Clive kneeling devoutly in that same pepper-potted church; saw Lally's batteries—perhaps from that hummock of sand some three hundred yards to the north—hurling the shot that smashed down its spire. Less probably, he allowed himself to envisage the future; if he did, his picture was likely to be very wide of the truth. From his *masulah* boat to the Sea Gate had been a walk of fifty yards; he could not know that in the processes of time this brief interval would be expanded into a half mile of sand accretion and bounded by a broad and handsome thoroughfare electrically lit. He could hardly foresee, rising somewhere about the spot where he had just planted Lally's battery, a glittering edifice, golden in colour, six stories in height, and bearing in large letters the name of a man he was to know intimately but had never yet heard of. Nor could he guess that the site of that unimaginable building would be known to generations—perhaps for ever—by his own surname, "Parry's Corner".

The young Welshman, whose name was indeed Thomas Parry, had chosen for his arrival in Madras an hour in some ways fortunate, in others not. The hour was unfortunate in so far as it fell almost in the middle of that long trade recession which supplanted the first bright beginnings of the Honourable East India Company's venture and lasted from the middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century. Trade in Madras, what with one thing and another, was to be very difficult during the next twenty-five years. On the other hand, he was entering a city which was, after some false starts, hastening rapidly in the direction of civilisation, culture and a sense of responsibility. Only three years before his arrival, the Governor of Madras, no less, had fought

a duel with his Third in Council and had been wounded; more fortunate than his almost immediate predecessor in office who had been forcibly deposed and arrested and imprisoned at St. Thomas's Mount where—from one cause or another—he had perished. The Governor who had just departed—the duellist—had infuriated his staff and subordinates by refusing, for the first time in history, a "good-will" gratuity of £30,000 from the Nawab of the Carnatic, a *douceur* which his predecessors had pocketed without thought either of compunction or of quid pro quo. These were antediluvian doings. But in the last few years Madras had taken herself in hand; there being at the moment—and quite unusually—no current war, she had turned to the arts of peace. She had got herself a hospital and a post office and a circulating library; Dr. Anderson had established his "nopalry" (where he hoped to breed the cochineal insect for the large-scale treatment of scurvy) which was to grow into the Botanical Gardens; the Police Plan of Stephen Popham, Mrs. Fay's "perpetual projector", had set out to clean up the neglected Blacktown and restrain the "votaries of Cloacina" therein—or at least make some attempt to sweep up their prolific offerings. It was possible to attend the philosophical lectures of the good Dr. Bell who so conveniently combined benevolence with a nice judgment in speculative stocks; there was a newspaper, the *Courier*, which was to become, under the Byronic C. H. Clay, a very lively sheet indeed; there was the little Theatre on the Choultry Plain. Taverns—many taverns—dangled the lures of "Thrale's best old October in the Cask": and of hams and cheeses rather oddly recommended as "preserved in Tom Lincoln's godown for six years". In polite society one could smoke a hookah (though not yet a cheroot) but the chewing of betel was now frowned upon as *démodé*. One could have one's watch repaired or one's horse broken; one could buy a hat for oneself and a bonnet for one's lady. There-

were balls and musical evenings, dinner-parties, amateur theatricals and other appurtenances of civilised life in which Thomas Parry could participate. In fact, in many of its aspects, Madras was becoming not unlike his native Welshpool.

All the same, Hyder Ali's cavalry had raided the Madras suburbs as recently as 1782 and though Hyder was dead, Tippu's might do it again any day. And for the "Free Merchants", such as Thomas Parry was to be, there were other serious considerations. A "free merchant" was a merchant permitted by the Honourable East India Company to enter the Presidency—that is to say, Fort St. George—and trade there under licence; for in 1788 the Company were still sitting tight on their monopoly of the trade between England and India. The Company did not like the free merchants, complained bitterly about their competition and annoyed and harassed them in a variety of ways; they continued to license a few of them, however, because there was a considerable volume of trade they themselves could not handle and because there was something to be made out of licensing free merchants. Few the free merchants certainly were; in 1710 they had numbered only twenty-nine and even supposing this to have been trebled by the time of Parry's arrival, there must still have been in Madras twice as many Civilians and five times as many Army officers; for every free merchant who sailed for India there were, according to the statistical records, 11 writers, 87 cadets, 11 surgeons and 110 "mariners". It was only by standing together (which they did not always do) that the free merchants could make any show against the overwhelming preponderance of the civil and the military. They were tolerated, however, because they were necessary; while the civil and military gentlemen were making their fortunes they required some dependable person—British for choice—with whom to bank their takings; someone also had to undertake the offices of mayor, alderman and other

"unofficial" duties. In these roles the free merchants were free indeed, but as vis-à-vis the Government, they had a constant struggle; it could be said that if a free merchant succeeded, it was because of his personal tact, his scruples—or lack of them, and his skill in spotting a stayer in the rapidly changing field of those whose interest was worth cultivating. Between sudden death, sudden disgrace and sudden caprice, it was difficult to depend on anyone.

Thomas Parry and his fellow free merchants had still graver obstacles to surmount. Francis Day had founded the settlement of Madras because it was a suitable place (or a not wholly unsuitable place, or at any rate the only place he could get) for the production and collection of those Indian "piece-goods" cotton stuffs and "paintings" on which in his time and for long afterwards the Company's trade was principally founded. He did not foresee—what Thomas Parry was shortly to encounter—a rising cotton-cloth industry in Lancashire whose operators could bring pressure to bear in Parliament and squeeze out of it a murderous system of anti-Indian tariffs and duties. Sugar was in much the same plight; the West Indian interests—with, it was said, as many as ninety M.P's in their pocket—were able to debar, by prohibitive tariffs, the East Indian product. For the rest of the trade, anything out of which money could be made turned out usually to be the Company's monopoly. Add to all this the facts that seasons in India in 1788 were as malignantly unpredictable as they were in 1888 or will be in 1988; that Madras had no sort of harbour at all—not even a pier or a jetty, so that the losses between ship and shore were reckoned at ninety per cent of the losses of the whole voyage and at twenty per cent of the trade profit; that the anchorage, such as it was, was so exposed that sailings could be contemplated only in certain months and in certain other months could not be contemplated at all; that during the mid-October to mid-November-

monsoon the flagstaff on which vessels took their bearings was dismantled and while it was down no insurance could be effected on bottom or cargo and all insurances already existing were void. These are topics to which we will return; the immediate purpose is to set forth just what Thomas Parry, stepping ashore on that bright morning of 1788, had before him.

"There is no place in the world where money is so plenty or where traders have better credit". So Thomas Parry might have read in a back number of the *European Magazine* in a "succinct account" of Fort St. George. If, even already, he felt a little doubtful of this optimistic estimate, he could console himself with Alexander Hamilton's remark, made sixty years earlier but still eminently applicable, that in Madras "a few pagodas rightly placed" could achieve almost anything.

* * *

Parry's choice of a free merchant's career and his selection of Madras were not of course fortuitous. As to the former, his sister Elizabeth, nine years older than himself, had married Gilbert Ross, a member of the firm of Mill Ross and Burgie, East India merchants in London. No doubt when the question of a career for young Thomas became urgent and Thomas himself fancied the overseas adventure, it was thought that brother-in-law might help, and brother-in-law duly did. In the same way more than one of the progeny of another sister, Anne who married Thomas Pugh, were presently to find shelter under the wing of Thomas Parry. As to the selection of Madras, Gilbert Ross had an agent there and could rely on at least one extant relative in the person of Colonel Patrick Ross, Chief Engineer. (There was a George *Parry* in Madras at the time, who surveyed the property which eventually became Parry's Castle, but he was a Herefordshire Parry and there is no evidence that he was in any way related to

Thomas.) Apart from these family connections the place had little to recommend it to an ambitious young man: its happy proximity to the diamond mines of Golconda, so warmly stressed by the older writers, had by this time become a little illusory.

For Madras in those days was rather looked down upon—and not without reason. Strategically it was of immense value as an outwork, however distant, of the Company's beloved Fort William and as holding down the French at Pondicherry; commercially its attractions were meagre. Its deficiencies in the way of a harbour impressed all visitors; in the words of Alexander Hamilton, "it fronts the sea which constantly rolls impetuously on the shore more here than at any other place on the Coast of Choromondel". If it persisted as a centre of business, it was only because it was already there and because, for several hundred miles on either side of it, there was nothing much better; indeed, with the Pulicat shoals to the north and those of Tranquebar to the south, there was much that was considerably worse. Again to its disadvantage, Madras was nicely set between the two principal potential marauders—France at Pondicherry, Tippu at Seringapatam; it lay at the mercy of any blockading fleet because so many of its necessities were imported—rice from Ganjam and Orissa, wheat from Surat and Bengal, even firewood from Masulipatam. It produced very little for export, having become, to quote Hamilton again, an "emporium, supplying foreign markets with foreign goods". Good money could be made in Madras and often was; one could point to Darke who had been the Nawab's biggest creditor, to Hope who had started as a private soldier and was now worth £100,000, to Benfield who was owed twenty-three lakhs on the Tanjore revenues and had been powerful enough—or so it was hinted—to engineer the arrest and imprisonment of the Governor whose policy had crossed his interests. But the fortunes of these financiers were the exception and were chicken-

feed even at that; all the big money was still in Bengal. One must presume therefore that there were special circumstances which drew Parry's attention to the "coast of Choromondel".

This Thomas Parry was no rough adventurer; he was a Welsh gentleman—indeed he was perhaps too much of a gentleman for the Madras of his day. He was the seventh child and second son of Edward Parry of Leighton Hall in the Welshpool area of Montgomeryshire. Leighton Hall in 1788 must have been a dignified and charming house; the curious may see from photographs what Victorian Industrialism, whose beginnings smote Thomas Parry so heavily in Madras, could do to the home of his ancestors. The Welshpool region swarmed with Parrys—a fact which has confused some of Thomas Parry's biographers more than a little; but amongst these—teste Sir Edward Parry in *My Own Way*—the Edward Parrys of Leighton Hall stood high if not highest. Besides being a well-bred family they were also tough; a younger brother of Thomas's lived to be eighty-five, while two of his sisters registered eighty-six and ninety-four, one of them after the production of sixteen children—a record which in the circumstances of the times indicates very remarkable powers of resistance. Parry's own constitution was tolerably strong and might have carried him safely home to a carriage and pair in Welshpool had he not demanded of it, when it began to fail him, just one endurance too many. He had not the opportunity to study that terse epitaph of a later generation—"Simpson Sahib lies buried here; He was going to have retired next year".

Although the early records of the firm have been preserved at Dare House in considerable strength, they remain in the end tantalisingly inadequate. Apart from his ledgers and his one authentic portrait, Thomas Parry is an elusive figure; there is no disinterested contemporary account of him at all; even the miniature bought by Joseph Pugh in 1837 is lost. His

letters which might have illumined him to us (those of 1806-1808 survive in some entirety) are disappointing; they are full enough of the charm of what must have been a sweet and loveable nature, but they are short on information. There is very little in them of the contemporary scene because they were written mainly to those familiar with it; one would so gladly exchange for a picture of Parry's daily life in Madras some of what we would now call railway-carriage comment on international affairs—often misinformed and requiring correction in the next letter. But then it was difficult to be knowledgeable in a place where vital news of the war with Napoleon was conveyed (wrongly) by word of mouth of an American ship's-captain who had spoken (and misunderstood) another American in Lat. 25 South; the said news being, in any case, many months out of date.

* * *

What Thomas Parry did with himself during his first months in Madras is not known, though one may well surmise that it took him some little time to settle in and acquire his free merchant's licence. At any rate he joined very soon after his arrival in partnership with Thomas Chase, Gilbert Ross's Madras representative. The earliest surviving ledger in the archives at Dare House is that of 1789-90 which shows items in January of 1789 (John Menzies and Mill Ross and Burgie) "in account current with Chase and Parry". The rapidly-acquired partnership suggests more than strongly that Parry was sent out with this very end in view and that Chase's existence was the factor that decided his advisers on Madras. Chase was a civil servant, but the embargo on private trading by civil servants was not promulgated—or rather, an embargo long promulgated on paper was not enforced—till Clive's reforms in 1800; there is thus no ground for surprise in Chase's being a trader as well as a Civilian. Although Chase had been in the Ser-

vice since 1782, he was probably not very much older than his new partner; the Company believed in catching them early. His face in John Smart's miniature of 1787 is a young face if a trifle haggard; it is embellished—unusually for those days—with a creditable moustache.

The business of Chase and Parry was nominally that of general traders and agents, but its staple—then as long thereafter—was banking. Deposits were taken in and utilised to finance the firm's transactions; advances were made at interest. "Interest", says Sir Gerald Hodgson in *Thomas Parry*, "was charged on all loans and debit balances at the uniform rate of 12½%..... In addition commission was charged at 1% on receipts, and in special cases, on payments—that is to say on payments to Bengal, Bombay and so on..... Messrs. Chase and Parry also charged 1½% commission on premiums of insurance effected through them, and another source of profit was a charge of 2½% on freight booked..... It may be thought that an interest charge of 12½% was usurious, but it must be remembered that the East India Company and the Indian Princes—the latter, of course, in particular—were borrowers at high rates, and the security on the money lent by such as Messrs. Chase and Parry was often no more than the good faith of an individual who might succumb at short notice to the rigours of the Madras climate, or fail in battle". Or might, Sir Gerald could have added, lose overnight the favour on which he depended and collapse rapidly into insolvency, or might for his own reasons slip unobtrusively out of the Presidency, or might—quite simply—bilk.

At 30th April 1790 the partners closed their accounts and split fifty-fifty a profit of well over £4,000—certainly a bright beginning for the junior member of the firm who had little more than attained his majority. On the same date Chase took in as a second partner his brother-in-law Henry Sewell.

Chase Parry and Co's first year of working showed a sharply increased profit at £7,500; but whether Parry's mind ran on the lines of the Scottish saying "What's a gill aman' three?" or whether his early success had gone a little to his head, he decided that he had had enough of the "Chase" and the "Co" and that "Thomas Parry" would look better on the bill-heads by itself. On the 1st of January 1792 he left the firm and set up on his own. The step was no doubt characteristically bold but it was dead against the trend of the times which was all towards associations and mergers; for surely two bank balances were better than one in the face of the unprecedented shortage of cash and the appalling risks that now overhung all business.

Parry, however, had some justification for a rosy outlook. For the background of Chase and Parry and of Chase Parry and Co. was the transition from peace to war. The beneficent and peaceful Governorship of Sir Archibald Campbell, under which Madras was learning to become a decent and self-respecting city, was cut short in 1789 by the failure of his health; it was succeeded by the brief but fateful interlude of the Hollond Brothers together with their *dubash* Avadhanam Paupiah—a name we shall encounter again. Tippu, taking advantage of the general confusion, corruption and incompetence, fell upon Travancore and the Third Mysore War was well and truly begun. The indolence or worse of the Hollonds had given Tippu a flying start, and it was long before he was brought to heel. In 1792, however, the year of Thomas Parry's secession, he *was* brought to heel and was obliged to furnish an indemnity of 330 lakhs—a very timely fillip for Madras business—and to surrender two of his sons as hostages. These last were to make what must have been rather an odd appearance among the audience at a record-breaking amateur musical entertainment given in St. Mary's Church in Madras two years later, over which

that short-lived journal the *Hircarrah* waxed wildly enthusiastic; the performance in the *Messiah* of Lady Oakley the Governor's wife (and the mother of eleven children) was said to be outstanding. One wonders what the little Tippus made of it.

But the present point of all this is that the war was good for business. The army which eventually took the field against Tippu was, by the standards of the times, enormous—forty thousand troops and nearly half a million camp followers. There were large-scale pickings in that; if Chase and Parry were wide-awake—and there is much evidence that they were—they should have done well out of it. Perhaps Parry, being young, thought that success once begun must last for ever; or perhaps he supposed that his own genius and not the march of current events was responsible for the handsome profit and decided no longer to share the fruits of his personal abilities with Chase and Sewell; at all events he broke away. He was, as it turned out, well inspired; for the Chase firm was to become an early casualty in the black years 1805-1807. Thomas Parry was to survive them.

* * *

For the next three years, until the close of 1795, Parry worked single-handed except perhaps for an unidentified partner in 1795-96 when the firm was styled Thomas Parry and Co.: Mainprice thinks this may have been the Hugh Jones who appears in an old list of partners but is otherwise a shadow; Hodgson suggests George Garrow who did certainly come into the firm in 1797. There is no reliable evidence in support of either. Parry worked vigorously during these years, but the quick and easy profits of the Chase days would not return. On the contrary—as he said himself—he would have done better to retire with the "snug little fortune" he had already amassed. But then few men, in the long history of commerce, have been strong-minded enough to do that.

Difficulties and disappointments began to rear their unpleasant heads almost at once. In 1793, for instance, war broke out between Britain and France—that war which was to last more or less continuously till Waterloo. The island of Mauritius was a nest of French warships and privateers, nicely placed to catch Indiamen coming round the Cape. Parry, who had been embarking on shipping ventures on a considerable scale, lost ship after ship. They were probably not very big ships—the average trading ship of the day ran only to some 300 tons—but, such as they were, he lost them. The war was also a very arduous time for Marine Insurance—a form of business which in many hands (including Parry's) had flourished in Madras since 1688, small ship-owners insuring with large and the large with each other. It was comforting, no doubt, to reflect that one's ships, sunk by the French, were insured; not so comforting when one was oneself, in another guise, the insurer.

And 1793 brought another disappointment. In that year the East India Company's charter fell due for renewal and hopes ran very high that something would at last be done to break the Company's monopoly of the England-India trade. It might have been had not Cornwallis, as Governor-General, beheld the free merchant—as ignorant people at home beheld his successors long after—in the guise of a speculator, an exploiter, a general vampire and parasite. As the result of his mistrust, the free merchants saw themselves fobbed off for the next twenty years to come with nothing better than a concession of 3,000 feet of cargo space in the Company's vessels—*if* they could comply with the innumerable and irksome restrictions imposed.

The fact is, of course, that by this time the entire trade between Britain and India was going to pieces; this did not affect the Company who gaily ran India at a loss which they had every intention one day of transferring to the public debt, but it was not so simple.

for the free merchants whose losses the public would be disinclined to shoulder. An instance in this deterioration—although it did not reach the critical stage for another twenty years—was afforded by what had been Madras's staple export, namely piece-goods—the punjums, izalies, natchanatches, Rajabahadar cloth and Booramboor chintz of the old ledgers. The almost deliberate slaughtering of this established trade in the interests of the Lancashire and Scottish mills is a far from creditable chapter in British economics. The trade was very considerable, amounting to one-third of the total imports into Britain from India and one quarter of the Company's business; between the years 1793 and 1807 the total import value of Indian piece-goods came to twenty-six million pounds. In law and equity Madras was as British and as well entitled to protection as Manchester. But in hard fact Indian piece-goods could be sold in Britain at a price a clear 50% below that of the home-manufactured article; any squaring duties that were to give the home mills a ghost of a chance must therefore be crushing. This was faced, and crushed the Indian industry was. A duty which in 1783 had been *reduced* to 18% ad valorem began to soar again steadily; by 1814 it had reached, together with "war enhancements" the monstrous figure of 67½%. There was little inducement for Thomas Parry to load his 3,000 feet of homeward cargo space with his blue Nellore purcalahs or white succatoons.

His only consolation would be the reflection that piece-goods or any other form of miscellaneous trading was little more than the butter on the bread. The real bread of business itself still remained banking—accepting deposits and using them, advancing monies on security. Blacktown was full of "bankers" but too many of them could better be described as money-lenders or money-changers; they lived either by advancing to their fellow-Indians loans which *ex hypothesi* could never be repaid but on whose extortionate

interest the lender could comfortably subsist, or by converting (at a profit) the miscellanies of curious coinage brought to their balances. (The coinage unification laws of 1835 which terminated this easy-money activity were a sad blow to them.) Neither of these methods quite accorded with British ideas of banking or satisfied the foreigner with money to invest. There was a lot of money going, one way and another, and those Europeans fortunate enough to possess it thought well to place it with persons not only of their own kind but of intelligence sufficient to comprehend the appallingly complicated exchanges and currencies with which the Mysore indemnities were distracting the market—Hydery and Ahumadee gold-mohurs; Shiddahee half-mohurs; Hydery pagodas; Vurayan, Raja Gopaul, Cotta Gopaul, Tellicherry and Sultan fanams; Shampoor, Surat, Pondicherry, Maratha and Goondoovettoo rupees; Venetians, German crowns and Spanish dollars. As a result of all this, no British house of agency could have felt itself in tune with the times unless it included a Bank; and if the Europeans of Madras at the turn of the eighteenth century did not live by taking in each other's washing, they did very largely live by taking in each other's money. It was not a very exacting occupation and many of them bore it easily, justifying Grandpré's scathing comment that they left everything to their *dubash* (their confidential go-between), lived far from their offices and gave them but "two or three hours attention and that not regularly". Grandpré was writing almost in the year of Thomas Parry's arrival but Parry's methods, even thus early, must surely have been otherwise; if they were not they certainly became so very soon.

* * *

But life was not all banking and business. In 1794, ere his rose glasses had quite lost their colour, Parry launched into matrimony—an expensive under-

taking when, as was estimated, a wife cost £600 a year to keep, doubled or trebled household staff and necessitated a carriage. He married a widow, Mrs. Mary Pearce, the daughter of a civil servant James West; through no fault of Parry's, it was not a very fortunate union. As is abundantly clear from his letters, Parry was fond of his wife and of the son and daughter with which she presented him; but the health of the whole family was most unsatisfactory and they were obliged to pass—or at any rate did pass—long periods out of Madras. In 1805 the boy, John, was sent home by the *Sanson* with his now widowed grandmother Mrs. West; either Parry was able to pull some strings as to the passage-money or he did this passage rather iniquitously on the cheap; the cost was a mere hundred pagodas (roughly £35) which was about one-tenth of what a normal passage would have been. The boy took smallpox soon after his arrival in England, recovered from that and apparently succumbed to something else before he was very much older. He is not mentioned in Parry's very comprehensive will and indeed nothing more is heard of him. The fate of the daughter Eliza is still more uncertain—who, for instance, was the "Miss Parry" for whom a lottery ticket was purchased in December of 1813?—but it seems safest to conclude that she did not return to India and, since she too is absent from Parry's will, that she perished before its execution in 1823.

In 1806-07 both Mrs. Parry and the daughter Eliza had protracted illnesses—which do not, however, seem to have entirely annulled their capacity for enjoyment. In July of 1807 Mrs. Parry "came to the determination" (thus Parry himself puts it) "of proceeding to England in October"—and proceed she did, in the roundhouse of the *Dover Castle*, the best possible accommodation, at a cost of 2,000 pagodas for herself and Eliza. As Parry, at the moment, was in quite considerable financial difficulties, one feels that she

might have put up with more humble quarters. Parry, writing to Neill, his then partner, on the 22nd of October, closed his letter with a pathetic paragraph: "I shall this evening see them for the last time in India—I hope we shall yet meet elsewhere". They did not. On the contrary, Parry had to endure the news of the deaths of both his children, and to endure that news in solitude, for Mrs. Parry, who was to survive at least till 1837, apparently did not deem her health equal to another visit to India. At any rate she never made one; and, as Parry could never bring himself to go home, the parting in 1807 was final and the "meeting elsewhere" took place, if at all, in another world.

In all these circumstances and in the social climate of the day, Parry could not be blamed for consoling himself—and he did. Madras was a city full of houris, from the mesdames of the Choultry Plain to the dancing-girls whose "eminently beautiful contours" so much delighted Wathen; it was no place for celibates—nor did it contain very many. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find Parry providing in his will (dated 4-3-1823) the sum of Seventy rupees a month for a lady called Mary Ann Carr from whom, at the time of writing, he evidently expected offspring. Mary Ann Carr is straightforward; a more perplexing figure is the little ten-year-old boy George Parry Gibson who had been given Parry's name and was evidently very close to Parry's heart. The child was the son of Major George Melsom Gibson whose wife, before her marriage, was Miss Eliza Harriett Wilson. Parry was certainly interested in Miss Wilson for both he and his partner signed the register at her wedding. Hodgson, who has gone into this conundrum very carefully, concludes that George Parry Gibson was Parry's grandson—on the pertinent evidence that he is so described in the ledgers of 1822; in which case Eliza Harriett Wilson can only have been Parry's daughter; in *which* case..... On the other hand,

if "god" be read for "grand" in the incriminating ledger—"grand" being the error of an Indian copyist unacquainted with Church of England procedure—most of the facts are covered and some very awkward chronological hurdles are cleared.

It does not greatly matter. Parry certainly did not forget or neglect his lawful spouse; she is the first person for whom, and in detail, his will provides. If, alone in Madras, sick, disappointed, sometimes even on the brink of ruin, he took other comforters into his bosom, which of us will cast a stone?

* * *

Perhaps it was his recently assumed domestic responsibilities, perhaps his rather alarming losses at sea, perhaps only the general deterioration in business conditions that drove Parry into the service of the Nawab of the Carnatic; at all events, in November of 1796, he resigned from two reasonably lucrative posts (Examiner to the Mayor's Court and Secretary to the Carnatic Insurance Co.) and proceeded to become Captain Parry of the Nawab's establishment at a salary of roughly £1,000 a year. This not very exciting stipend was but half Parry's share of the Chase-and-Parry profits of four years earlier and its acceptance may indicate Parry's business expectations at the moment; on the other hand, the Nawab's servants could look confidently to many sources of income other than the figures against their names on the payroll. The £1,000 was presently doubled but then, like most of the Nawab's salaries, it was never, during the Nawab's lifetime, paid and Parry had a long wait and a deal of correspondence before he eventually recovered it. Despite its martial title his new post involved no military engagements, being concerned with His Highness's treasury. It was a step Parry was to have some cause to regret. Meantime, for assistance in his business while he was thus otherwise engaged, he took in as partner George Garrow, a young

recently-joined civil servant; thus the firm underwent yet another change in style and became, until 1800, Parry Garrow and Co. The "Co" may have been the unidentified partner of 1795-96 or—as indeed in that case—may have been merely a flourish.

The transfer to the Nawab's service was a move fraught with graver implications than might at first sight appear. The old Nawab Wallajah who had died in 1795 after a reign of forty-six years, had never been a wholly dependable friend to the Company; his son Umdat-ul-Umara who had more cause to feel grateful (since he would never have succeeded at all if the British had left his father to his own devices) was openly inimical. As the first known Indian Freemason one feels he should have made a better showing. He had inherited the old man's tortuous mind and spendthrift profligacy without that *noblesse* which, even in his worst moments, had gained Wallajah a certain amount of respect. His spectacular Chepauk Palace had been built in 1768; it was originally to have been located in the Fort but the Directors came down against this—to the furious annoyance of Benfield who had the contract; now it stood on the very beach at the eastern margin of its enormous grounds, in which secluded spot it had become the nest and focus of anti-Government intrigue. For this last there was not at the moment, nor had been for generations, any lack of material. Wallajah carried big guns and had been able to play off Fort St. George against Whitehall and Leadenhall Street with some success; his son, deprived of these amusements, brooded and schemed in his Palace and worked himself up into tantrums. The "tumultuous" anti-British hooliganism of Triplicane was probably not unknown to the lord of Chepauk. To enter this potentate's service, as Parry now did and with his eyes open, was not only to enlist oneself with a disreputable regime whose financial position and methods were, to say the very least, questionable; it was in some degree to proclaim one-

self a member of the anti-Government party. The Nawab-Company feud had been running for half a century and was still vigorous; a score of minor feuds tacked themselves on to it. It was impossible not to be of one side or of the other. In no way was Parry openly subversive but he was there, in the Chepauk Palace, and he thus put himself in a position in which all his activities might well be suspect.

For a time all went well. Parry was even given a semi-Government appointment (as a Commissioner of the Court of Requests) which he treated somewhat cavalierly. But then began a most curious series of events.

In February of 1798 a certain Captain Robert Powney (also of the Nawab's service and perhaps a descendant of that "rogue named Powney" who annoyed Alexander Hamilton or of the Mrs. Powney who died in 1780 at the ripe and unusual age of 101) reported to the Governor in Council that Thomas Parry had been advancing large sums to the Nawab and taking as security the revenue from lands in the district of Tinnevelly. This was perfectly true; lending money to the Nawab, regarding it as thrown in the sea and making what one could out of the handsome securities offered was common Madras business at the time; Benfield had made his fortune out of it. Powney, who was departing for England and therefore had no reasons for reticence, said he knew Parry was doing it because he had been doing the same thing himself: indeed he had, for he had been ousted by Parry and his *dubash* Paupiah (of whom we have already heard once and will hear yet again) and to add insult to injury, Parry had been given the entire revenues of Tinnevelly as his security whereas Powney had been fobbed off with a part only. Hence no doubt the Captain's virtuous indignation. The Governor in Council swallowed Powney's allegations without even investigation and when presently the Captain, having been somehow squared in the interval, desired to

withdraw his charges, "determined not to comply"; all of which would seem to suggest that Parry had already made himself some enemies in high places.

A chronological summary of the action taken on Captain Powney's report should hang in every Government office as an example of what can be done; it must be very nearly a record. Powney's letter of accusation was written on 13-2-1798; it was laid before the Council on 3-4-98 and a report on it was sent to the Court of Directors in London on 15-10-98. (This was not so bad as it looks; the report could not be sent till the October fleet was ready to sail.) The Directors replied on 31-10-99 ordering that Powney (who had of course gone home long since) and Parry should be "required to repair to Europe". This order was communicated to Parry—pretty promptly—on 20-5-1800 and he replied by return asking for information "why I have been accused, by whom, and to what extent"; papers, please! On 29-5-1800 the Government curtly refused but they did forward his letter to London. The intervals in the correspondence, by no means brief even to date, now extend; London replied, hedging, on 23-9-1801, Fort St. George reaffirmed in 1802 and London at last closed the file in 1804, indefinitely deferring execution of their previous orders so long as Thomas Parry conducted himself "to your entire satisfaction". The exchange of these half-dozen despatches had occupied no less than six and a half years from the date of Powney's original letter of accusation.

During this long interval (which had allowed of the death of Umdat-ul-Umara, the consequent annexation of the Carnatic, the entire Governorship of Lord Clive and other relevant happenings) Parry had not greatly disturbed himself. The Carnatic with all its nefarious opportunities had ceased to exist and friends had represented that, in Umdat-ul-Umara's service, he had done his best to mitigate that potentate's

anti-Company ardours; banking on these facts and on the processes of time, he apparently judged shrewdly and correctly that between London and Madras the affair would fizzle out. So in fact it had; but it left Parry with an uncleared stigma attached to his name, an order of banishment hanging over his head and—no doubt—a very sable mark against him in the books of the Governor in Council of Fort St. George.

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In 1798, about the time when Captain Powney was launching his accusations, there arrived as Governor of Madras the second Lord Clive whom Wellington described in a private letter to his brother as "a mild moderate man having a bad delivery and apparently a heavy understanding"; under Wellington's tuition, however, he "improved daily". He improved so much that in 1800 he was able to launch, in a minute running to 113 folio pages, a comprehensive campaign of reforms, two of which were to affect Thomas Parry directly. The first of these was Clive's edict that the rule against private trading by the Company's servants, which had been subsisting piously on paper since 1773, must now be strictly enforced. This was, of course, practically a charter of liberty for the free merchants; but it meant that George Garrow, Parry's partner since 1797, must choose between commerce and the service; he chose the latter and left the firm. In his place Parry brought in John King Lane, the capital of the firm being now Rs. 70,000, contributed in equal shares.

The second of Clive's reforms relevant to the present subject was his insistence on removing the Sea Customer and his office from the Sea Gate in the Fort to the region they have occupied ever since, to what had been the old North Granary and more recently a repository for French prisoners of war. The move was certainly not before its time, for owing

LIMITS OF MADRAS
As fixed on the 2nd of November 1798
by the Right Honourable
The GOVERNOR in COUNCIL
when the
COURT of the RECORDER
was established.

MADRAS CITY IN 1798

The river roughly bisecting Madras from West to East is the Cooum. The object like a stranded sea-urchin on the seashore just N. of its estuary is Fort St. George. The blank white space immediately S. of the same estuary is the vast grounds of the Chepauk Palace; the Palace itself is seen as a cigarette-shaped object lying parallel to the beach at their S. E. extremity. The small isolated square on the beach an inch or so N. of the Fort is the Sea Customs House; behind it, running inland, are the streets and squares of Blacktown. Mount Road can be seen as a diagonal line running straight S. W. from the Fort; the Choultry Plain lies on either side of it.

The particular interest of this map however is the clearness with which it shows Parry's Corner—or what was still "the royal dwelling on the seashore in the town of China Pash"—as a distinct projection at the S. E. corner of Blacktown half way between Fort St. George and the Customs House.

to congestion in the Fort, James Call the Sea Customer had spent the last eighteen months in tents or sheds on the beach (it killed him) and the rather absurd situation had arisen under which business men could find accommodation in the Fort while military men could not. It was therefore decided to appropriate the Fort exclusively for the soldiers and the public offices, leaving the merchants to fend for themselves in Blacktown or elsewhere. An immediate yell of protest went up from the merchants in the form of a memorial signed by most of the leading firms (including "Chase, Sewell and Chase" but not Parry and Garrow whose senior partner was still with the Nawab); their prayers were rejected. As a result Parry's first concern on retiring from the Nawab's service in 1801 (when Umdat-ul-Umara died and the Carnatic was annexed) was to seek new office quarters. These were found at the nearest permissible spot, the locality known ever since as Parry's Corner.

The Corner in those distant days was more than a corner, it was a terminus, the end of the world. There was no such thing as First Line Beach or Second Line either; the ultimate north-and-south street of Blacktown was Moor St. To seaward of the Corner were the tidal sands; at high water the waves broke within a few yards of it, in a cyclone they burst over it. Here on a projection, in solitary state, there stood some sort of building belonging to the Nawab of the Carnatic. To the north the unbroken beach ran away in the direction of the Sea Customs House and Royapuram; to the south, a bare and hummocky waste of sand diversified by a few unsightly tombs led the eye to the unimpeded glacis of the Fort. Behind was the close-packed huddle of Blacktown. In front—infinity.

The exact dimensions of the site purchased here by Parry and Lane in 1803 have been preserved for us; the area covered about one quarter of that now occupied by Parry and Company's buildings and was extended northwards and southwards by leasing-

adjacent strips from the East India Company. As to the validity of that purchase, some curious questions were later to be raised. When, in 1826, Thomas Parry's executors came to settle up his estate, they seem to have felt some qualms on the subject, for they decided, for reasons of their own, to put the premises up to public auction. By this course they presumably intended to bring into the open any possible claimants and then, having dealt with these, to buy in the property themselves and so establish an indisputable title for all time. In the first of these objects they were eminently successful for their advertisement drew a letter from an attorney called Gordon, acting for Nawab Majud-ud-Dowlah, nephew of Umdat-ul-Umara, which asserted that the site at the Corner was never Thomas Parry's but belonged to Majud-ud-Dowlah's mother the Begum Malikunisa, to whom it had been given in perpetuity by her father the Nawab Wallajah. Mr. Gordon and his client relied upon a deed of gift written in Persian and sealed with a seal subsequently identified by Joseph Pugh as that of a *Khazi*, a Muslim magistrate. This curious and interesting document, known to successive generations of Parry's staff as " The Persian Writing ", still exists in their archives—a minor but considerable puzzle being just how it ever got there; perhaps one falls back again on Alexander Hamilton and his few pagodas rightly placed. Mr. Gordon went on in his letter to state that Thomas Parry had bought the property from a certain Mr. Geslin of Lautour and Company, one of the leading firms of the day; furthermore, he said, Parry got it for about half its real value because Geslin could not give any valid title-deed to the site—the reason being, of course, that it was the property, as Geslin knew very well, of the Begum Malikunisa. Mr. Gordon went so far as to allege further—if improbably—that Geslin had told Thomas Parry all this in a letter from Fort St. George under the date 6-8-1803, a copy of which was in the possession of his

client. All proceedings in respect of the site as a part of Thomas Parry's estate should therefore be stopped immediately.

Naturally alarmed by these allegations, Parry's executors promptly took legal opinion from Herbert Compton who had begun life as a subaltern in the 74th and was later to become Advocate-General. Compton's opinion is lengthy but part of it is worth quoting in full: "It appears that in 1766 the house in question was sold by John Call to the Nawab Wallajah and that in July 1797 it was sold by the Nawab Omdat-ul-Omrah son and successor of Wallajah to Messrs. Lautour Colon and Geslin and that on the 1st of August 1803 they, for a valuable consideration, conveyed their interests therein to Messrs. Parry and Lane. It is not so said, but I presume that Messrs. Lautour Colon and Geslin obtained possession of the house and premises at the time of the transfer by the Nawab Omdat-ul-Omrah and that possession from August 1803 has accompanied the transfer of that period. If this is so, I am inclined to think that the position of those who derived under the assignment of July 1797, accompanied with the conveyance from Call to the Nawab Wallajah and from his son and successor, will be sufficient to enable those who duly claimed under Messrs. Parry and Lane to resist effectually any action that can be brought by Majud-ud-Dowlah under any Deed of Gift that may have been granted to his mother Malikunisa Begum by the Nawab Wallajah". Compton thus admitted the awkwardness of the deed of gift, the "Persian Writing", but thought that long undisturbed possession for over twenty years would see Parry's through. He did ask for some further details but these were never forthcoming; nothing throws any further light on Attorney Gordon's allegations and the subsequent proceedings remain obscure. Thomas Parry's executors went ahead and Attorney Gordon repeated his threats, but there is no evidence

that he or his principal took the matter into Court or even that the auction was ever held. Whatever did or did not happen, Parry's title to their Corner has remained unquestioned ever since.

The "Persian Writing", which at one time threatened so much unpleasantness, is now among Parry & Co's most treasured possessions. It is true that Joseph Pugh, in one of his letters to Compton in 1826, alleged that the "Writing" had been "considered to be a forgery", but there seems no particular reason to suppose this. That there were curious and unrecorded factors in regard to the purchase of the Corner is, on the other hand, likely enough. The full truth will never be known now; what seems probable is that Umdat-ul-Umara, imposing upon the ignorance of his sister the Begum Malikunisa (who was doubtless illiterate) persuaded her to execute some document (untraced) authorising him to sell or mortgage the property to Lautour and Co., and this he duly did—comfortably ignoring the fact that it was not his to dispose. If this be so, then there may well be something in Attorney Gordon's allegations as to the deal done by Thomas Parry with Mr. Geslin of Lautour's and the consequent shakiness of Parry's original title to his Corner.

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These complications in regard to Parry's Corner have carried us rather far ahead; we must return to Parry and Lane. For some time after the move from the Fort they were probably preoccupied with building their new offices on the site pleasantly described in the "Persian Writing" (as translated) as "the royal dwelling on the sea shore in the town of China Pash". The "conveyance of interests" (Compton's cautious phrase!) from Lautour and Co. to Thomas Parry had, as we have seen, taken place on the 1st of August 1803, just two days before the official outbreak of the Mahratta War. It would be interesting to

know just when and in what order the primal office buildings, which were to serve the firm for nearly a century and a half, were put up, but the records are missing. The original Call structure, temporarily elevated into the " royal dwelling ", probably served for a time, but there is good reason to suppose that the fine old block with its vast old-style pillared verandahs was erected very soon after the acquisition of the site. It was then a two-storey edifice; of the third storey we shall hear later. Godowns were added in 1817.

All this time, of course, Thomas Parry was theoretically banished from Madras—a circumstance which, as we have seen, cost him little sleep and did not noticeably diminish his activities. The final and belated order of the London Directors that he need not be deported so long as he behaved himself should have reached Madras early in 1805 and was presumably communicated to him on receipt. As if stimulated thereby, he proceeded to launch into that policy which has ever since been pursued by the firm—that of combining with business, indeed substituting for it, an interest in industry. Parry began this in 1805 with a personal venture of his own independently of the firm—his tannery at San Thome.

If his fellow merchants—as probably they did—called him an optimist, there was something to be said for their view. Indian industry at the moment ran under a variety of saddle-cloths and despite a progressively failing performance, went up in the weights rather than down. We have already noted the appalling burden in tariffs laid on the manufacture of Indian cotton piece-goods for the British market. But it did not end with tariffs. Not only were there crushing import duties in England but there were also a series of fiddling imposts even on internal trade in India itself. Thus in the case of cotton the raw stuff paid a duty of 5% as soon as sold, a further 7½% when spun into yarn, a further 2½% when woven into cloth and a final 2½% when dyed. Nor was leather

exempt; a hide paid 5% duty; if it became leather, 5% again; if it became a boot or a shoe, yet another 5%. The duties were arbitrary and variable. There was thus a good deal to be said for the policy of leaving Indian industries alone.

Parry, however, believed in them—and the future history of his firm has vindicated his confidence. His tannery was by no means such a wild idea as it may have seemed to some of his contemporaries, for he was shrewd enough to see that so long as military forces were kept in strength in India, so long would there be a demand for such minor accoutrements as belts and pouches and straps—to say nothing of boots. On these lines his tannery prospered; as early as July of 1806 he was able to write to Robert Campbell that he had netted a 24,000-pagoda contract from the Government for supplying 12,000 sets of accoutrements. He well deserved his success for he worked untiringly, writing letters home to enquire about methods and materials, assailing the Secretary to the Military Board with "musters" or samples, even launching an attack on the American market. (But here, as elsewhere, his ship's-captain let him down.) Presently he was employing three hundred and fifty men at San Thome and his business was growing rapidly. But his expenses were growing too, and a difficulty perhaps unforeseen began to make itself felt —the shortage in the supply of hides; American competition, that bugbear of the Madras tanning industry, was already in evidence, for the American ship-captains paid high prices for their hides and shipped away an unconscionable number of them. Still, Parry's tannery was a sufficient success to confound the pessimists.

The precise location of the tannery is not known. Hodgson thinks it must have been on the land Parry had already taken up for his house at San Thome and therefore to the south of the village, between the sea and what is now Adyar Road. No trace of it remains. It is to be hoped that Parry sited its

premises well to the leeward of his house—though in the seasonally contrary breezes of the Madras coast this must have been difficult. Can the tannery be the reason why Mrs. Parry preferred to pass the year 1806 in Pondicherry? At least it may account for the fact that Parry, after a year or two, first let and then sold his San Thome house and moved to the less pungent atmosphere of Nungumbakam.

The house itself, "Parry's Castle" is worth a word in passing. It stood on the old San Thome Redoubt, a formidable little piece of fortification which had held its own against more than one assailant. This had fallen into disrepair, however, and one day in 1794 a certain Colonel Brathwaite, viewing it on his morning ride, thought it would make a pleasant site for a "bungalo". The Government offered no objections and he acquired the site; it was that George Parry already mentioned, the Superintendent of Company's Lands, who surveyed it. But it was the other Parry's—Thomas's—by 1805, as witness the contemporary survey; and it is "T. Parry's Castle" in the map of 1822, although by that time Parry had parted with it to Major Leith the Judge-Advocate-General, whose titular "Castle" it later became. It was still in existence, a curious cylindrical edifice, within recent and living memory; but it has now, like the Redoubt and the Tannery, disappeared.

Incidentally this period—circ. 1805—was the second high-water mark in Parry's fortunes; had he allowed the rising tide to carry him out of India and home to Montgomery, he would have been a wealthier and perhaps a happier man. But as he said of it himself, "we never know what is for the best till it is too late"—a sentiment which in itself perhaps indicates why Thomas Parry made no fortune.

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The tide, for Parry and for others, fell rapidly as 1805 advanced into 1806. The Mahratta War, which

had dragged on so disappointingly after Wellington's early success at Assaye, showed signs of ending at last, but the greater war with Napoleon showed none—even to the most long-sighted. Napoleon had closed all Europe to " enemy " goods and British India was, of course, an enemy. Anti-Indian tariffs and duties rose rather than fell. There were indications that the season would be, climatically, a bad one, that there would be shortages and starvings; twenty-five thousand persons were in fact to perish within three years and Parry himself wrote, " We are on the point of starvation.....we cannot escape a famine". In all these circumstances, short of going into bankruptcy, only two courses were open to men of business—either to lie low and hope for a change in prospects or to strike boldly out into something new. Parry preferred the latter. Lane, his partner, was fortunate enough to be presented with yet a third choice; he was offered and accepted the post of Cashier to the Government Bank. This left Parry once more alone and on the outlook for a fresh companion; instead of drawing in his horns, he went to Ceylon.

His objective there was Trincomalee, a place whose naval, military—and therefore commercial—importance he was one of the few persons intelligent enough to foresee; it was the only decent harbour south of the Ganges and Parry was vexed that the Government should neglect it as they did. He thought of taking up ten thousand acres there for the cultivation of indigo but the East India Company were setting their faces against European ownership of land in the island and he was told " it could not possibly be done "; he made a further attempt two years later but it is not clear with what effect. He did, however, actively join forces with a Trincomalee firm, Neill and Gibbons, and became Parry Neill and Co. Neill and Gibbons were a somewhat moribund pair, both in poor health and both preoccupied with the idea of getting home to Britain as soon as possible; Neill indeed

fulfilled this ambition very soon after the partnership was formed, leaving Gibbons dejectedly marking time. Parry, with his vigorous and questing mind, must have been a sore trial to them, as they were a sore disappointment to him. Not surprisingly the partnership perished of anaemia in 1808; Parry had thought the Madras end of it might with luck show some profit; "at Trincomalee", he wrote resignedly, "I fear you have not done much". As things turned out, however, the Madras end had no luck; it was indeed the main contributor to the heavy losses of the firm.

In the meantime, in Madras, the skies were falling with a vengeance. Nature provided drought and famine, man bankruptcy and ruin. In the course of 1805 Chase and Co. "involved beyond a possibility of recovery" failed for the resounding sum of forty lakhs, five and a half of which had been lost in "speculations to England". Tulloh and Co. who took over the task of liquidation failed in turn themselves and Thomas Parry eventually liquidated the affairs of both. It was a melancholy occupation, the more so as it formed the accompaniment to two of his own most lurid personal disasters.

For Parry, pursuing the policy of launching out rather than closing down, had invested heavily in two separate ventures in two separate ships. The first was the *General Wellesley* (Captain Dalrymple) trading to Borneo with a two-lakh cargo of piece-goods, rice and iron-and-steel oddments. The other was the *Marquis Wellesley* (Captain Grant) trading to the Cape with a full cargo of grain to meet the famine conditions said to be prevailing there. It would be difficult to say which of the two argosies was the more unfortunate. The *General* was treated by Dalrymple as if she were his own ship and no such person as Parry existed; for two years he sailed her half over the world—Borneo, Botany Bay, New Zealand, Fiji, Penang, China—sending rose-coloured reports and promises from which emerged in the end only the gloomy finale of a two-

lakh write-off in Parry's ledgers. In the interval, Dalrymple's fantastic Odysseys left Parry acutely short of cash at a time when he needed cash badly; his contemporary letters are full of apologetic off-putters to those seeking payment or advances. The fate of the *Marquis* was even worse; before she was well started on her way she was completely gutted by fire off the coast of Malabar. True, she was insured for Rs. 260,000 (block) and 100,000 (cargo) but even the recovery of this sum did not bring back to life a fine vessel from which, in these famine times, much might have been made as a carrier of grain. Worse still, Parry—on his own showing—had made the grave error of under-insuring; if so, the total loss on the two *Wellesleys* might be put conservatively at three or three and a half lakhs. A heavy blow at a moment when established businesses were crashing in the dust all round and when Parry's own depositors were hammering at his doors in justifiable anxiety for their deposits.

One cannot but feel acutely sorry for Parry in the matter of the two *Wellesleys*; his boldness in a dark hour deserved a better recompense. The truth is that Parry should have left these "ventures" alone; he was a gentleman and unfortunately he expected his ship-captains to be gentlemen also and unfortunately they were not. There seems no doubt that Dalrymple's attitude to Parry was one of insolent contempt; "tell the old fool anything". Grant was a liar of a shabbier sort and certainly deceived his employer as to his financial position; it was—and would be—"unaccountable" to Parry who had been "a dreadful sufferer by the connection with him" that Grant, dying so shortly after the loss of the *Marquis*, was able to leave a "large property" to his widow and children. It was not at all "unaccountable" to Grant; he and his wife probably had many a good laugh over it before the end came. From their names both Dalrymple and Grant should have been Scots; Parry

was a Welshman; but in this contest of Greek and Greek it was the Scots who won. Or—did they?

Of all these tragedies it was the Chase failure that went most deeply to Parry's heart. Chase had been his original friend, his original partner, in the bright days of 1789 and the "snug little fortune" now careering round Fiji in the *General* or lying charred and expended in the smouldering timbers of the *Marquis*. If he had stuck to Chase and Co., would he have been so much worse off? Sending home his portrait (which appears in this book) to his brother-in-law Gilbert Ross in July of 1806, he wrote, "You will see that time has made sad havoc with me. The last year has done more than all the rest!" Doubtless it had; but there was further havoc to come.

* * *

The Governor of Madras during this distressful period was Lord William Bentinck (1803-07) who has been described as "most gentlemanlike"; Parry, however, thought him a "young and ill-advised Lord" and at his door, not altogether justly, he laid the Vellore Mutiny of 1806—whose hero, Robert Rollo Gillespie, was incidentally to become one of Parry's banking constituents. Parry, with others, had subscribed to the noble Lord's entertainment on his arrival and perhaps His Excellency had failed to reciprocate suitably; at any rate Parry was against him. Lord William survived his unpromising debut to make an outstanding reputation for himself as Governor-General but there is no doubt that he had a rough time of it in Madras. Not the least of his troubles arose in an institution where he might well have looked for tranquillity—the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court had recently superseded the Recorder's Court which in 1798 had in turn superseded the old Mayor's Court, "undermined by bandicotes", consistently agin-the-Government and subject to delays which, it was said, might last for anything up.

to two years. The new Supreme Court was composed of a Chief Justice (Sir Thomas Strange, the promoted Recorder) and two Puisne Judges, one of whom was Sir Henry Gwillim. Again from his name one would suppose with some confidence that Sir Henry was Welsh and this may have been the reason why Thomas Parry became his adherent in the raging feud in high places which he presently kindled. Parry was devoted to Sir Henry; when at last and to the common relief the firebrand had been got rid of and was sailing for home, Parry wrote, "It is the general wish of all descriptions of people here that he may return as Chief Justice. The natives actually adore him"—statements for which there is no other evidence.

Sir Henry, whom one suspects of some lack of mental balance, began by quarrelling violently and persistently with his superior the Chief Justice and by writing him abusive letters. He quarrelled with Lord Bentinck, he quarrelled with Petrie, the First in Council. Presently he went further and made an onslaught on the police enrolled by Government after the Vellore Mutiny; when the Police attempted to put down a riot, Sir Henry had the constables arrested and impeached the Superintendent. There were public scenes and public scandal; Madras had not enjoyed herself so much since the days of Governor Pigot's abduction.

Parry, however, remained in all things warmly and whole-heartedly pro-Gwillim; and when Parry's partisan ardour was aroused, it was formidable. Parry may have loved Sir Henry because he was Welsh; or it may have been because Sir Henry's most vigorous supporters happened to be Parry's friends. These were a barrister called Marsh and a pair of free merchants called Abbott and Roebuck, the latter of whom also held the post of Paymaster-General; of these we shall hear again. About the time when Parry broke away from Thomas Chase, Abbott and Roebuck had set up, together with Maitland, the firm which bore

their names; Parry was evidently leagued with them and they were for a time his evil angels. Their tradition carried back to the highly-coloured intrigues of Benfield, long since hopelessly in disgrace and suffering the fall of those who ride too ruthlessly; they inherited also Benfield's anti-Government and pro-Nawab sympathies. Abbott's motives in the Gwillim scandal were obvious enough; he had once been Mayor with the old Mayor's Court in his pocket; he was therefore ready to do anything in his power—such as vociferously backing up Sir Henry Gwillim—which was likely to annoy or embarrass Sir Thomas Strange whose Recorder's Court had supplanted and ousted his own. Roebuck, a quarrelsome man with a talent for mischief-making, presumably followed Abbott, and Parry followed them both; they were to hunt in couple again later. Meantime they remained marked down as a recalcitrant junta who would bear watching. Gwillim's own excesses frustrated their efforts on his behalf, but the unsatisfied antipathy they had developed and displayed against Lord William Bentinck and his advisers simmered quietly till it might boil over yet again in the days of Bentinck's successor Barlow.

The whole uproar was of course but another manifestation of the perennial faction between Government and non-Government which under various names—Nawab versus Company, Civil versus Military, Merchants versus Writers—had vexed Madras for generations. To Madras rows in high places and their resulting deadlocks were no novelty nor had been since the days when Aaron Baker found the City filled with a "spirit of factious madness" and when the Right-Hand Castes (not perhaps the people best entitled to throw this particular stone) declared to London, "This Towne is called the Towne without Government". The preposterous pantomime of Sir Henry Gwillim and the Supreme Court was merely the current chequer-board on which once again faction

had fallen into alignment; but once again—and this is the present point—Thomas Parry had ranged himself on the anti-Government side.

* * *

The dawn of 1807 brought no light in the prevailing gloom. It was another year of adverse seasons, and the procession of Madras business houses into the abyss of insolvency continued. Yet despite the disasters of the *Wellesleys*, both of which had now to be abandoned as losses, Parry stoutly weathered the storm; in October of 1806 he had been able to write proudly to Lawson in Bimlipatam, "I believe our credit is as good as that of any commercial House in the place". He could have written the same words a year later—though by that time they would not perhaps have been saying very much. The historian cannot but be struck by the almost exact parallel with 1906-07, exactly a century later when again, amid wreckage and casualties all round, Parry and Co. were able to survive and to meet their obligations.

At Parry's Castle things went no better than at Parry's Corner. Parry's own health was in a poor state; he was worn out by depression and ill fortune as much as by any specific ailment—and by that heart-sinking formula, "if only I had sold out ten years ago!" And it was now that the separation from the survivors of his family took place. As we have already seen, John, the boy, had been sent home ailing in 1805; he was still to Parry, in letters to his friends, "our poor little boy"—not the expression of a proud and happy father. In the following year the girl, Eliza, and her mother, Mrs. Parry, became seriously ill; they spent almost the whole of 1806 away from Thomas Parry in Pondicherry. One may ask in what respect the climate of Pondicherry, a hundred miles down coast, was so greatly superior to that of Madras, and the thought may suggest itself that if Eliza, as Parry himself says, was able to enjoy the "very

agreeable" society there and to "improve in French and music", she could not after all have been so very acutely ill. "At the point of death" in February, she was "entirely recovered" in May. Were there then other reasons behind the separation; was ill health, as it has been so often before and since, a convenient excuse to dismember a union of which one of the partners at least had wearied? It may be so; at all events the separation took place and Parry felt it deeply. When the *Dover Castle* had tacked her way out of Madras roads, he wrote to Thomas Chase, "I have not now one single inducement to keep me here".

He had one, however; the perennial hope that the tide would rise again, as tides do, and that he would yet recover those profits and savings which had twice been allowed to slip. As the *Dover Castle* dipped below the horizon he may well have sat down at his desk and reckoned up the irons in his fire. The tannery? Going well and in steady work on Government contracts; but the running expenses were still rising and the rates for Government contracts were not. The stocking factory? An idea only as yet, but there might be something in it; indeed, there might be a great deal in it—if the requisite machinery could but be landed in Madras. Madras had plenty of books on stocking looms, their nature and working; but no stocking looms themselves or the means of making any. Yet the loom only was required; all the rest—silk, cotton, cheap labour, a variety of legs demanding a variety of stockings—were on the spot. If a stocking loom could be got out from home—why, one might be able to fall in with Eliza's parting request and follow herself and her mother to old England before they knew where they were!

The tannery and the stockings. And there was one other thing. There was the indigo.

For some time past the names of two gentlemen, both in the South Arcot District, had been figuring

in the books of Parry Neill and Co.; Colonel Cullen at Pondicherry and Mr. Edward Campbell at "Chillumbrum" (Chidambaram). Both these gentlemen were interested in the cultivation of indigo but Mr. Campbell had been interested in sugar-cane as well. Both had drawn heavy advances from Thomas Parry and the contemplation of these advances and their hopes of repayment did not in any way ease Thomas Parry's already distracted mind. And now, as if this bleak year of 1807 had not enough to its discredit, Colonel Cullen must needs die suddenly on the tenth of its April, while breakfasting with a neighbour. He died owing Parry no less than Rs. 70,000 for which his works had been mortgaged as security; but on inspection the said works proved to be in a far from satisfactory state, nor did the indigo shipped home by Colonel Cullen live up to his descriptions of it either in quantity or quality. There was nothing for it, however, but to sell the "speculation" for what it would fetch—if anyone would buy it. "This is another unfortunate concern", wrote Parry (a little self-righteously) to Robert Campbell, Edward's brother, "in which I am involved in consequence of my endeavours to serve others"; he added that unless outside persons came to the rescue, "I shall be under the necessity of becoming Indigo Manufacturer on an extensive scale". But he thought the indigo business a "precarious concern" positing for its success not only unremitting diligence but local knowledge as well.

Precarious or no, an Indigo Manufacturer did Parry become. Not so much on account of Colonel Cullen, whose ill-managed concerns were disposed of so as to leave Parry himself saddled with only a third of them; but on account of that other South Arcot venturer, Edward Campbell. It will be convenient to take Campbell's story here, though its closure will carry us a little ahead of our dates. He was an Irishman from Ballyshannon and he enjoyed the

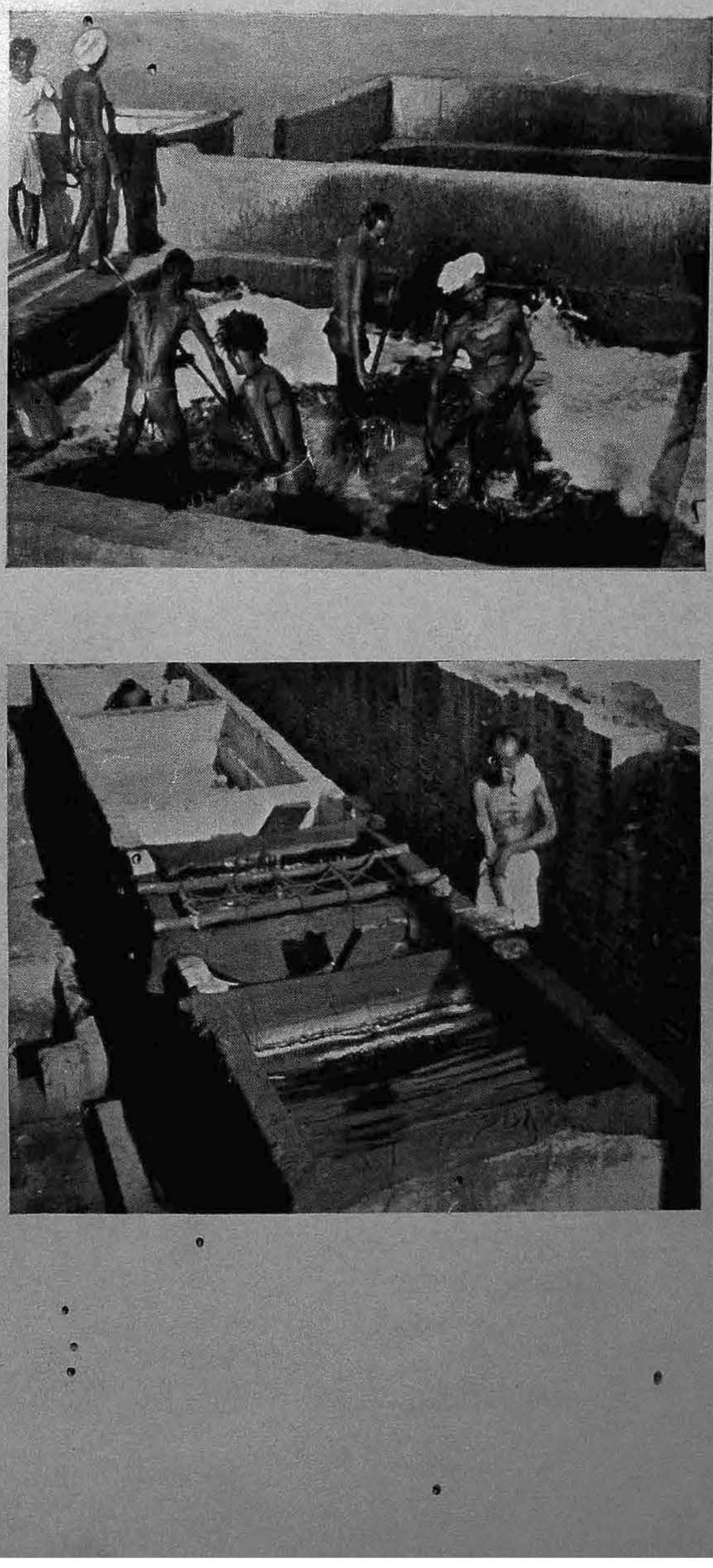
INDIGO MANUFACTURE

(1) Pressing the green leaves

(2) Filtering through cloth

"Precarious or no, an indigo manufacturer did Thomas Parry become."

(These photographs were actually taken in 1954 in one of the very few surviving indigo works in South India; but the process is as Parry, Col.Cullen and Sugar Campbell saw it.)



pleasantly modern-sounding nickname of "Sugar"; this he had earned by his devotion to a single idea. As Heath, a little later, was to be obsessed by South Indian iron, so Campbell was obsessed by South Indian sugar. He had been easily persuaded by the Company's Directors to come out to Madras in the late 1700's in order to try his hand at introducing West Indian methods of sugar-cane cultivation, which he was confident he could do. He failed at his first attempts in Coimbatore and Tanjore where the ryots would have nothing to do with West Indian methods; but in 1803 he was emboldened to lease from the Government nineteen villages in the Chidambaram area of South Arcot; he took them on a ten-year lease at the remarkably precise annual rental of 2,062 pagodas, 3 fanams and 25 cash. He was to pay all Government dues and allow half the produce of the canes to such ryots as were willing to try the experiment; nobody was to be compelled. Campbell struggled along with this rather unpromising concession for five years, but in 1808 he applied to the Government to be allowed to surrender his farm. This was partly because of harsh conditions in his lease but mainly because of the attitude of the local ryots who, at first "tolerably attentive", lapsed gradually into negligence (and non-payment of their dues) and finally became wholly "contumacious and unmanageable". Campbell's unflattering view of the South Arcot ryots of those distant days is not unsupported; a little earlier Collector Ravenshaw had written of them that they were "no novices at fraud but were hardened by long practice at deceit".

The Government having accepted the surrender of his farm, Sugar Campbell set out to make good his losses from what had so far been his second string—indigo; he hoped he might succeed in this, and so did Thomas Parry who had backed him substantially and had in fact done a good deal more for him than had his wealthy brother Robert in Vizag. The hour was

not bright for indigo; there was over-production and cut-throat competition and the Honourable Company had withdrawn all help in the way of loans or advances. In any case, before he could achieve very much, Campbell too succumbed to the rigours of life in South Arcot. Once more Thomas Parry saw himself faced by the gloomy prospect of outstanding advances covered only by the doubtful securities of works and crops. He grasped his nettle; on 24-8-1809 he wrote to Colvin, his Calcutta agent, " Mr. Campbell's works were put up on the 21st, but there were no bidders. I shall try them again on Saturday, when, I fear, I shall be under the necessity of purchasing them to cover our balance ". His fears were realised; on his behalf Christopher Breithaupt, who was to become a partner four years later, took over poor Campbell's " Chillumbrum " factories for the sum of 1,510 Star pagodas. This he did as Thomas Parry's personal agent; for the indigo works, like the tannery, were to be Parry's own property, as distinct from the firm's.

It has repeatedly been pointed out that the expansion of the British Raj in India was due much less to deliberate aggression than to pressure of circumstances, each forward step inexorably leading to another. It was so with Parry and Co. in South Arcot, their first up-country venture. Parry felt no urge towards indigo; he was forced into it willy-nilly because the indigo planters to whom he had made advances died owing him money. He lived to think better of the indigo; but of the sugar which had brought Edward Campbell into the country and thus initiated the entire chain of events he never thought anything at all. He could not know that it was in the sugar that the eventual fortunes of his firm would lie, nor could he foresee the tireless mills of Nellikuppam crushing their fourteen thousand tons of cane a week.

* * *

PARRY AND DARE

We have seen that in 1808 Parry dissolved his partnership with the impossible Neill and Gibbons; on the first day of 1809, the year which was to see him adding the indigo industry to that of tanning, he took into partnership his nephew David Pugh—a surname which was to figure in the firm's books for the next forty years. David Pugh was a black-haired chubby young Welshman, a son of Parry's much older sister Anne—she who, despite her extensive progeny of sixteen, lived to be four score years and six. Once more therefore the firm changed its style and became till 1818 (with the later addition of Breithaupt) Parry and Pugh. It was to be a period no less stormy and difficult than its predecessors.

Lord William Bentinck's misadventures, including the Vellore Mutiny and the antics of Sir Henry Gwillim, had culminated in his recall and Sir George Barlow, whom Wathen rather unflatteringly called "unostentatious but dignified", had been dragged down from his Governor-Generalship to clean up the mess. (Parry thought that Sir George would refuse to come, but his guess was wrong; Sir George appeared.) The new broom had every intention of sweeping exceedingly clean, but the nett result of his endeavours was no better than the stirring up of a fresh cloud of even more unsavoury dust.

This was by no means altogether Sir George's fault; the wisest of rulers would have had little chance in the lethal climate of feud and faction now prevailing in Madras. Laxity and corruption in high places had sapped and discredited authority; the Army was discontented and undisciplined; there were far too many men in charge of affairs whose first and last consideration was their own pocket. In the very nature of things Barlow was necessarily in for a stormy administration; at one time there was a proposal among the brighter spirits to deport him through the surf in a *masulah* boat. But if his methods were not of the soundest he was not primarily to blame for the

two outstanding scandals of his day—the so-called White Mutiny of the European officers and the Carnatic Debts. With the former of these Thomas Parry was not concerned and we need not follow its story; with the latter he was very deeply concerned indeed.

The tale of the Carnatic Debts is as long and involved as any tale of roguery can be; briefly and in an over-simplified form, it comes down to this. The last two Nawabs of the Carnatic, Wallajah and his son Umdat-ul-Umara, had spent money like water, caring nothing what promises they made or what or whose securities they pledged so long as that money was forthcoming. The provision of the funds to be thus squandered had long been an interesting sideline for the merchants of Madras; it was not supposed that the money advanced would ever be seen again, but if securities worth five times its value were pledged, one should be able, out of the exploitation of these, at least to double one's outlay. For form's sake, however, there had to be some sort of papers, and it was the habit of the Nawabs, father and son, to issue what they were pleased to call euphemistically bonds; these bonds formed a medium of speculation for many persons who had nothing to do with the original transaction. As Hodgson says, they "were freely bought and sold throughout South India, their values fluctuating in direct ratio to the Nawab's prospective ability to redeem them". If therefore Thomas Parry lent money to the Nawab and was given the revenues of Tinnevelly district as security, he had plenty of shareholders behind him, acknowledged and unacknowledged, to back him in ensuring that these revenues came in. And so with the scores of other speculators similarly engaged.

So far so bad. But it was not to be supposed that a body of gentlemen so nimble-witted as the staff at the Chepauk Palace would let so golden an opportunity slip by them. Forged Nawab's bonds began pre-

sently to beset South India like flying ants emerging after rain. The forged and the genuine were marketed together, sometimes innocently, sometimes not; nobody—or very few people indeed—could tell which was which.

When, in 1801 the Nawab Umdat-ul-Umara escaped the consequence of his ingenious but treasonable cipher correspondence with Tippu by conveniently dying, and his son Ali Hussein refused to guarantee the security of the British in India, the British Government took over the whole of the Carnatic—considerably to the annoyance of the Madras merchants who saw this El Dorado closed for ever. The Government were then faced by the question of the Nawabs' financial entanglements, their debts and their bonds; rather rashly they undertook to liquidate the one and redeem the other, setting aside for the purpose an annual sum of £120,000. Two things then became immediately obvious; firstly, that the debts were monstrous, amounting to some thirty million pounds, so that it would take two and a half centuries, at the agreed rate and without any interest, to pay them off; secondly, that the majority of these debts had no real existence and were based on bonds which were forged and fictitious. It being impossible for the Government—or for any ordinary person—to distinguish the genuine from the spurious, Commissioners were set up, two in London and two in Madras, with the onerous and formidable task of weeding out the fakes.

This is not the place in which to describe the ingenuity displayed by those in high station (many of whom were bond-holders and many of whom feared themselves to be *forged* bond-holders) to obstruct and thwart the Commissioners in their labours. We are concerned with Thomas Parry. Now, among the protagonists in the Chepauk Palace in the forged bonds industry two were outstanding—the Nawab's Sherishtadar Raya Reddi Rao and that sinister figure Avadhanam Paupiah whom we have already twice

encountered, once as the " Paupiah Braminy " of the infamous Hollonds and once as Thomas Parry's *dubash* working the Nawab's bond in Tinnevelly. His past history was thus not wholly blameless—though not perhaps so unrelievedly black as Scott has made it in *The Surgeon's Daughter*; his efforts with and for the Hollonds remained notorious even in an age with a blind eye to scandals, and he had been convicted of conspiracy in 1805 and awarded three years imprisonment with a fine of a thousand rupees. To Parry's honest heart, however, he was simply an old friend in trouble, an old associate attacked; early in 1807 Parry wrote to Robert Campbell that Paupiah was " by no means in a flourishing state and he is rapidly advancing towards that bourn from whence no traveller returns ". This last was substantially true; all the same Paupiah was still flourishing enough to possess a diamond which Parry was trying to sell through Campbell for a trifle of three and a half lakhs.

Again to over-simplify an extremely complex story, Paupiah said Raya Reddi Rao had forged a bond; Raya Reddi said Paupiah had. Here, then, were two outstanding figures in opposition; no more was needed in the current conditions in Madras to constitute an immediate faction; everyone rushed to take sides. To Paupiah's side rushed his old employer Thomas Parry; with him were his tried associates in the Gwillim campaign, Abbott and Roebuck—the latter regarded by the Government as "particularly active and violent". They were not wholly disinterested; Roebuck, who had made rather a specialty of the Carnatic Debts, held bonds for £350,000 and Parry himself was interested through Paupiah to the tune of £27,000. To say therefore, as Hodgson does, that Parry " defied the Government in the public interest " is perhaps to credit him, good man as he was, with a higher degree of altruism than the facts will altogether justify.

It is again impossible here to follow the feud in detail; one can but note in passing the extraordinary spectacle of the two Government Law Officers, Anstruther and Orme, constituting themselves into a Committee which largely arrogated to itself the Commissioners' functions; of the same two Officers importuning Government to appoint them as counsel for one of the principal accused—and succeeding; of the jury twice bringing in a unanimous verdict of guilty against Raya Reddi Rao and the presiding judge twice refusing to pass sentence. No wonder that the Governor in Council could write sorrowfully of "a very factious spirit which has been lately, from causes not difficult to be traced, evinced in this settlement". The part played by Parry and his friends—who had not a great deal of support among their fellow merchants—was simply to back Paupiah through and through, as the part played by others was to back Raya Reddi Rao. Up to a point they won; but only up to a point, because while their candidate had technically succeeded in Court, the victory could hardly be called conclusive so long as the Court refused to accept the verdict of the jury. Unfortunately, in January of 1809, Paupiah did in fact cross "that bourn from whence no traveller", and in the endeavour to carry on the good fight Parry and Roebuck turned their guns on the Commissioners themselves. The Commissioners, who had come from Bengal and were doubtless staggered by these Madras eccentricities, submitted a plaintive memorial to Government pointing out that if this sort of thing were allowed to continue "it will be impracticable for us to proceed with immediate effect or with any prospect of ultimate success in the discharge of our duties". This was commonsense too obvious to be ignored; the game was up; the Government fell upon Parry and his party in chastisement.

The penalties imposed were, considering the lengths to which the malcontents had gone, relatively

light and may be a measure of the Government's disbelief in everyone concerned and their refusal to take the whole affair very seriously. Abbott they could not touch, he having been already dismissed from every post he had ever held; but Roebuck, who still filled the office of Paymaster-General, was hustled off instanter to the factory at Vizagapatam. Maitland, the third partner in the firm, who was a Presidency Magistrate and had been helpful to his side in that capacity, was removed from office. With Parry it was easy to deal; the old order of banishment, never rescinded, was fished out of the drawer wherein it had been lying since 1800 and he was again told to embark by the earliest opportunity. Again he appealed at once—with what result is not apparent; perhaps this time the Directors in London were unable to formulate a reply before his death fifteen years later. Perhaps the order was not seriously pursued. Nor, however, was it cancelled; four years later, in 1813, Parry made an attempt to get it expunged from the records and was primly told that it was not the Governor's intention to enforce the order "so long as your conduct will continue to afford grounds for suspending" its execution.

The Commissioners, restored to relatively sane conditions, eventually found both Raya Reddi Rao's and Paupiah's bonds in the test case to be forgeries—as they did with ninety per cent of the total bonds in circulation, including those held by Roebuck and Parry. And as Raya Reddi Rao may be said to have finally squared the match by dying—perhaps by his own hand—in 1810, the excitement dwindled and died. For the time being, however, Parry had made Madras a little too hot to be comfortable and he slipped away to the comparative tranquillity of the Governor's house in Ceylon; as the current incumbent there was a Maitland, he may have been among friends and sympathisers. His departure practically coincided with the arrival in Madras of a man who

was to make some stir there and who was now joining as Assistant to Balfour and Baker, the Naval Victualling Controllers. His name was John William Dare.

* * *

Parry was by now, of course, quite accustomed to living in a city from which he had been banished; he did not stay many months away from Madras. He returned, however, to a community exhausted by the sensations of 1809; nothing had appeared to stimulate new business; the old accustomed factors and the endless European war continued to depress it. The tannery, that brilliant inspiration, was in full employment and the indigo works at least existed and paid their way. In the ledgers for 1812 a list of nine of them, all in South Arcot, is given with individual valuations which seem to have been written down somewhat from the purchase prices of 1807; the total value is just over a lakh. Some sort of sub-office or agency appears to have been already established at Cuddalore to handle piece-goods and indigo; if so, it was the first of Parry's branches. From Madras a certain amount of business was being done in Colombo arrack; piece-goods, wheat, crockery, braid, copper and camphor made up the rest of a miscellany.

In the yellowed and dusty pages of the ledgers which record these staid transactions there are one or two more diverting items. There are the "pumplemoses" or "pimple-noses" brought from Cuddalore which had a great reputation for these delicacies; there are the imported "kulediscopes" —a word which not unnaturally puzzled the Indian copyists and reappears, still disguised, as "kaleidescrops".. There is the curious entry under the personal account of Parry's young partner David Pugh—"Oct. 15 1813. To paid J. Griffiths for Gin, tea, Bandy whip and shaving brush purchased in the year 1811 as per bill, Pags. 18." What strange story lay behind this curiously miscellaneous purchase and

why did Mr. Griffiths have to wait two years for his money? And the historian pauses to contemplate the picture conjured up by the entry, "July 20th 1808. To paid cooly brought the tyger's cub, 18 fanams". There was another "tyger" in 1826 which cost Rs. 36 in boat hire to get it on board the *General Palmer*, and yet another one in 1833. "Young elephants" were also handled—at least three of them. Nor were these the last of Parry's zoological ventures; long afterwards, in 1952, a final tiger—or rather tigress—was purchased and exported by the Calcutta office for Mr. Bertram Mills. Except that she was differently spelt and travelled by air instead of by the *General Palmer*, she probably did not differ noticeably from her distant predecessors.

Between 1809 and 1813 the years ran on in what must have seemed, after the recent nightmare, an almost preternatural peace. As if to show that they were prepared to bury the hatchet, the Government appointed Parry (who was still theoretically banished!) to the Committee of the Native Poor Fund and Native Infirmary. It was certainly a forgiving act on their part; on the other hand they might have searched far before they found a more suitable man. Nobody can skim through Parry's personal ledgers without realising the kindness of his heart; he subscribed to every cause and gave constantly to this unfortunate or that. And suitable men for such offices were few; Lord Abercromby, appointing Parry to another post a year or two later, was to lament "the very limited number of competent gentlemen not in the service of the Honourable Company". Yet, though Parry was charitable, he did not stint himself at home; his house expenses over a five-year period averaged eight hundred to twelve hundred rupees a month, the servants' wages accounting for three hundred and fifty and the cook's book for a hundred and seventy-five. This, if contemporary authority is to be believed, was moderate enough; many were spending

anything from two thousand pounds a year to ten.

By 1813 the dulness of business and the burden of his failing health seem to have reduced Parry to despondency; unlike himself, he played for safety and followed his former partner Lane into the post of Cashier to the Government Bank. Though the Government Bank was really more of a Treasury than a Bank, this was a responsible and remunerative post; Sir George Barlow, indulgent as he may have been in the minor matter of the Native Poor Fund Committee, would hardly have risen to it in view of what he had suffered at Parry's hands in the days of the Carnatic Debts. But Sir George had gone and Lord Abercromby reigned newly in his stead and was "convinced" (no doubt on trustworthy recommendation) of Parry's integrity and abilities. The appointment was a five-year one and under Clive's Law meant that Parry must relinquish his personal connection with his business; he therefore handed over the firm to David Pugh and brought in that Breithaupt who had been his underling at "Chillumbrum". Breithaupt came of a powerful family of Danish missionaries long connected with Madras and South Arcot where he had always been interested in indigo. The firm was further strengthened from 1815 onwards by the enrolling of Joseph Pugh, David's brother, as an Assistant.

The year 1813, besides the Bank appointment, was signalised by two occurrences which should have cheered Parry's drooping spirits. The first of these was his recovery, in the form of 6% Government bonds, of all his back pay so long owed him for his Captaincy under the Nawab; it amounted to the agreeable sum of three quarters of a lakh and a pleasing circumstance, as Hodgson notes, was the fact that it was passed for payment by Parry's old partner George Garrow who had now risen to the dizzy heights of the Accountant-Generalship. A less pleasing circumstance is that

these arrears could have been disbursed much sooner but for the spiteful obstructiveness of Fort St. George.

The second enheartening feature of 1813, not only for Parry but for all men of business, was the Company's Charter, renewed now after the regular twenty years interval. At long last the Company's monopoly of the India-England trade was abolished—a tremendous advance on that miserable 3,000 feet of cargo space which was all the merchants had screwed out of the renewal of 1793. It was an auspicious step towards the next revision, that of 1833, when the Company as a trader was to vanish altogether from history and was to confine itself, for the remaining quarter-century of its life, to administrative functions only. True, the advantages of the new 1813 Charter were not immediate; London might decree but Fort St. George died hard, buying up Indian goods at fantastic prices in order to keep the free merchants out of the trade that London had designed for them. Naturally the Company's losses were equally fantastic but—who cared? Let them be added to that monstrous Company's Debt which one day, as everybody knew, the taxpayer would groaningly assume. So the Company fought to the last; it died hard. But—it was dying.

* * *

In 1818 Parry's five years of peaceful officialdom at the Bank came to an end and he returned—one hopes gleefully—to his Corner, and to Messrs. Parry, Pugh and Breithaupt. What precisely happened when he arrived there is not very clear; but there must have been some serious difference of opinion, for the partnership, despite the cement of its family ties, immediately split up. Parry can hardly have accused his young partners of mismanagement because in the last year of his Bank absence they had been able to show a substantial profit of eighty-six thousand rupees. Whatever the reason, David Pugh

and Breithaupt now broke with Parry and went on their way as a separate entity. But two years later, David Pugh, who had apparently wearied of business, retired to his native Wales and his short-lived firm passed out of existence. Joseph Pugh, who remained with Parry as an Assistant, reaped the reward of a partnership five years later. He held it for nearly twenty years.

In the meantime Parry, bereft of his colleagues, had taken a step that made history—that may indeed have made the difference between his firm surviving his death or perishing with it. He took in as partner that John William Dare whom we saw arriving in Madras as Assistant to the Naval Victualling Controllers eight years earlier. It seems possible that the inclusion of Dare may have been the cause of rather than the sequel to the secession of Pugh and Breithaupt; Parry may have had his eye on Dare for some time; we may imagine him saying to his juniors, "I'm bringing in this man; he must have a third, I must have a third; that leaves you with a sixth each" —and Pugh and Breithaupt saying "No, thank you!" This is conjecture; what is certain is that Dare's advent to the Board was a turning-point. Dare was a rougher tougher type than Parry or any of his kin, with a firmer hand on clients and patrons alike. Perhaps he was what the business needed; Parry's heart was gold but the hearts of his debtors were quite frequently iron; and by 1818 Parry was a sick and weary man. On the other hand Parry had lived through the difficult years and had carried the business through times when diplomacy was a sine qua non; the waters into which Dare brought his ship were infinitely more placid and required therefore a less liberal application of oil.

Results at any rate were shown. By the terms of the partnership each component brought into the firm a capital of half a lakh but within a year this had been quadrupled. Leaving out altogether Parry's personal profits from his indigo and his tannery

(which must between them have amounted to well over half a lakh) profits began to run at the rate of two and a half lakhs annually and upwards. Parry was able to make his nephew and assistant Joseph Pugh a present of a lakh, and at the end of 1822 his own private balance was close upon three hundred thousand rupees. When, in 1823, Pugh was given a partnership, Parry was able to sit back at last and rest. His share of the profits dropped by fifty per cent; but the snug little fortune was in his pocket again.

Dare's direct share in these improvements was, as would be expected from his previous connections, mainly nautical. He brought in a large and valuable business with His Majesty's ships; the accounts of a dozen men-o'-war and the messes of several regiments begin to figure in the ledgers, together with miscellaneous naval supplies of all sorts; the Madras agency for the Naval Commissioners at Trincomalee was well worth having. The old business of banking was still, of course, the mainstay of the firm—Dare taking a line with defaulters which must have unpleasantly surprised those accustomed to the good-hearted patience of Parry; but as the years went on, its activities turned more and more towards the sea. Parry, who had sworn in 1807 that he would never again be a shipowner, now found himself—and naturally, for one should never tempt fate by such utterances—becoming one on a quite considerable scale.

The first of these ventures was a 510-ton vessel called the *General Palmer* (an ominous name, perhaps, in view of the fate of a previous *General*); it was followed by a larger ship the *Golconda* for whose passenger accommodation the firm claimed "great superiority" which made their charges "very reasonable". The accommodation had no doubt improved to some extent since Parry made his maiden voyage in 1788 but in the nature of things it could not have improved very much, and the price of passages had certainly not fallen. The *Golconda's* cabins ranged from 3,500

to 4,500 rupees but these were relatively cheap; half the "great cabin" on a larger ship was 7,000 and half the round-house 10,000. Grandees, of course, could pay much more; between cabin, clothes and cabin furniture Hickey's homeward passage in 1808 cost him a quarter of a lakh, and when Elliot retired as Governor of Madras he took, for himself and his family, six cabins on the *Golconda* at an inclusive charge of no less than £3,000. (Seventeen years later, his successor Sir Frederick Adam was content to pay Rs. 5,000 for himself and his wife on the *Lady Flora*, plus Rs. 600 demurrage for delaying her departure for two days.) It must of course be borne in mind that these charges covered lodging and board of at least a sort for a period of five or six months; but even at that, there should have been a nice profit for the ship-owners.

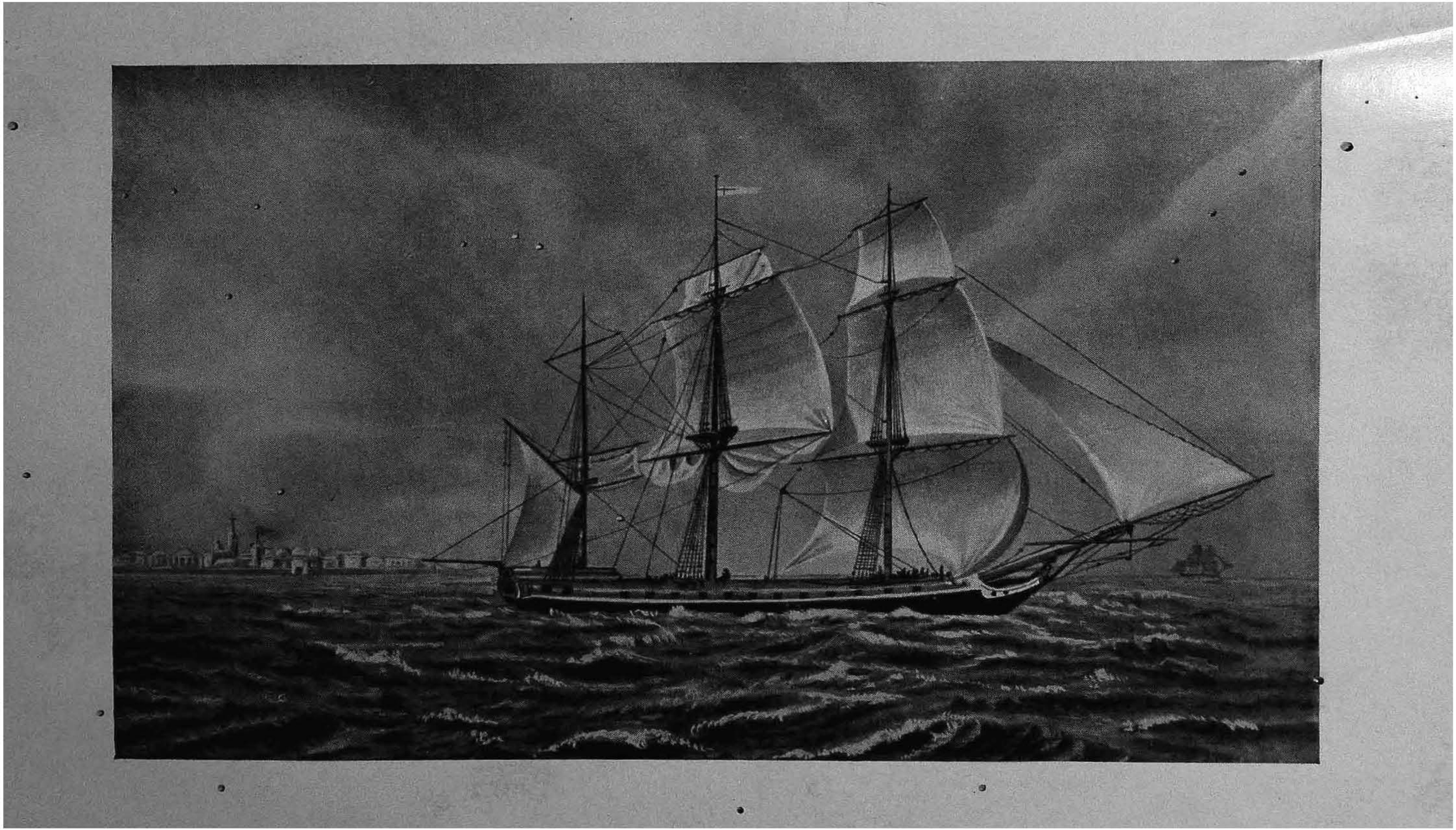
But the carriage of passengers however exalted was by no means the end of Parry and Dare's maritime activities. For fifteen years before the new partnership a name had been appearing regularly in Parry's books—that of Francis Schuler. Schuler was a Dane and a shipwright of particular skill who lived and worked in Cochin and was tough enough to treat his chronic asthma by smoking stramonium leaves—i.e. dhatura; this drastic treatment seems to have done him no harm for he lived to be eighty-five. Shortly after 1819 Schuler was given an Admiralty contract for five ships of war—three frigates, a "tank-ship" (presumably a water-carrier) and a schooner. It is uncertain whether Parry and Dare were in direct partnership with Schuler in this venture or whether, as representing the Commissioners at Trincomalee, they merely acted as agents; at any rate they were closely interested. According to T. W. Venn in *Malabar-Cochin: Palms and Pageants* the three frigates were *Alligator*, *Samarang* and *Termagant*; they ran to about 500 tons each and carried twenty-eight guns. Hodgson has identified the "tank-ship" as H.M.S.

Ganges; from Parry and Dare's correspondence with Schuler the schooner was H.M.S. *Cochin*. All five vessels were completed to the Admiralty's satisfaction. Schuler was assisted, from 1819 onwards, by a master-shipwright called Edye who, with typical British independence, refused to speak a word of any Indian language. When Col. Digby Mackworth visited Schuler's yards in 1821, he met this stalwart; "we admired", he says, "we could not help admiring Mr. E's genius and application, but his profane and light conversation obliged us to quit him sooner than we could have wished and spoiled the pleasure we should otherwise have derived from the society of so intelligent a man". Writers of higher repute than the Colonel have often failed to produce so clear a vignette with so much economy of words.

Despite the Company's Charter of 1813 it was still difficult to fill a ship with cargo from Madras to England; Parry and Dare fell back on the established practice of carrying time-expired, invalid and insane soldiers; they were prepared to embark any number above a hundred and fifty in their *General Palmer* at a flat rate of £25 a head inclusive of everything or £18 a head if the Company fed and watered them. On one voyage they did eventually embark (in addition, be it noted, to the normal crew and cabin passengers) a hundred and eighteen invalids and time-expireds, one ex-convict, one ex-deserter, thirteen women and five children. These figures do away with the supposition, commonly held in Britain at the time, that no soldier sent out to Indian service ever survived to come home—presuming, that is, that these close-packed repatriates *did* in fact survive their dreadful voyage. Recalling that the tonnage of the *General Palmer* was only 510 and that the passage probably lasted six months, one feels inclined to doubt whether all of them did, and to suspect that the numbers of the insane may have been augmented by the time Britain was sighted.

AN 18TH CENTURY INDIAMAN OFF FORT ST. GEORGE

"The sea which constantly rolls impetuously on the shore more here than at any other place on the Coast of Choromondel."



Parry himself could now have gone home at pleasure; he might with advantage have recalled Wellington's farewell words to Madras—"I have served as long in India as any man ought who can serve anywhere else". On the contrary, however, he pledged a further stake to the country by taking into his household that Mary Ann Carr for whom, in his will, he provided a life income of seventy rupees a month. Not only that, but he begat upon her two sons—Thomas William Parry (1821) and Edward Moorat Parry (1823); he had them both baptised and given his own name with all due rites in St. Mary's Church, but alas! he also had to bury them both there in infancy. Mary Ann Carr herself outlived her benefactor by nearly twenty years; she married one James Almes (or Alms) and had issue. She was not, however, the last surviving Parry pensioner; this was "Chillie, a native woman" (clearly a corruption of the Tamil *selli* which may be translated "little pet") who was perhaps originally taken into service on Mary Ann's account. Under the will "Chillie" is to draw five rupees a month—and draw it she did for half a century till her death in 1873. It seems a sad pity that not a single one of Parry's own offspring, legitimate or otherwise, could show a similar tenacity of life.

* * *

Comforted by Mary Ann Carr and quietly drawing his quarter share of the firm's profits (he had come down to a quarter since the elevation of Joseph Pugh) Parry might well have seemed settled in Madras indefinitely. But in the cold weather of 1822-23 his health took another alarming turn for the worse; with some reluctance, we may well believe, he realised that the hour of his dissolution from Madras and all it had meant to him for thirty-five years was at hand. Owing to the normal monsoon restrictions, no homeward sailing could be made till the October fleet; on this Parry booked his passage and in March of 1823, while Edward Moorat Parry was still in the womb, he took

the prudent precaution of making his will. The document is cited in full by Hodgson in *Thomas Parry*; it covers many pages because Parry remembered everybody—his wife, his nephews and nieces in Wales, his servants (butler Ramaswamy got Rs. 2,000 and Abragooloo Naick Rs. 3,500). Those enigmatic figures the Gibson children were not forgotten. The tannery—Parry's own private property, be it remembered—went to Joseph Pugh, but one-third of the annual proceeds to be paid to the widow of Peter Bower, Parry's technical superintendent there. (Bower —Bauer—was a German from Batavia.) Besides all these, there are a number of oddities mostly connected with the indigo concerns in South Arcot—Mrs. Weehedie of Tranquebar, Miss Bronnikam of Pondicherry, the son of Babkismah Candy. Dare and the two Pughs to be executors.

This rounded everything off nicely. But when October came, either Parry's health was in fact improved or he persuaded himself that it was so or he could not face abandoning Madras after all. Like all of us, he had said in moments of heat that he hated the place; like all of us, he could hardly bring himself to leave it. In the end, he revoked his decision and cancelled his passage. The news caused alarm and dismay among "the several respectable Hindu inhabitants of Madras". What on earth were they to do with the Gold Cup they had prepared for presentation to him on his departure from their country?

Decision was for some time deferred. But the Cup had been made, it had even been inscribed; there was really nothing to be done but to hand it over according to programme. This was in fact done with all due formalities on the 1st of Feburary 1824. The inscription on the Cup is worth quotation. It ran as follows: "From the several respectable Hindu Inhabitants of Madras to Thomas Parry Esq., of the same place, merchant, as a mark of their great esteem

and respect for the support and patronage at all times received by them during his several years residence in India, through his natural humanity and benevolence to assist as much as is in his power the poor, distressed, and helpless persons among the community". Every word of this was true. So, making allowance for the slight fulsomeness common to such occasions, was the address read out at the presentation ceremony. The " respectable Hindu Inhabitants " offered their warmest thanks for Parry's esteem and regard " and for your constantly allowing a great part of your valuable time in hearing, complying and advising on the several requests of the natives of this country. The friendship and kindness which have marked your personal acts during a protracted career of thirty-six years, and the love you have cherished for us, are entitled to our warmest gratitude and acknowledgment ". Parry replied in the terms in which a thousand similar replies have been couched in similar circumstances. In the days when he was applying for a grant of land at Trincomalee he had written of the natives of Ceylon what was probably, in his heart of hearts, his opinion of the natives of Madras: " From the natives, nothing can be expected. They are too much wedded to their old customs and prejudices to attempt anything by way of experiment, although their fondness for money leads them to embark on any undertaking which from observation and experience they are satisfied will be productive of gain ". He may have subscribed also to the corroborative finding of the Committee of Police in 1797— " the Inhabitants of Madras, down to the lowest orders, are not to be surpassed in Acuteness at any call of Interest ". These sentiments (or the even harder things said at other times) found no place on the happy occasion of the Gold Cup presentation. And when Parry declared in his reply " on my arrival, it was my first wish to acquire the goodwill of my native fellow subjects, amongst whom and with whom,

I may with truth say, I was to live. Since that time my best endeavours have unceasingly been directed not only to obtain, but to secure an object which I had so much at heart", his tongue was not in his cheek and he simply enunciated a principle he had always followed. More than that—he enunciated what had been in the past and was to be for all the future a directive for his firm. From first to last the attitude of Parry and Company towards the Indian, hard tried though they sometimes were by him, has been that of at least a would-be partner and friend.

This is a pleasant note and a happy scene with which to close Thomas Parry's career. For close his career it practically did. Six months later, in the sticky heat of the East coast August, he went to South Arcot to visit his indigo concerns, taking with him that little ten-year-old George Parry Gibson whose precise relationship to Parry has been the cause of so much speculation. In the dreary flats of Porto Novo, beside the Vellar river, they were both smitten by cholera which, as so often in those days, ran its lethal course within twenty-four hours. Both Parry and the boy died. Their bodies were taken to Christ Church at Cuddalore and there they lie together to this day. There is something more appropriate to the reserved and gentle Thomas Parry in that plain stone in the unpretentious church than in Chantry's flamboyant tablet in the Madras Cathedral with its odd-looking Hindu mourner and its pretentiously balanced legend. "In him were happily blended those qualities which elevate and adorn the human character, whether in the exercise of liberal and enlightened principles, or in the practice of the social virtues to which his urbanity and extensive attainments gave a grace and attraction beyond the ordinary reach of man".

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PARRY AND DARE

From 1824 onwards John William Dare was in the saddle at Parry's Corner in earnest; but as this had long been the case *de facto*, the transfer to *de jure* caused by Parry's death probably made little outward change. For the next fourteen years Dare's was to be the controlling hand on the reins. Since Joseph Pugh had been taken into partnership the firm had been known as Parry Dare " and Co " and remained so known till Dare's death in 1838. Pugh, dark and chubby like most of his family, constituted the " Co " for most of this period; with the exception of young Cosmo Howard, taken in for a brief interval between 1836 and 1838, the only other partners in this fourteen year stretch were the ill-fated Jollie brothers, J.H. and J.M., who died before they could make any very significant mark. It was the former who brought in the North Arcot indigo factories and who stimulated the firm's interest in coffee; when he died at Cuddalore in 1829 and was buried within a few paces of Parry, his brother, J.M., took his place. But for practical purposes Parry Dare and Co. was Dare from 1825 (and indeed before it) to 1838.

That the firm got a much-needed shaking-up under Dare can hardly be questioned. Parry, never sparing himself, had been prone to spare others; knowing his own integrity, he had expected to meet its counterpart in those with whom he dealt. One can hardly see John William Dare putting up patiently with the incompetence of Colonel Cullen; nor would he have been duped by that worthy pair Captains Grant and Dalrymple. Dare was quite possibly *suaviter in re*; he was certainly *fortiter in modo*. As an illustration of the contrasting methods of the old and the new regime, one can hardly do better than quote the simultaneous letters of the partners to E. R. Hargrave, a Civilian who had got himself into difficulties and was unsatisfactory in his payments. Dare:—" Dear Sir..... We feel ourselves called upon,

to state in the most unequivocal manner, that, as we require funds to make remittances to carry on our mercantile operations it is not convenient to delay longer the adjustment of our claim against you and we therefore trust you will consider this quite conclusive..... Had a thought existed in our minds that this claim would have remained unliquidated we should certainly never have taken upon ourselves the payment of your bills, Your faithful servants." Parry:—"My dear Hargrave, The fact is we really want money, and I must tell you that although I have shown your letter to Dare he is determined that if the matter is not adjusted by the 5th, to put it into the hands of Mr. Teed. You must admit that in this business we could not be helpful..... Yours very truly".

Brusque as Dare could be on paper, he was quite probably a genial boss in the office; the staff were not at any rate without aids to good-humour. Bass's and Barclay's beer flowed lavishly, brandy was laid in by the five and six dozen, claret and sherry went without saying. Had Dare been alive in 1841, one can hardly believe that "5 bottles of champaign, slightly ullaged" would have found their way into the tiffin-room even at the bargain price of ten rupees a dozen; the place for "ullaged champaign", Dare would have thought, was Kelly's Drain.

If, under Dare, business lacked its former *politesse*, it ran on familiar lines. The old staples continued; the banking constituents, each with his separate account; the insurance; the naval supplies; the freight and passenger agencies. Piece-goods and indigo bulked most notably among the exports, supplemented by spices and coffee. Imports in the main were mixed liquors and European canvas and rope—presumably for the Navy. On Parry's death his indigo concerns became the property of the firm, which now embraced not only the original areas in South Arcot but those in the Vellore region brought in by J. H. Jollie; the

factories and godowns in the latter are valued in 1832 at ninety-five thousand rupees. The fate of the San Thome tannery is obscure; under Parry's will it passed to Joseph Pugh but it disappears from the ledgers, general or particular; perhaps Pugh, not fancying himself as a tanner, disposed of it.

In the meantime, in the background, Madras was changing again; she was beginning slowly to assume the appearance she was to wear for the next half century. A citizen of the 1830's, surveying her decorous and almost spinsterish habit, would have been hard put to it to believe that within a past of only thirty years she had known such bizarre figures as Avadhanam Paupiah, Paul Benfield and Sir Henry Gwillim. Since 1816 she had possessed a Cathedral and since 1821 a Kirk; one saw the dawn glimmer of that educational sunburst that was to dazzle the next decade under the progressive Elphinstone; meanwhile there was a Medical School and the General Assembly's School of John Anderson which was to blossom into the Christian College. There was, since 1832, a Club, supplanting to some extent that pleasant little refuge on the Ennore backwater where, of a weekend, "a party of gentlemen" would repair to eat fish, play cards and navigate those safe and placid waters. At the auction rooms of the Franck brothers cricket bats and balls were on sale.

Yet although Madras was coming to take her civic obligations very seriously, she was still eminently a gay city. Dances, concerts and race-meetings crowded the social calendar; daily or nightly, in the beautiful houses that were now filling the interstellar spaces of the Choultry Plain, one hostess or another gave a "roof entertainment" under awnings—a form of pastime their successors were foolish enough to abandon. These jollities had of course been going on for the last fifty years and were no novelty; yet if we are to believe the contemporary prints, the social values were shifting—for instance in the matrimonial market.

PARRY'S OF MADRAS

When Thomas Parry came out, English women in Madras were few—one perhaps to every ten adult males—and anything that looked remotely like a potential bride was snapped up before she was well through the surf. By the 1830's it was otherwise; the market everywhere was glutted. "A batch of new arrivals", says the *Asiatic Journal* of 1838, "are like the hams and cheeses imported by the same vessels. They will not keep to another season. If they do not meet with a suitable match soon after they have lighted on Indian soil they must lower their hopes from the delightful dreams of a rapid fortune, shining liveries in Portland place and a mansion and park in Hampshire —hopes which a union with a civilian of rank can only realise—to some Lieutenant Colonel with a liver perforated like a sieve or colon almost brought to a full stop". One can imagine these ladies, conscious of fading charms and opportunities alike, becoming desperate; perhaps it was now that the "maneater", that terror of the eligible Club *parti* of later generations, first sharpened her claws.

But—doubtless stimulated by this notable increase in the female population—civilisation in Madras was striding vigorously forward, casting the neat trappings of modernity over that once rustic and perhaps ridiculous figure. Punkahs flapped in the hot and languid air, spilling assorted insects from their frills—though hookahs still reeked below them. Ice could be bought—by subscribers—for two annas a pound. Perhaps that skilled ex-warrior Corselus still lingered in what Wathen called "Persewachum" and painted an occasional miniature for forty guineas. Certainly in Mount Road Mrs. Sayer was regularly securing for her patrons "monthly importations of articles of Millinery etc. consisting of choice selections from the London and Parisian Market".

Nor were Messrs. Parry and Dare left out of the race. Under the date 19-7-1819 appeared in their ledgers the proud entry—"By recd from Messrs.

Binny & Co for a water closet with a Mahogany case and with lead pipes, per bill Pags. 50 ". And in 1820 the same indispensable was fitted with " pumps ". If this object was what it seems to have been, it was far far in advance of its day and naturally, by the normal laws of evolution, it failed to survive.

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Although in the main the trade of 1824 to 1838 was a case of *plus ça change* there were one or two developments with which, not always to their advantage, Parry and Co. were to be concerned for some time to come.

The first of these was coffee. This was still in the stage of being a recent importation at which the cautious looked askance—though Parry's were importing, and presumably selling, a good deal of "Mocha" from "Muscat, Bussorah and Bushier". The progressive Dr. Roxburgh had forty young bushes "flowering well" at Samalkot as far back as 1788 and indeed the plant had been more or less successfully grown for some time in the Bababudan Hills in Mysore; soldiers drank the beverage at the siege of Seringapatam in 1799. In the same year the East India Company established Anjarakandi Brown (so called from the name of his estate) near Tellicherry. Twenty-five years later Anjarakandi Brown was able to give some plants to Captain Bevan in charge of a detachment of troops at Manantoddy which began by doing very well but eventually perished from mishandling and neglect. It was John Hart Jollie, one of the two brothers already mentioned, who most probably started the plantations in the Chickmagallur district of Mysore; there was also embryo coffee on the Shevaroys. Meanwhile the gardens on the Bababudan Hills had become the monopoly of the Mysore Durbar whose method was to share the crop fifty-fifty with the local cultivators; in 1823 Parry and Co. took their first real step in the industry (in

which they were never to prosper very greatly) by leasing the Durbar's half share of the Bababudan produce for ten years for an annual sum of Rs. 4,270. J. H. Jollie brought his coffee interests and enthusiasms to Parry's Corner and the commodity began to figure more frequently in the ledgers. And some time between 1830 and 1840 two members of Parry Dare and Co's staff (one of whom was probably David Pugh Junior who had recently joined the firm as an Assistant and who is recorded as having journeyed to " Condapore and back on account of the Coffee concern " in 1834) were sufficiently impressed by the derelict Bevan estates in the Manantoddy region to consider the possibilities of development; with the Pugh estate—sometimes mis-spelt Pew—they installed Parry's in the first of those Wynaad Lands which were to cause so many headaches in the future.

The next item to show some signs of life was cotton. Cotton had developed into a feverish race between the East India Company and the United States of America in which the Company, hampered by the unintelligent and indeed dishonest methods of their pickers and the lack of a suitable long-stapled variety, were rapidly falling behind. The concentration of their efforts at Tinnevelly was not achieved until 1838 but Parry's ledgers before that date show a fair amount of dealing in the commodity, in 1823 and 1832-1835 especially; in the latter year shipments were made to London via Bombay to the total value of £3,000.

Sugar appears *passim* though not in any very considerable quantities. It would seem that most of it came from North India rather than South.

Lastly, in the year 1836, there occurs for the first time in Parry & Company's books the Indian Iron and Steel Company. This concern centred round the much discussed Iron Works at Porto Novo. It was the child of J. M. Heath, a Civil Servant who had the misfortune to be an enthusiast and in due course

paid the penalty. Heath was convinced that good bar iron from the Salem ores could be made in India and that Porto Novo, whither these ores could be basket-boated for part of their journey down the Vellar river, was the place to make it. By 1824 he had resigned from the Civil Service in favour of South Indian iron and was importuning the powers for concessions; he had the powerful backing of the great "Mandava Rishi", Sir Thomas Munro, and his enthusiasm and his persuasiveness are indicated by the fact that he succeeded in inducing the Government of Madras to lend him successive sums which by 1835 amounted to the substantial total of nearly Rs. 600,000. Rs. 360,000 of this was guaranteed by a body of Madras businessmen calling themselves the Porto Novo Steel and Iron Company and it was presumably for this body that Parry and Company eventually became agents. The Company's debut was unhappy; it ran into the depression of the 1830's and almost at once it began asking for remission of interest and royalties. George Garrow, Parry's former partner, reappears yet again at the head of an inspecting committee sent down to report on the iron works; they recommended (as Parry had done in the case of Sugar Campbell and for the same reasons) that all possible remissions should be allowed and the works given their chance, the alternative being to lose everything so far committed. These recommendations were approved, but still the works did not pay and by 1844 they had reached such a low ebb that they were practically closed. A new firm, Alexander Fletcher, were then given a five-year chance by the East India Company Directors in order to try an improved principle of manufacture; the principle may have been improved, the product was not. It was still a time of financial difficulty and depression and the Limited Liability Company proposed as a remedy could not be got together. In 1850 the old Company was, however, wound up and a new Com-

pany, the East Indian Iron Company with a capital of £400,000, was formed to take over the industry. For a time there was new vigour and new hope but in the end the old enemies of the Porto Novo Iron—freight difficulties and the flaws and inadequacies in the product—prevailed. Final winding-up was suggested in 1863 and begun in 1867. The relics of the Iron Works at Porto Novo (never worth anyone's while to carry away) may still be seen on the banks of that Vellar river which was one of the last sights on which Thomas Parry's eyes rested; while at Dare House is preserved the door of the old Silver Godown, cast at Porto Novo in 1837—a testimony to Parry's practical support of their clients.

The story of the East Indian Iron has again carried us forward in advance of our dates. To return to Madras in 1836; in that year, on the 29th of September, at a "largely attended meeting" at Binny's in Armenian Street, the Madras Chamber of Commerce was founded, anticipating the Trades Association by exactly twenty years. It was two years behind the Calcutta Chamber, a week behind Bombay and three years ahead of Colombo. The purpose of the institution, perhaps stimulated by the abolition of the Company's monopoly in 1833, was to enable the merchants of Madras to speak with one voice on subjects concerning them and this object it subsequently achieved with remarkable success. At the meeting of 1836, J. A. Arbuthnot was elected first Chairman but both Dare and Joseph Pugh were made members of the Committee. The Governor Sir Frederick Adam, while giving the new Chamber his blessing, expressed dissatisfaction at the absence of the "principal native merchants"; the Chamber was able to reply that only two of these gentlemen had expressed a wish to be admitted and these *had* been admitted. In 1936 in the year of the Chamber's centenary there were still, by a curious coincidence, only two Indian members; as the Centenary Handbook remarks, more appositely than

grammatically, " *autre temps, autre noms* ". In the next year, 1837, Parry's came into their own; Dare became Chairman, setting a fashion which his successors were to follow. In the course of the Chamber's life between 1836 and 1954 sixteen of Parry's partners or Directors have filled the Chair—several of them on more than one occasion, so that the total of their terms of office accounts for thirty-seven out of those hundred and eighteen years. Roughly speaking, one in every three of the Chamber's Chairmen has come from Parry's.

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In the year following that in which the Madras Chamber of Commerce was founded there occurred an international event which has generally been taken as marking the close of one era and the opening of another; Queen Victoria ascended the throne of Britain. At the time the importance of this Rubicon may not of course have been so well appreciated, and in Madras the doings at Westminster may well have been overshadowed by the brilliant arrival of the new Governor Lord Elphinstone. But the historian of today, looking backward, can hardly avoid finding in Victoria's accession an occasion for taking stock.

At that epochal moment, Parry and Company, under a variety of styles, had been running for just under half a century. The firm had seen many of its early companions and competitors fall by the wayside; it had seen others, ambitious and capable, springing up in their place. It could give itself the comforting assurance that it had survived and more than survived; it was doing as well as—perhaps better than—at any period in its history. Its progress no doubt had not been steady, it had not run on a level or on an even upward slope; there had been troughs and crests. It was a case of—up; down; up; down; up. There had been the opening successes in the days of Chase and the Third Mysore War; the corresponding droop initiated by the disappointing year 1793; the bold recovery

effected by Parry single-handed after his return from the Nawab's service; the black disasters of 1806 and 1807; the final and steady pick-up from the peace that followed Waterloo. If the firm's operations had not been on any spectacular scale, they were as notable as those of any firm in South India; if failures had been mixed in almost equal proportion with successes, Parry's had kept on its feet through appallingly difficult times and cruelly frustrating conditions of trade. And against its integrity or the integrity of its partners —except perhaps in the case of that flutter in the Carnatic Debts—nobody had ever been able to say a word.

Victoria's accession gives opportunity also to review the extraordinary changes that had taken place in the geographical entity known as the Presidency of Madras in the fifty years since Thomas Parry had first set foot in it. They were cataclysmic. In 1788 the "Presidency" had been synonymous for practical purposes with Fort St. George; true, the Northern Circars—Ganjam, Vizag, Godavari and Kistna—were also Company's territory but they were separated from the base by hundreds of miles of almost impassible Carnatic. By 1793 Salem and the West Coast had been added; by 1799 Tanjore and what is now called Rayalaseema. And in 1801, by the annexation of the Carnatic, all the gaps were filled; South India which, fourteen years earlier, might have been coloured green on the map with a small spot of red had now become one solid sea of scarlet. These were exciting times in which to live, dementing times in which to try to do business.

And, as Hodgson points out in his *Thomas Parry*, there were other fundamental changes. Parry had never seen the French cannon-shot actually dropping in Fort St. George, but he had seen the troops assemble and march out to a life-or-death finish with Tippu; he had seen his ventures shattered and sunk by French warships at sea. By the time of his death, such

episodes had become unthinkable; as well might one have envisaged an armed landing at San Thome by the Great Mogul. Between Parry's arrival and Victoria's accession law and order in Madras had shifted from farce to reason, society had revolutionised itself, communication with Europe had been shortened, the "Hills" had been discovered. "These were kaleidoscopic years in Madras", says Hodgson, "and it is doubtful whether any period of thirty-six years in the history of the Presidency has been productive of greater or more far-reaching changes". Certainly, one might almost say, none.

* * *

As if he knew himself to be a survival from an expiring age, John William Dare refused to live into the new reign. He died in the first year of it—1838. It is impossible, reviewing such an event, to refrain from a comparison of the two heroes of the firm's first half century, whose names—one in his Corner, the other in his House—look like being perpetuated for all foreseeable time.

Parry was not a very characteristic Welshman; he lacked at any rate the traditional qualities attributed by the nurseries to his race; he neither sang nor stole. But he had a very distinct personality for all that. He was a fervid Whig to whom Fox was God and Pitt devil, he was shrewd yet trustful, cool headed yet easily fired to enthusiasm; pugnacious in the cause he had adopted, be it bad or good; partisan in all causes whatsoever. He was a loyal friend and looked for loyalty in return as he hoped for charity to match the ready warmth of his own. He knew his times and his people, European and Indian, sized them up and made the best of them, took the smooth gratefully and the rough with a stout heart. He was ready, almost to a fault, to take chances and to switch his fortunes from one hope to another; if he did not always pick a winner—who does? He comes before

us bold, eager, alert, interested, humane ; he makes us forget the ill-health of twenty years, rarely altogether absent and often incapacitating.

Dare was tough and hard, heavy-handed and self-confident. Two pictures of him survive in Parry and Company's custody; one a crayon sketch of head and shoulders, the other (which appears in this book) at full length—and quite evidently at a later age. In the crayon sketch his handsomeness is almost frightening; few of us would have cared to meet the glare of those wide-open eyes or the curl of that contemptuous mouth. And how that long and masterful nose must have snorted! In the full length picture he stands four-square in what looks like his office verandah, one hand on a chair, the other on his hip. Mark now the white bow tie and the dress collar up to his ears; the seal that dangles from his impeccable waist-coat, correctly unbuttoned. The cheeks have fallen a little since the crayon days but the eyes are still as wide and appraising, the mouth as resolute, the nose as ready to snort as ever. At home and in possession of his own quarter-deck, point-device in his white trousers and his black tail-coat, he might be the master of the ship one glimpses over his verandah rail.

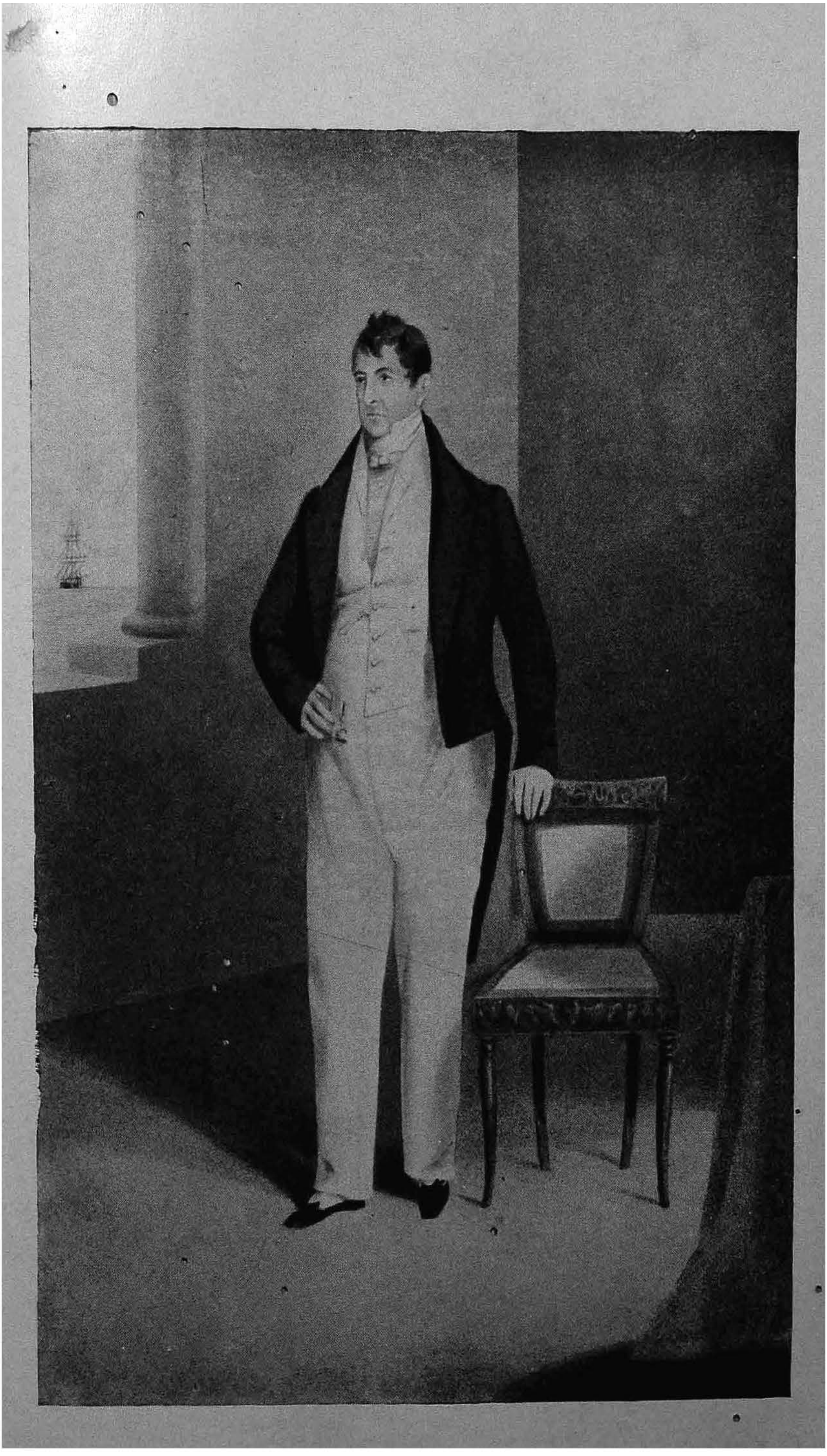
Dare could be kind and, being Dare, he was kind on the grand scale. A bachelor (or conceivably an early and childless widower) he enjoyed domesticity; when his friend C. G. Howard died somewhere in the early 1820's Dare took his widow and three children into his own house and maintained them there till his death, when he left them a lakh apiece to maintain themselves.* For over a decade, as the ledgers testify, he made himself responsible for the young Howards'

*The Ledgers of 1835 refer to a portrait of "Mrs. Dare" and those of 1824 and 1825 to a "Miss E. S. Dare"; but these can only be clerical errors for Mrs. Howard and Miss E. S. Howard, also and much more frequently mentioned; an accounts clerk in Blacktown not very deeply interested in the inhabitants of distant Chetpat might well suppose the Howards, living so long and so intimately under Dare's roof, to be his wife and family. No shadow of child or wife appears in Dare's will made in 1835, the very year of "Mrs. Dare's" hypothetical portrait.

JOHN WILLIAM DARE

Probably circ. 1832, when Mr. Fonceca was paid Rs. 301-8-0 for taking his "likings".

"At home and in possession of his own quarter-deck... four-square... point-device..."



education—the Reverend Roy for Masters Cosmo and Gordon and Mr. C. Kennett as private tutor for Miss Elizabeth Sara; Messrs. Anderson and Martin to ensure that all three pointed their toes correctly. For a debutante Elizabeth Sara was designed the harp which came from Erard's in 1836 (and was at once replaced by a better one); the diamond necklace and bracelets at Rs. 6,440 may have been a reward for proficiency. Young Cosmo was actually groomed for a partnership in Parry's and got one in 1836 but his place in the Board Room perished with his patron. One can think of several possible reasons for this; the Pughs are one of them.

But Dare was a society man as well; the ledgers show that there can have been few aspects of contemporary life in which he did not cut a dash. A dash, voluntarily or involuntarily, he must have cut anywhere; with that head and face he could not have helped it. He was evidently a prime mover among the " party of gentlemen " who resorted to the Union Club at Ennore and he seems to have been the secretary of a sort of syndicate who were responsible for the upkeep and perhaps even the construction of the roads to Ennore and Red Hills. At Ennore and Red Hills he built stabling for his horses; he was a tremendous man for horses, he was always buying them—so many that they can hardly all have been for his own use. Doubtless he raced many of them—he was a keen racing man—but one also suspects him of doing a bit of coping on the side. He was fond of his horses and had their portraits painted by that same Fonceca who excuted the full-length version of himself.

Dare lived fully; he kept a good table and did himself well at home to the tune of over £2,000 a year with a further £200 for wines; his servants' wages cost him Rs. 500 a month and he did not stint the madeira. Many a convivial gathering must have assembled round the " drab and gold dinner service " that came out in 1836. He was musical for, besides

the harp, he presented Elizabeth Howard with two pianos, a grand and an upright, and he stumped up regularly to keep them in good condition. One pictures him as one of those men who are seen everywhere, a man about town, a clubman, full of go and all the latest stories; and all this to an extent and a degree to which Parry never approximated. This is not to say that Parry was a bear or a recluse—far from it. But while Parry would be quietly among the company, to his own pleasure and that of his friends, Dare, one feels, must always have taken the centre. He made impact.

He certainly made impact at any rate upon the Indian population of Madras. Within the firm, of course, the fame and name of Parry held their ground; the Pughs, who may not have greatly loved Dare, had no compunction in slashing his name out of "Parry Dare and Co." as soon as he was away. There Parry's name survived its owner's death; Dare's did not. Yet in the byways of Blacktown Dare seems to have remained the hero, not Parry. One would imagine that Parry, going back to the old bad days of Umdat-ul-Umara and the "Persian Writing", of Abbott and Roebuck and the French privateers and Tippu's hostage-children sitting listening to Mrs. Oakley singing the *Messiah* and Sugar Campbell and the Duke of Wellington and the Exodus from the Fort—one would suppose that Parry would, for several generations at least, have been a legend. Possibly he was; on the other hand, for half a century after Dare's death and longer, if a client desired to be conveyed to Parry and Company's office, it was "Dare" House he told the *ghariwallah* to make for, not "Parry's"; the firm's offices are officially labelled "Dare House" at this date, and there were "Dare's Buildings" at the Corner in the 1890's. When *dubashes* desired to add an honorific prefix to their names, it was "Dare" they begged permission to use, not "Parry". Now Parry was the founder, he

had kept up his wicket while other members of the eleven came and went for thirty-six long years; make all allowances for illness, for the semi-retirement, the sleeping partnership of his evening, and still his name must have resounded throughout the length and breadth of the bazaars. How loudly then must have resounded in its day the name of John William Dare.

PART TWO
THE REIGN OF VICTORIA
(1838—1900)

THE Victorian era saw the onslaught of a process which has continued with ever increasing fury until the present day—the improvement of communications, the telescoping of the world, the closing of its hitherto unbridgeable gaps. In 1837 transport and transit conditions were not in essence very different from those of 1737 which were not so very different from those of 1637; they were still governed by mud roads, man-power and the horse. But the half century that followed the death of John William Dare was to bring about a speeding-up and an amplification so radical and far-reaching that the lives of men and the possibilities and opportunities before them were to be utterly revolutionised. To no class of men did this apply more effectively than to men of business, and to no class of men of business more than to those who were conducting their affairs in the remote places of the earth, sundered and stultified and restricted by the intractabilities of space and time. Dare in this respect was already better off than had been Parry in 1788, but as between Dare in 1838 and Nelson in 1858 or the Shaws in 1888 there was far more than a difference in mere degree; there was a total difference, a difference in kind.

Any account therefore of the affairs of Parry and Co. during the long reign of Victoria must necessarily take note—as they themselves took note—of this immense narrowing and compression of their world. It is against a background of steadily—and sometimes startlingly—improving communications, of leaps and bounds in available facilities for trade and business, that we must view their progress. It can almost be said that Parry's fall back into second place as the leading figures in the narrative; in a sense they lose the initiative. Instead of originating, they have to keep up. What we shall now have to follow,

therefore, is the world development in the sphere of communications and Parry and Co's reactions thereto.

* * *

When Dare died, the two Pughs—Joseph and his nephew, David Junior—took on the firm *minus* young Cosmo Howard; in 1840 they brought in John Uttley Ellis and in the following year when Joseph Pugh retired to England—the first senior partner of Parry's who had lived to do so—Ellis and the younger Pugh were joined by Pugh's cousin Joseph Goolden. There had been a Pugh in the firm since 1808 and it is to the Pughs' credit that they resisted what must have been a considerable temptation to make their own name the titular style of the firm; instead they stuck loyally to the venerable "Parry and Co." with all its goodwill and all its associations, and by this title the firm was to be known ever after, subject to the addition, in 1928, of the qualifying "Ltd". The capital was fixed at three lakhs, the partners continuing to share profits and losses *pro rata*. Parry's were now, of course, securely established but the competition against them, so far as numbers went, was hardly stronger than in the old days of the Free Merchants; in 1839 only thirteen agency houses are listed as doing business in Madras. Journalism, however, had made more rapid strides; Madras had nine or ten dailies or weeklies of one kind or another; it might almost have been said that there was a periodical for every agent.

For some time after Dare's death the firm continued to concentrate on the sea. In 1841 they served twenty-one of Her Majesty's ships—practically the entire East India Squadron. Their passenger agencies were also flourishing; passenger rates did not noticeably fall but as Parry's were drawing a flat commission of 5% on all these, they could view this circumstance with more complacency than could the passengers. An Army Captain could now get himself and his

family home for Rs. 4,600 while a civilian with a comparable tail might run to Rs. 6,500; soldiers were done at Rs. 123 per capita—unless they were insane, when they were allowed Rs. 500. One admires the more cordially what seems to have been a smart stroke of business done by Joseph Pugh in 1841 when he got his entire family home on the *Inez* for Rs. 1,160; but perhaps this only covered the four cots, three couches, four almirahs, two large and five small chairs with which he fitted them out.

Amenities on shore continued to multiply; both Ellis and Goolden promptly joined the newly-formed Ootacamund Club which had laid in such a cellar of sherry and port as would make its members' mouths water today. Iced soda was now a favoured and readily available beverage; though if we may judge from the contemporary verses quoted in a recent issue of *Mysindia*, the drink had its deprecators;—

> " Full many a man both young and old
> Is brought to his sarcophagus
> By pouring water icy cold
> Adown his warm aesophagus ".

For a time Parry's were curiously interested in hats which arrived in great variety from Christie's—black and drab beaver, ladies' fashionable riding, blue cloth caps; perhaps this was due to the influence of Joseph Pugh who liked a good hat himself—in 1832 he bought at one fell swoop two beavers and " 2 gentlemens rich lustre Seal caps ". Among these frivolities the charity so long associated with the firm was never forgotten; the orphaned child of Dr. O'Neill of the Mount was brought to Madras by bandy, fed, clad and entered in the Female Orphan Asylum. In 1841 David Pugh presented the Lodge of Perfect Unanimity with furniture worth a hundred rupees; and in the same year Parry's opened a subscription for the widow of a Colonel Spry, the response to which—Rs. 4,630—must have made that lady feel in tune with her name.

The contemporary ledgers, in fact, present a miscellany, the clues to which are sometimes to seek. On the principle that coming events cast their shadows before, one can understand the firm's buying, in 1841, "The Tropical Agriculturist" and "The Culture of Sugarcane"; but why did David Pugh find it necessary to pay duty on four hundred squirrel-skins? And what could Joseph Goolden have wanted with "one velvet cap with feathers" at Rs. 28?

Meanwhile sporadic work was being done in the development of those coffee estates in the Wynaad whose possibilities had attracted David Pugh on his journeyings. This enterprise suffered from obvious disadvantages; the area was separated from Madras by a very long and difficult journey and it was already clear that competition in the now fashionable crop was to be intense; rivals were going ahead rapidly in the Manjerabad and Kadur districts of Mysore and at Kotagiri and Hulical on the Nilgiris. Undeterred by these considerations, Parry's pressed on with the arrangements at their own estates. It is a little difficult to determine just what and where these were, owing partly to variant spellings in the ledgers, partly to the practice of alluding sometimes to individual estates and sometimes to "blocks"; there was certainly, however, a "Wynaud Coffee Plantation" belonging to the firm from 1841 onwards. In this instance Parry's were themselves growers, but there were apparently other estates under private ownership such as those of the Malcolms, *pêre et fils*, in which they became interested as traders or agents. At this stage, in the early '40's, the ledgers show entries mainly on the debit side; considerable sums were being spent on getting materials to the sites by boat and cooly, on travelling expenses, on tools and ploughs and the components of the prospective buildings. Considering that a good deal of energy was directed to the project which had been in existence now for the best part of a decade, progress seems to

have been very slow; from which fact an omen might have been drawn for the future.

The export lists of the day consist mainly of saltpetre (a derelict industry to be temporarily resuscitated during World War Two), indigo, cigars, ground-nut and coconut oils, buffalo and deer horns, hides and redwood. Except for "blue cloth" the export of piece-goods seems practically to have ceased; the Porto Novo cloth concern, where much of the "blue cloth" was made, was still able, however, to show a profit. A large amount of indigo was still being shipped but the indigo accounts show almost consistent losses. Cotton, now concentrated at Tinnevelly, was handled on a big scale but without noticeable gains. The import side of the picture is too miscellaneous for quotation; but the "hum drum Madrassers", as Wellington once called them, were going in heavily for English beer which they were able to purchase at five rupees a dozen.

One staple item in Parry's business accounts for a long time past was presently to disappear with the general prohibition of lotteries in 1844. For more years than they could count Parry's had been buying up blocks of lottery tickets and selling them at a profit—small, no doubt, but still a profit. Lotteries may have been iniquitous, they had certainly been overdone and had been allowed to fall, in many cases, into unscrupulous hands; the fact remains that they had been exceedingly useful as money-raisers. Few of the roads and bridges in the Madras of 1844—even such as these were—would have existed without them; any more than would the Cathedral or the Kirk or, in their day, the Customs House, the Pantheon or the Fort Exchange.

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In December of 1842 an item makes its first appearance in Parry's ledgers which was to prove of the very highest importance and which was to have a long

and distinguished sequel; here is the first surviving mention of the "Bandepollium concern" which meant, in a single word, sugar. Presumably Parry's, beginning to despair of the prospects of indigo and, as ever, looking round for a new line, had decided at last that sugar was worth going in for. It was a momentous resolve. With sugar, from the very outset, went distilling; indentured emigration was to be one of its later by-products; out of sugar Ranipet, with its curious history of logical but unforeseen development, was to be born. Which partner was responsible for the departure we have no means of knowing, for the correspondence of the day which might have told us has not survived. The current partners were David Pugh, Ellis and Goolden; as Pugh was probably taken up with the coffee, which was in a sense his child, it may have been either of the others. Whoever it was, the entry in the 1842 ledger signifies Parry's determination to take sugar seriously and to that extent may be said to open an epoch. Sixty-seven years previously, William Hickey, visiting the West Indies, "could not but contemplate with wonder and gratitude the beneficence of an all ruling Providence that it thus furnished mankind with so useful a plant as the sugar cane not an atom of which is lost". The beneficence of Providence had now struck Parry's also.

The idea, which had doubtless occurred to them in the past, had been made practical by a revolutionary change in the economic position of sugar since the days when Edward Campbell had struggled with it and succumbed. In Thomas Parry's time, as we have seen, the West Indian sugar interests had succeeded in clamping down and keeping down a restrictive tariff against East Indian sugar; this dead-weight could not be overcome either by rational argument or by the East India Company's propaganda sugar-basins labelled in gold letters "East India sugar *NOT* made by slaves". The difference between the two tariffs, West Indian and East Indian, ran to some

thirty shillings a cwt. and was sufficient to discourage all but the most earnest of enthusiasts; up to 1819 the free merchants of Madras exported sugar only to the negligible total value of four and a half lakhs. But the situation had now radically altered. In 1834 slavery, the ace in the West Indian hand, had been abolished and two years later, in 1836, the duties on the two sugars, East and West, had been equalised. There was now no economic distinction between East Indian and West Indian sugar; there was inducement now to improve the East Indian product, to cure it of its "unpleasant taste" and lack of the essential quality of sweetness. It would have been wholly unlike Parry's to allow such an opportunity to pass.

They received the usual reward of the eagerly progressive—a sharp slap in the face. The economic blizzard had changed to a favourable breeze, but favourable breezes may veer; an industry so vulnerable to political caprice must have seemed to many what Thomas Parry had called indigo—"precarious". That such suspicions were well founded was shown as early as 1845, in the Bandepollium concern's third year, when the British Government made a sudden switch-over to a policy of free trade. This practically slaughtered the new-born sugar industry in India; Parry's in South Arcot and Binny's at Aska in Ganjam were the only firms in South India capable of carrying on; in North India only a single refinery survived. A half century was to elapse before the promising export figures of 1840-45 could again be approached. This chequered beginning was to prove all too typical of South Indian sugar's career; all the same, Parry's even in 1848 could hope for a profit of fifteen rupees a candy on their sugar—despite the additional drawback that the neighbouring Iron and Steel Co. at Porto Novo was scandalously boosting the price of firewood.

Parry's began the Bandepollium concern by going into partnership in it with one Benjamin Thomas

Norfor in the ratio of three-quarters share to one-quarter, Norfor being the local Manager; when they built another factory at Nellikuppam, seven miles away, Norfor managed that also. Norfor was one of two brothers who had come out to India somewhere about 1829; the elder went into the Naval Service and became Master Attendant at Cuddalore; the younger, Benjamin Thomas, became an uncovenanted servant of the P.W.D. (The elder brother married as his second wife a Miss Breithaupt who was undoubtedly connected with Parry's 1813 partner of that name.) Exactly when B. T. Norfor switched from engineering into sugar is not clear. He had a sugar factory of his own at Pattambakam of which the chimney may still be seen, but whether this was before, during or after Bandepollium is a matter for argument; some indeed maintain that it was an indigo factory and not a sugar factory at all. He was an extremely temperamental person, so much so that the partnership had little hope of a long life. Parry's are not to be blamed for its collapse; a man of business who could get on such terms with authority in his District that the Collector could write to him "with reference to the most offensive and ungentlemanly language of his letter of the 4th instant, any further communications will be returned unopened and unnoticed"—such a man was no promising ally in a new and struggling industry. At Nellikuppam Norfor was obsessed with the idea that he was being hounded and thwarted by "the narrow-minded policy and the dislike of the authorities who, instead of encouraging the influx of skill, enterprise and affluence in the district, pursue a course calculated to disgust those who have made the beginning and to deter others from imitating their example"; so discouraged was he by official myopia that he strongly recommended Parry's to abandon the venture at once before heavier losses were sustained. All this he wrote at great length because, as he explained, the excitement of talking did not agree with

him. He was almost equally verbose and hysterical over the settlement of the Bandepollium accounts and shares when Parry's suggested to him that the partnership might, perhaps terminate. It *did* terminate eventually by a deed of mutual release signed on 16-5-1848. After a gap which nobody has satisfactorily filled, Norfor reappears as British Consul in Pondicherry in 1862, in which office he died in 1870. He appears to have been excitable in other aspects than conversation for in 1836 he married a girl of sixteen on whom he proceeded to beget no fewer than seventeen children.

Kipling has remarked that India and Indian affairs in the later 19th century were in the hands of a few devoted families who came forward generation after generation to Indian service. Had he known of it, he might have cited the example of Nellikuppam. For F. N. G. Gill, who came to Nellikuppam as Chemist and Engineer in the 1870's, married a daughter of Norfor's, an item in the above-said seventeen, and through his son G. G. Gill the Norfor line was in charge at Cuddalore until 1938. The Norfor-Parry's connection covered in the end four generations and a hundred and eight years.

Sugar led almost immediately to spirit. The original Bandepollium concern (1842) obtained its distillery licence in 1843. A second factory was then started some fifty miles off at Kallakurichi (1844) again *plus* distillery (1849). Here Parry & Company were in half-share joint account with a certain Mr. Norman Morison; in 1845 they were already able to split a profit of nearly ten thousand rupees. This Norman Morison, either alone or with various partners, seems to have had a finger in a good many of the pies of the time; we shall meet him again. The third and, as it proved, the permanent factory—that at Nellikuppam—came into being in 1845/46; its distillery was licensed in 1848. The final member of the group, Tiruvenanallur, was added only in 1855. It was

indeed fortunate for Parry's that they took out these distillery licences in connection with so many of their sugar plants, for when the annihilating equalisation-of-import-duties enactment fell upon the industry in 1846, it was mainly on the strength of their arrack that the factories were able to struggle on.

Cane, on which that ill-starred enthusiast Sugar Campbell had staked and lost his all, was not the sole source of raw material; a great deal of palmyrah jaggery was employed and was bought up by Parry's special buying agencies in Palghat and Tinnevelly, the homes par excellence of the tree. Jaggery is a solid substance procured by boiling the juice tapped from the palmyrah spathes; when refined it can be turned into white sugar. That the direct manufacture of sugar from the cane was a much superior method to the refinement of jaggery was common knowledge and undisputed; but not all Parry's blandishments or their practical inducements could persuade the local ryots to take up cane in earnest. Their reply to Parry's overtures was invariably to the effect that there were other crops—for example, groundnut—which were much less trouble to cultivate and brought in much more money. Jaggery had, from their point of view, an advantage over cane as to which they were less outspoken; it was easily adulterable by slipping in surreptitious handfuls of sand. As Collector Ravenshaw had remarked some years previously, there were no flies on the ryots of South Arcot.

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The earliest of the Victorian innovations in mobility to make itself felt in Madras was the marine steam engine, the substitution of steamers for ships; as early as 1837 Parry Dare & Co. put themselves down for a subscription of £1,000 to the Madras Steam Committee. Madras was not in fact to see a P. and O. liner lying in her roads till 1842, but since the

late 1830's steamships had been playing their part in what was known as the Overland Route to Europe. The actual "overland" portion of this was but a small fraction of the whole—"a passage", as the Madras *Spectator* put it in 1841, "on the stern of a small donkey for a desert trip of eighty-four miles", to wit from Suez to Alexandria. This was accomplished "rapidly in five, leisurely in eight days". The arrangements for this transit, which included at Suez a "comfortable furnished house superintended by an English female of high respectability", were in the hands of a Lieutenant Waghorn to whose efficiency many travellers paid grateful tribute and to whose "testimonial" the Madras Chamber of Commerce contributed £100 in 1845; to the general regret he died prematurely in 1850 leaving the donkey-borne to the tender mercies of the "Transit Administration of H.H. the Pasha of Egypt". Bombay-Suez and Alexandria-London were done by steamer; on this route, again according to the *Spectator*, two "very enterprising Parsees from Bombay" had started a "very decent" bungalow hotel at Aden. At Cairo and Alexandria the French hotels were to be recommended; as so often alas! the British hotel-keeper had proved a broken reed, his hostelry being "comparatively, some will say positively, a dirty (may I be pardoned the term I am going to use but it is an apposite one) a lousy concern". The *Spectator* also recommended to prospective passengers a straw hat, dark glasses and a pocket pistol—"a very useful thing in case of need".

All these services, however, terminated in Bombay, not Madras, and Bombay was still a weary way from Fort St. George. There was nothing for it really but the good (or bad) old palanquin, whose drawbacks as a means of locomotion need no emphasis. While the palanquin was actually in motion it was endurable; but the halts for (hopefully) rest and sleep could be ghastly; as dak bungalows were not invented till the later '40's, the choice of dormitory lay between

the palanquin itself and the village choultry. The voyager could but light the special type of hookah designed for palanquin travel and hope for the best. The service was not even very cheap; eight palanquin-bearers and a torch-bearer were required *plus* luggage porters *ad lib*, all of whom had to be changed every ten miles; 3½ annas each and a 4 anna tip for each stage, while a large deposit had to be put down in advance—for instance Ellis's Rs. 662 for a journey to Mysore in 1845. It must therefore have been a red letter day for Madras when, in 1842, the P. and O. included a call there in their schedule; as Parry's J. U. Ellis was Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce in that year, the firm may well have had a good deal to do with the innovation—though they failed to secure the agency then or thereafter.

There were P. and O. ships which ran regularly between Calcutta, Madras, Ceylon and Suez (the Honourable East India Company, who maintained a very stepmotherly attitude towards the new venture, retained their monopoly of Suez-Bombay); others made the through voyage to England by the Cape but even by these the interminable journey had been enormously shortened. Dr. Bell in the *Rose* had made a record run, England to India, of a hundred and one days, but Cordiner took seven months and Mrs. Graham twenty weeks; now the *Hindostan* leapt over the interval from London to Madras between 24th September 1844 and 20th December (Gibraltar, October 1st; St. Vincent, 13th; Ascension, 25th; St. Helena, November 14th; Cape Town, 19th; Mauritius, December 4th; Ceylon, 17th). The *Bentinck*, another P. and O., left Southampton on August 24th and reached Madras on November 18th; the *Hindostan* in June made Suez-Madras in twenty days. By 1857 the P. and O. were running a fortnightly service to Madras with six regular vessels, leaving Southampton on the 4th's and 20th's and reaching Madras on the 10th's and 27th's of the succeeding month: the Cape route

was now taking six weeks. Naturally, with the shortened voyage, passenger fares had fallen markedly; by 1849 they were quoted as Rs. 1,280 for a lady and Rs. 1,190 for a gentleman, though why this unchivalrous discrimination between the sexes was made is not very clear. The Suez-Alexandria "overland" portion of the journey was cut down to sixty hours, some more rapidly-moving vehicle than the donkey's stern having obviously been devised. There can be no better illustration than these figures of the sudden leap forward in mobility brought about by the advent of steam. As between 1837 and 1847 the speeding-up in travel had been enormous; between 1847 and 1897—and indeed till the air liners began to ply—there was relatively little change.

All this condensation of space and time introduced to Madras a new conception—short Home leave. Up to the 1840's men on short leave had made do with the newly-discovered Hills; unless one could contemplate at least a year or eighteen months in Britain, the journey was simply not worth it. Now however it was made possible, within the compass of a total absence of twenty weeks, to enjoy a couple of months in Berkshire or Piccadilly. Parry's partners were not slow to appreciate this change of circumstance; in 1848 we find Ellis on "Home leave" and his example has been followed by his successors ever since. The days when men came out to Madras to live and die there (postponing the latter event as long as possible) were now for ever ended.

But man is an ungrateful animal, whether in Madras or out of it; instead of delighted rhapsodies and paeans to the name of James Watt, we find him grumbling bitterly, his target being, as so often, the Post Office. In 1849 the Madras Chamber of Commerce "cannot avoid giving expression to the tardy arrival of the mails both by direct steamer and by Bombay. Instead of the improvement which the public has a just right to expect, there is a marked

falling off both in the performances of the mail steamers and in the general arrangements for the delivery of letters". Yet surely the Chamber had much cause for the counting of blessings. Madras had possessed no postal service at all till 1774; for long thereafter delivery of overseas letters was dependant on the caprice, memory, sobriety or goodwill of the ships' captains who brought them. These captains charged four annas and upwards a letter which was reasonable enough; the complaint was that they often kept the letters lying on board for days after their arrival or, worse still, negligently carried them on to Calcutta without delivering them at all. The East India Company had been notoriously—some thought deliberately—incompetent in the matter of postal services which they never seemed anxious to improve. But now, in 1841, mails left London on the evening of the 4th of every month, reached Calais on the 5th, Marseilles on the 9th, Malta on the 13th, Alexandria on the 19th and Suez on the 23rd—whence another fortnight to Bombay. Homeward mails left Bombay at the month's end, so that if all went just right, one could address one's London friends from Blacktown and receive a reply in less than three months—which put a very different complexion on Home correspondence.

No doubt the Madras Chamber of Commerce would have admitted all this; but again the trouble arose from the fact that Bombay was not Madras; it was in regard to the cross-country journey that the Madras merchants complained. This would still take the ordinary traveller fifteen days, travelling either by day only or by night only; travelling without halt, as the mails would do it, meant nine days—which was no improvement on the rate of fifty years ago. The Postmaster's excuse for this, then as thereafter, was that no forage could ever be got for the mail-*tonga* ponies in Mysore state. When similar complaints were made of even more serious delays

in mail between Madras and the northern ports, the Postmaster retorted that the roads on that side were so bad that no horse or mail-cart could face them at all. One would have supposed that the Government's first act after the annexation of the Carnatic would have been to drive a decent road through from Madras to the Circars, but this was not done—and indeed, it was still not done more than a century later. But then, in the 1840's good roads were an idea that had hardly been assimilated—and that too in places closer to the hub of civilisation than was Madras.

* * *

Against the blaze of all these brilliant achievements, like a wisp of cloud in a sunny sky, one small shadow appears—the first tentative murmur of Indian political aspirations, the first glimmerings of the Indian nationalist idea. To the Indian man-in-the-street the notion that Government was a thing with which he personally had anything to do was almost completely foreign; Government was and had been for centuries a thing managed by Other People whom he could not control and with whom he had no direct contact. So long as the Mogul or the Mahratta or the Mysorean, or whoever for the time being represented the remote abstraction—so long as these did not extort too grievously, were reasonable about bribes, left him to get in his harvests and refrained from insisting on the *droit de seigneur* in regard to his women, he was perfectly content to let them get on with it. But now, in the 1840's—perhaps as an eddy from that strange tide of popular unrest then running all over the world—there came a change. No doubt the ideas of Indian Nationalism, of *swaraj*, of *swadeshi*, were as yet but dimly apprehended in Madras and were scarcely formulated at all; but in 1844 the men whose children and grandchildren were to think along these lines armed themselves with two essential weapons, an Association and a newspaper. The former

was the Madras National Association, the parent of the Madras Mahajana Sabha, a fairly innocuous body whose primary objective was to keep the Viceroy and the Governor posted on the grievances of the Indian proletariat. The newspaper was the *Crescent* (a curious name for an entirely Hindu organ) which made its first appearance in October of 1844; like all vernacular newspapers up to that time it was principally occupied with religion and indeed had been originally devised as a counterblast to the Christian Missionary journal, the *Record*. The man behind both Association and newspaper was Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetti, who may thus claim to be Madras's first publicist and political agitator.

Gazulu Lakshminarasu was ahead of his times; few Madras Indians of those days were politically educated or even politically minded and of those few only a handful were ready to support him. His *Crescent* perished and his Association dwindled away. But he had started something that was soon to move again and with greater vigour—that, indeed, was never again to stop. And during its brief course the *Crescent* had made its effect, it had been acidly critical of all that it saw and disliked. If the partners at Parry's ever read it—which seems highly doubtful—they must have fulminated against its impudence as vehemently as did the Civil Service and must have supported the Government in withdrawing from the *Crescent* the privileges granted to other newspapers. (Seventeen years later, however, the Government relented and gave Mr. Lakshminarasu a C.S.I.; later still they "appointed" him to the new Madras Legislative Council, the second Indian to be thus honoured.) It was early days yet for Parry's partners to take a view on Indian nationalist politics; when, later on, it became necessary to do so, we shall find that they were not wanting.

* * *

The mention of Parry's partners as a group turns the mind to thoughts of them as individuals. And during the earlier part of Victoria's reign some remarkable individuals there were.

There was, for instance, Joseph Goolden who first became a partner in 1841, three years after the death of Dare, and retired as senior partner only in 1866. Among that celebrated gallery—the "Rogues' Gallery"—of Parry portraits Goolden's is a little unimpressive; with his Newgate fringe of whisker—so inadequate when seen against the colossal beards of his successors—he might have been a Victorian footman. "But the cool and perspicuous eye overbore unbelieving"; it is the eye of a man of shrewd business acumen. That Goolden had a marked influence on his firm's career seems hardly open to argument. If he did not originate the move into big-scale sugar and distilling in 1842, he must certainly have backed it, and as senior partner in 1861 he must have foreseen the repercussions of the American Civil War on American cotton, he must have taken the correct but unpopular view that the American Civil War was going to last and he must have directed that concentration on South Indian cotton supplies from which Parry's were to make some of their most spectacular profits. His was a serious mind; one of his first acts in Madras was to have his forty-seven volumes of the Waverley Novels bound by the Mission Press, and he promptly took a sitting in the Cathedral and joined the Masonic Lodge. He was an unassuming man like his great-uncle Thomas Parry himself; it is not without significance that when the Madras Volunteer Cavalry was formed in the Mutiny year of 1857, Crake was a Captain with resplendent uniform to match, Goolden a humble trooper. One wonders if Goolden was one of those who displayed that "great slackness in attendance on occasions of drill" which led to the rapid disbandment of the Corps, or one of those others who

"devoted themselves with such praise-worthy zeal to their duties". One would be inclined to guess the latter. An unassuming man; still, he *did* buy himself that velvet cap with feathers.

Henry Nelson became a partner four years after Goolden and left the firm five years before him, but he was one of the most original minds Parry's ever had. His brother Christopher was master of the *City of Poona*, and his daughter Emma married J. L. Lushington of the Madras Civil Service, thus founding yet another of those families whose generations served India. Nelson's picture in the Rogues' Gallery shows a quizzical, doggy "Scots" face with a particoloured beard which would have passed in any ordinary company but is dwarfed into insignificance by its neighbours. Nelson was a man of ideas and as he was eventually Chairman of the Madras Chamber of Commerce on three occasions, 1849, 1859 and 1860—an unusual achievement though by no means unique—we have some record of what these ideas were; for although they appear as minutes of the Chamber, one suspects the agile knight-errant brain of Nelson behind them. He signalised his first Chairmanship by assailing the Government on the inadequacy of the supply of bank notes in circulation; on this topic he had some sharp exchanges with the Accountant-General and though nothing happened, the round went to Nelson on points. Ten years later he won a Parthian victory over the newly joining Governor Sir Charles Trevelyan, before whom he laid a staggering list of reforms embracing everything from Land Revenue to a new Town Hall. Trevelyan fobbed him off by "shrinking before the expression of his high expectations", whereupon Nelson, side-stepping adroitly, suggested that His Excellency might at least do something about Kelly's Drain. The other reforms vanished from view but Kelly's Drain was immediately—if temporarily—ameliorated.

The pugnacious mouth and lively eye of Nelson's

portrait do not belie him—he was a congenital fighter. He proceeded to attack the Commissioner of Police because the sailors incarcerated in the Penitentiary were not being made to work hard enough and were living a far more comfortable life than they would have done at sea; the Commissioner's reply showed that he was not far wrong. He then had a brief battle with the Government on the question of emigrant ships; why might the same ship take 450 emigrants from Calcutta and 500 or 600 from Bombay but only 350 from Madras? If the French deemed 60 cubic feet per emigrant from their Indian possessions a sufficient allowance, why did the British Government insist on 72? The Government replied crushingly that they had no intention of abandoning rules which tended to secure the health of their subjects. Nelson picked himself up and attacked them again on the subject of an allegation made in the Legislative Council of India that Madras was trying to dodge the new Mutiny Income Tax on the ground that there had been no Mutiny in Madras; would the Government explain this "grievous imputation"? This time the Government could only say that they "had no observance to make on the subject", leaving Nelson to tackle—as he promptly did—the orator himself. But by far the most statesmanlike and far sighted of the Chamber's representations under the consulship of Nelson was its proposal to reform and reconstitute the Legislatures. Its petition set forth that the Legislative Council as established in 1835 had failed—and no wonder since it was entirely composed of Civil Servants under the thumb of the authorities and very largely ignorant of the conditions and feelings of everybody in India except themselves. The Council's debates were miserable—especially on finance, as to which they naturally knew nothing. Why not therefore reconstitute the Assembly from people of different classes and varied experience; why not try "to a certain reserved and limited extent

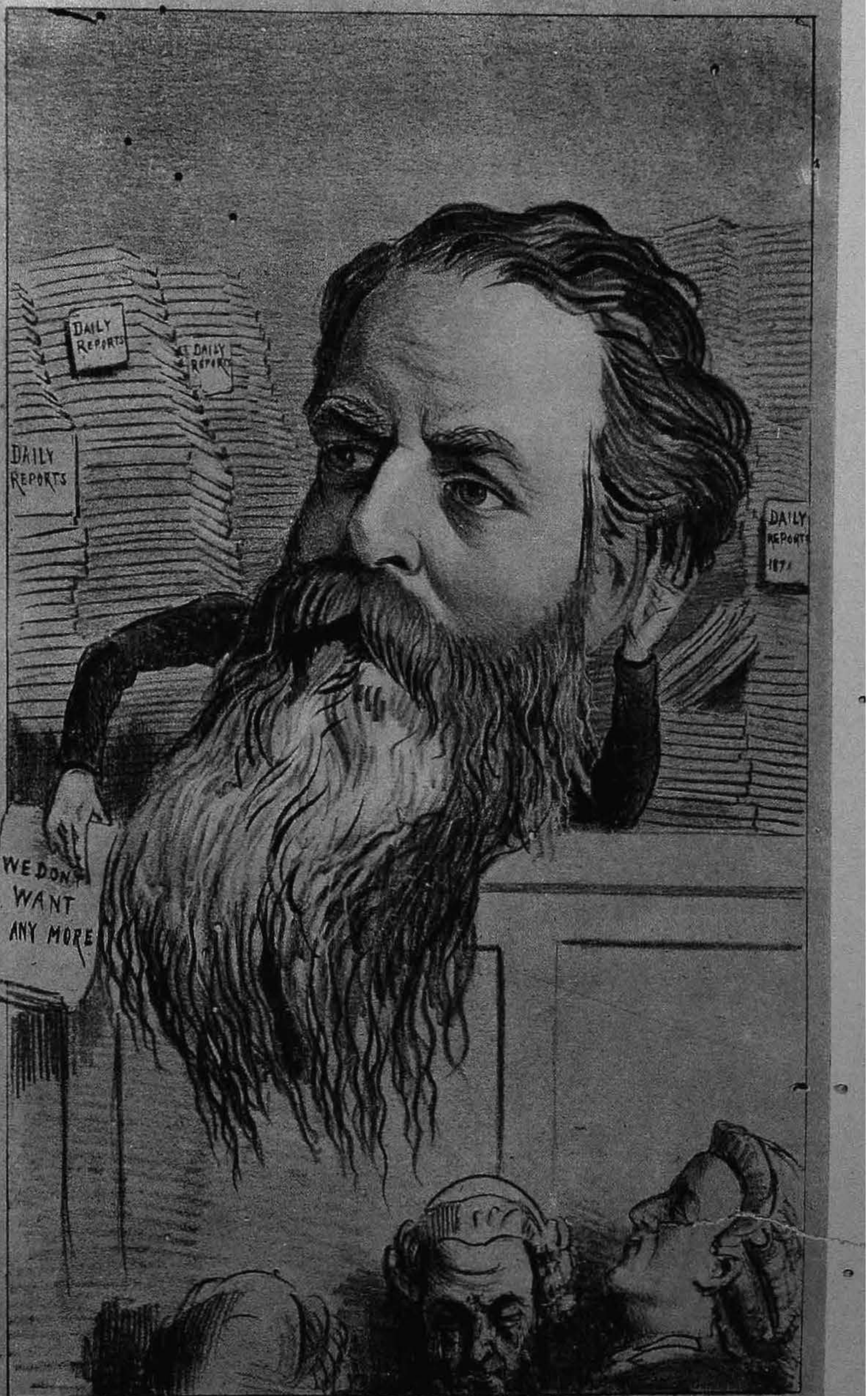
representative Government in India"? Let each Presidency have its own Executive and Legislative Council, including three non-official European members and one Anglo-Indian, Hindu and Muslim. And let each local Legislature elect one member to a Supreme Legislative Council for all India. This was looking far ahead, with a grasp and understanding of the Indian political situation far in excess of that shown by the contemporary Civilians. Unfortunately, the petition appears to have had no outcome whatsoever; one fears that it met with that succinct and serviceable Government disposal—"Lodged".

So much for Henry Nelson. But the man on whom the mantle of John William Dare had really fallen, the spectacular man of the century, was William Hamilton Crake. He may not have had Goolden's solidity or Nelson's catholic interests but he had Dare's own gift for stealing the limelight, he had the *panache*. In the Board Room his portrait hangs near that of his colleague Alexander Forrester Brown; both are gorgeously bearded but they might have sat for contrasted portraits of the wrathful and the bountiful Jehovah. With his blazing eyes, his furious frown, his general air of riding a cloud among the winds, Crake might have stepped out of an illustration from Josephus. And yet a member of his family, who should have known, said that the Board Room portrait was painted after Crake had become so ill that it gave no idea of what he was like in his prime!

Crake, like Dare, was something of a martinet. He was a man of fixed habits; in Madras he hunted every time the hounds went out, and every evening he would regularly drive his smart phaeton and pair from the bungalow to the Club and back again—perhaps a couple of those "fast-trotting Pegus" which, as Canon Sell remarks, made a "very pretty turnout". On returning to London he kept up his Oriental habits; woe betide any member of his household who was late for family prayers at 7-55 a.m.,

W. H. CRAKE ON THE TICHBORNE JURY

"Crake's patience became exhausted."



THE "FIRST" MAN ON THE TICHBORNE JURY.

With a full apology to Mr. Cruickshank.

or his daughter if she kept him waiting for the 9-15 ride down Rotten Row to the Duke of York's monument on the way to office. Crake led the procession of boats at the ceremonial opening of the Victoria and Albert Docks on whose Board he had a seat; it must surely have seemed to the onlookers as if Poseidon himself had risen from the waves. For his sins he was appointed foreman of the Tichborne jury (in the original suit for ejectment of the trustees, not the subsequent and more celebrated trial for perjury); this was a compliment but probably an unappreciated one, for the sifting of the ingenious claims of Mr. Arthur Orton to be Roger Charles Tichborne and heir to the Tichborne estates occupied the Court for ten months during which the jury sat for a hundred and three days. They might well have sat still longer but, as the picture reproduced in this book suggests, Crake's patience became exhausted and he took a firm line with all concerned; the jury, having heard the Tichborne family evidence in refutal of Mr. Orton, declared that they desired to hear no more. A redoubtable figure was W. H. Crake; and yet—just to show what people will do—a voter once threw a rotten egg at him at an election meeting in Hastings where he was standing—unsuccessfully, as it proved—as the Liberal candidate. Fortunately it only hit him on the hat; otherwise the Philistine would probably have been blasted where he stood.

Crake was essentially a Londoner but he had a very soft heart for Parry's and Madras and impressed their virtues on his family. He named his eldest son, born in Madras in 1852, William Parry after the firm; and the said son grew up dutifully to marry Emily Chase the great-grand-daughter of Thomas Chase, Thomas Parry's first partner. And it is on record that his eldest daughter Ada Jane at the age of 90 (when she retained a magnificent memory) could recall clearly the atmosphere of the Madras which she had left as a child of seven, " the smell of the spices

and cardamom waiting to be shipped in the godown and the marvellous sight of the rolling surf and the natives in their catamarans tumbling on the shore ".

There were other outstanding and distinguished men among Parry's partners during the reign of Victoria; A. F. Brown, the bountiful Jehovah; the two Shaws; the beginnings of A. J. Yorke. And yet one cannot but feel that there was a certain dwindling —perhaps inevitable—from those demigods of the great Queen's middle years.

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The 1850's were for Parry's a period of steady profits round about the two-lakh level, the firm's capital remaining at three lakhs with interest at 8% and the usual pro rata arrangements among the partners. Their trade, though still varied and adaptable, was tending to concentrate along certain lines; of these the ledgers of 1854 give a useful summary. In that year Parry's exported in round figures, 630 chests of indigo, 43,000 bags of sugar, 22,000 pieces of red-wood, 18,000 pieces of deer horn and 25,000 of buffalo, 25,000 bags of rice, nearly 10,000 bales of cotton, and smaller quantities of gingelly coconut and ground-nut oils, linseed, myrabolams, castor, hides, saltpetre, mustard, coir and coffee; the distilleries contributed 100 hogsheads of rum. All these went to their London agents, at the time Crawford Colvin and Co. Not all these items were equally profitable; as a rough generalisation it can be said that cotton nearly always showed a gain, sugar sometimes did, indigo and the horns and the redwood were almost always losses.

As regards the sugar, the industry was still in the doldrums owing to the equalisation-of-import duties already referred to; but in the earlier years of the period at least, all three ventures—Bandepollium, Kallakurichi and Nellikuppam—showed profits. Parry's were not the only labourers in this much

afflicted field; besides Binny's considerable undertaking at Aska, that same Norman Morison of Kallakurichi had small sugar enterprises at Venkatagiri near Chittoor and at Palmaner, the latter of which at least combined a distillery; whether Parry's were partners with him in these is not very clear; neither Venkatagiri nor Palmaner was in a very good way. And there was another independent and languishing concern far away to the north, at Razole near the mouth of the Godavari where, according to *Pharaoh's Gazetteer*, " want of capital alone has prevented the European gentleman, to whom the establishment belongs, from carrying out his project with success ". Against this, in the margin of the Madras Club's copy, an unknown hand has written the succinct epitaph, " Mr. James Rundall. He died ".

The cotton—a business in which Thomas Parry had collaborated in 1806 with Mr. Henry Brown of Ramnad—was now concentrated in Tinnevelly where a superior type was being grown; from the 1840's onwards Parry's were making big purchases and in association with Messrs. Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy and Messrs. Remington were screw-pressing them at Tuticorin; 3,900 bales were shipped home in 1850 and 2,883 in 1851. The work was sufficiently onerous and regular to employ a special assistant—A. F. Brown. The cotton industry, though promising and profitable, had its own drawbacks; for in 1850 the Madras Chamber of Commerce—stimulated perhaps once more by Henry Nelson—importuned the Government for legislation to prohibit the adulteration of the raw material. In Tinnevelly, they said; unlike " more advanced countries ", it was impossible to take action for breach of contract because the cotton came, not from the seller direct, but through middlemen. These not only adulterated it but resorted to offering a cotton much below sample, knowing quite well that the buyer must either accept it or pay demurrage on the ship he had chartered for its removal. The

merchants, said the Chamber plaintively, could but submit to these evasions, "trusting to their own exertions to repel the notorious trickery of those with whom they deal". Sugar Campbell, these forty years in his grave, must have heaved a sympathetic sigh.

Of the other staple items of the old trade, indigo was slowly sinking; the London market was becoming increasingly difficult. Piece-goods, now known as "Manchester" or "Europe" goods, were flowing east instead of west, large consignments arriving regularly from Crawford Colvin; it was a trade which had completely reversed its direction. As regards the Wynaad coffee, the situation is obscure and confusing; the "Wynaud Coffee Plantation" and the estates of Pallacoolly, Culpatty, Manantoddy, Cotiaddy and Caroline come and go under various spellings and with varying fortunes in the ledgers but it remains far from clear in which, if any, of these enterprises Parry's were the actual growers. Meanwhile the East India Iron Co. was pursuing its foredoomed course at Porto Novo with a new branch on the West Coast at Beypur—which was to fail for lack of funds in the depression of 1847. Few enterprises had been started, though there was a new partnership with Morison to export groundnut oil from Cuddalore; an attempt was made to handle the import of silver at the same port but met with a small loss and was apparently discontinued. The Cuddalore office, however, was now so important as to have become almost a separate branch; it was in charge of yet another of the unending Pughs—John, the son of Joseph; he drew Rs. 750 a month for his work there and for superintending Bandepollium and Kallakurichi.

Shipping was still an effective interest. Besides the East India Steam Navigation Company (the old "Comprehensives" based on Ceylon and a substantial rival to the P. & O.) Parry's took up the agency for the General Screw Steam Shipping Company, a line

of eight vessels of 1,800 tons carrying passengers and mail from Great Britain to Madras by way of the Cape only; one of these vessels, the *Cape of Good Hope*, became the nucleus of the B.I.S.N. Co's fleet till she was lost at sea. Parry's embarked on this venture in 1854 to '55 when the partners bought some 250 shares in the Company, and the firm, apparently acting as its brokers, disposed of a number of other shares to miscellaneous constituents. It was not a very fortunate speculation. The Company had an adequate capital and was competently managed and its fares were competitive, but perhaps its religious adherence to the Cape route, now dropping out of fashion as the "overland" passage from Suez to Alexandria was made more rapid and more comfortable, was too much for it. Having lost £7,500 in a single half-year, it promptly went into liquidation; in Parry's ledgers for 1855 to '57 nothing appears but dribblings of returned capital and the item thereafter is heard of no more. With its disappearance the P. & O. were left with a monopoly of the England-India run (the B.I., then the Calcutta and Burma Steam Navigation Co., operated only Calcutta-Rangoon); they began to display those take-it-or-leave-it manners that were to characterise them for a quarter of a century thereafter. Loud complaints presently arose from the various Chambers of Commerce—and not unjustifiably. In Madras, for instance, the P. and O. developed a habit of weighing anchor the moment the mails were aboard, irrespective of what passengers or cargo were in-ship and what were not; on one occasion adding insult to injury by pelting Binny's *dubash* and clerk with coal when they tried to remonstrate. When the Chamber protested, the P. and O. did not defend the coal-heavers, but in the matter of the main complaint blandly referred the Chamber to the Admiralty, saying that they had Admiralty orders to sail immediately the mails were on board. Friction naturally continued and a

year later the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, backed by Madras, carried the war into the enemy's camp by asserting that the P. & O., under contract to carry mails Southampton-Calcutta in forty-two days, frequently took forty-nine, whereas the journey *should* take only thirty-five; a little competition, the Chamber suggested, would do the P. and O. no harm. Rudyard Kipling was to make exactly the same comment fifty years later.

By 1852 the P. and O. had thirteen liners afloat in East Indian waters. As against this advance is to be set the sobering thought that, in 1850-51, the number of vessels of all classes lost in these waters was forty-three. One of them, the *Fawn*, was run ashore and burnt by a mutinous crew who had murdered her officers and passengers. These are reminders that steam and the screw had not yet wholly conquered and that ocean travel had still its risks.

Parry's at this time supported their East India Steam Navigation and General Screw Steamship agencies with those of four insurance companies and the Eastern Archipelago Company; they were also handling the accounts of the Committee responsible for paying the pensions to the Nawab's descendants. They retained the valuable agency for H.M.'s Dock-yard at Trincomalee; more than a score of warships appear regularly in their account-books, though their activities were apparently confined to 'naval supplies, the victualling being in the hands of Arbuthnot's. Both this last firm and Binny's were in keen compe-tition for any agency that was going and had deve-loped into serious rivals. It does not seem that Parry's had any direct connection with the East Indian Emigration Society whose object was to promote the emigration to Australia of "eligible persons belonging to the East Indian community"—that is, the community which would now be called "Anglo-Indian". The Society sent out fifty young Anglo-Indians in 1852 (all male) and a hundred and twenty

in 1854 and then collapsed. Not perhaps surprisingly; Anglo-Indians in the vivid Australia of the 1850's were not a very hopeful export.

In the Madras of 1855 Blacktown still had its walls—and still had *not* its drains; the contemporary commentator, less inclined than his predecessors to stress the Cloacina aspect, allows it "an air of respectability". The City's water supply came from the source at Seven Wells (misnamed, for there were actually ten only two of which were in use); this water had a wide reputation for purity and the Wells could deliver 264,000 gallons of it a day. (Seven Wells was to see Madras through ten critical days when the cyclone of 1885 breached the Red Hills tank.) The City had now three "respectable family" hotels and the Club, providing all comforts at advantageous rates, was "a great accommodation to the residents and visitors of the town". There was scarcely any conceivable species of charitable institution or Samaritan society that was not represented in mid-Victorian Madras; it even, in 1851 and just to be in the fashion, had a balloon ascent by a Mr. Knight. The palanquin and the hookah, those emblems of the "Nabobs", were on their way out; the hookah, like the punkah, was a Persian immigrant which reached Madras late by way of Bengal and was never perhaps very securely established. For a further decade the palanquin, especially up-country, was perforce to remain a regular mode of conveyance but by 1860, we are told, only half a dozen diehards throughout the whole Presidency persisted in adhering to the "snake"; the evil smelling cheroot, so long permitted to the lower classes only, was steadily ascending the social ladder. But in their easy-going life of chits and chit-chats the "hum drum Madrassers", if we are to believe Bruce Norton, had not greatly changed. "Small talk", he wrote to Robert Lowe in 1854, "moves in an endless cycle of tittle-tattle, scandal, Mount Road dust, punkahs and musquitoes.

I have not six times during my residence in India listened to anything which I would dignify by the name of "conversation"..... One does not require, with the thermometer ranging from 84 degrees to 90 degrees, to be informed twenty times a day that the land-wind is very hot, or that the sea breeze is comparatively cool; the musquitoes are very capable of advocating their own cause; and Mount Road dust would redden whiskers and spoil bonnets even were the fact not nightly chronicled at every tea-table in Madras".

Superior fellow! Yet it is a description that would not have been wholly unrecognisable fifty, sixty or seventy years thereafter.

* * *

Time, with its meteoric shower of ever-fresh facilities, went marching on. On the 16th of April 1853 the first section of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway was opened at Bombay, and two months later the first turf of the Madras Railway was cut at Perambur by the Governor of the day Sir Henry Pottinger. The line as far as Arcot was opened for traffic on the 1st of July 1856. Meanwhile the South Indian Railway had commenced a line from Negapatam to Trichy; it was opened as far as Tanjore in December of 1861. The craze for railways, which had been raging in Britain for the last two decades, now broke out in Madras; the Indian railways were built mainly out of Government advances—amounting to over five hundred million pounds—and though the Public Debt was thus multiplied tenfold, the Indian taxpayer got off very lightly indeed and was loud in his demand for more and more and more. The new-born (1867) *Madras Mail*, the organ of the Chamber and the Club, devoted leaders to the subject, and in 1868 one of Parry's partners, J. C. Loch, joined a delegation which waited upon the Viceroy, the ill-fated Lord Mayo, to urge further constructions.

Unwarned by parallel events in Britain, Madras allowed herself (in common with the rest of India) to fall into the same errors—a tangle of small independent lines competing uneconomically with one another; subsequent history has followed, as in Britain, the natural course of a series of mergers ending in State control. There was some argument as to whether the headquarters of the Madras Railway should be at Madras or not, but in the end they were so located and the fine building at Royapuram took its place on the Beach. The Directors of the Honourable East India Company—whose hour was now very nearly up—were a little nervous about this new-fangled means of transport; in their order to the Governor-General of August 1853 they were careful to urge the need for economy in the working expenses and to disadvise that "high rate of speed and frequency of despatch which is the practice in English Lines". Too many of the Directors' admonitions were shelved or ignored; not so this one.

If it was now possible to travel from Madras to Arcot in two or three hours, it was also possible to send a message from Madras to Marseilles in as many days; on October 13th 1853 Henry Nelson did this very thing and it cost him ten rupees. Enter now, therefore, the most revolutionary invention of them all—the electric telegraph. By 1854 this was firmly established in Madras City; as if to show once more that within these walls ancient and modern still kept incongruous company, its appearance coincided with the appointment of a Commission (agitated for by Gazulu Lakshminarasu) to investigate the alleged torture of dilatory assessment-payers by officials of the Land Revenue Department. (The Commission found that there was something in it, but *not* in the City of Madras; but then in the City of Madras there was no Land Revenue!) Torturers and telegraphists must have seemed—in those pre-Nazi days—a curious combination.

Experience with the steamers a decade earlier was renewed with the telegraph; instead of thanking their stars for this crowning mercy, the Madras merchants fell immediately to vociferous complaint. They objected (why?) to a charge being made for the address and also to the double rate for repeated messages. They scored a partial victory over the addresses but in regard to the repeats the Superintendent of Electric Telegraphs in India fell back on an argument not to be heard for the last time—shortage of staff. Here, indeed, the merchants had something of a case; the education in English of the telegraph operators, especially up-country, had not advanced *pari passu* with the development of electrical science and a great many messages, sent out from Blacktown in block capitals, suffered a sea-change by the time they reached their destination; repeats were rendered essential and if the double rate was charged for these, it meant that the price of telegraphic communication per word was three times what it appeared to be in the Department's notifications. Science might do her utmost but the human element remained fallible; as Parry's A. F. Brown, now Chairman of the Chamber, wrote to an interested M.P. in England, a system under which a word left Crawford Colvin in London as " shipment ", became " shipace " in Karachi and " shipoyo " in Madras, and where " ferocious " could pass in the course of the same journey to " garocious " and " garocimbs ", was clearly still suffering from imperfections. Indeed, science had gone too far this time; she had presented India with a gift for which her children were not ready. Seven years after the Madras Electric Telegraph Department set up in Popham's Broadway (with four branch offices) the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was ruefully informing the House of Commons that in a series of 1,500 messages from London to India, " some have taken fifty days, many were about forty days and a large number thirty days ". As Lord Nuffield was to say

of a similar institution in Britain itself long afterwards, "It's quicker to walk". It must be remembered of course that in the case of these long-distance messages, the Aden to Bombay part of the journey had still to be done by steamer; even so, at £2-17-0 for a twenty-word message and £1-8-6 for every extra ten words or fraction thereof, thirty to fifty days was a trifle extreme. The Madras Electric Telegraph Department proudly claimed that in the case of local messages "the time from Madras to the most distant station is from four to six hours", but it added the rider—so familiar again—that there might be "delays on the line". There might also be, as it did not add, a message of which no one at the receiving end could make head or tail.

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Except for the—to them—incomprehensible vagaries of their Government and its officials, Parry's passed the earlier '50's in placid progress. But the hour was at hand when they were to become the sport of world events far or very far from Parry's Corner.

The first of these, of course, was the Mutiny of 1857. As is common knowledge, the Mutiny affected life in Madras hardly at all, though no doubt scaremongers were rife—as they were to be, later and *crescendo*, in 1914 and 1942. It enabled William Hamilton Crake to appear at the head of his troop of Volunteer Cavalry in a "dark blue tunic handsomely embroidered with gold and red piping, white moleskin breeches, long Napoleon boots, red felt helmet with gold trimmings, gold chin strap and flowing plumes". What would one not give to have seen that glorious attire surmounted by the very beard of Jove and the eyes of a vengeful eagle! His wife, the Crake family traditions relate, slept with a sword under her pillow, though it is difficult to see the necessity for this precaution or what use the weapon could ever have been to her. In any case the Madras

sepoys remained solidly loyal; they had seen the British and their resources too long and too closely and were moreover acquainted, as their Northern friends were not, with the existence of a sea over which heavy reinforcements could—and almost certainly would—arrive; with characteristic Southern shrewdness they backed the winner. An attempt might well have been made to inflame them on the strength of the Government's recent and rather high-handed abolition of the Nawab's title, pensioning his family and more or less confiscating his Palace; if any such attempt was made it met with no response. The chief repercussion of the Mutiny upon Madras was the new Income Tax—temporary, of course—at four per cent on all incomes exceeding five hundred rupees a year. In a sense Parry's kept it in the firm, for their old Kallakurichi partner, Morison, was appointed as its assessor and collector. Madras grumbled but paid; Nelson's tirade against the slanderer in the India Legislature was justified. But the Mutiny must have been at most a distant drum; quite probably the incorporation of their new University in the same fateful year was a more powerful local excitement.

Hard on the heels of the Mutiny came the final apotheosis of the Honourable East India Company and the transfer of India's management to the Crown. The old Company, which had grown so strangely out of the determination of Elizabeth's subjects not to pay a Dutch price for their pepper, passed gently away in a cloud of compliments; "in the humble hope that the Company's rule will prove to have been, in the hands of Divine Providence, an instrument of good, and even of the highest good, to India". The Governor-General (and first Viceroy) Lord Canning replied kindly that he was quite sure that it would; *Punch*, in a venomous cartoon, indicated the alternative view.

Neither the Mutiny nor the translation of the Honourable Company had any very immediate effect

on Parry's—though the Income Tax, in those years of good profits, must have been an unpleasant imposition. But the next event was a different story. In 1861 broke out the American Civil War, which—like so many wars—was to be over in a matter of weeks and which raged instead till 1865. The Lancashire mills had been buying 80% of the American cotton crop and though stocks at the outbreak of the war were high, they dwindled rapidly; large-scale unemployment became inevitable and thirty thousand persons were presently on relief in Preston alone. Translated into terms of economics, the war meant closing down the mills for the duration—unless some other source of cotton existed. But there *was* another source of cotton, and Parry's in Tinnevelly had some of it. For the past fifteen years they had been buying up the available crops; they continued to buy them before the local price rose too steeply against them; they were ready to supply the demand and to watch the price of cotton rise from three annas a pound to twelve and the Madras shipments from 220,000 cwts. to 692,000. In 1861 their profit jumped to over three and a half lakhs, in 1862 to the hitherto unheard-of figure of ten lakhs; in 1863, at just under nine lakhs, it was hardly less brilliant. These windfalls were not misused for it was now that the third storey in the old office buildings arose to crown the edifice; it was built both rapidly and reasonably between June and October of 1866 at what seems today the trifling figure of seven thousand rupees.

The American Civil War had another local repercussion. Not only did it stop the supply of American cotton; it also stopped—which was almost more serious for Madras—the supply of American ice, "an article indispensable to the comfort and health of Europeans in this climate". (The author of the sarcophagus-aesophagus poem already quoted would not have agreed.) It was as a receptacle for this commodity that the Ice House began its long and

ill-starred history, being erected in 1841 on what was then a sand-hill close to the high-water mark. But the American supply had already proved unreliable, failing three times in five years, " inflicting great loss of comfort and no doubt considerable loss of health "; why, then, should not the citizens of Madras make ice for themselves? The Madras Ice Company Limited was projected; Parry's were to be its Secretaries and Treasurers and one of their partners, J. C. Loch, was to be on its Board of Directors which also included the legendary figure of John Bruce Norton. A glowing prospectus (the source of the above quotations) was issued; the citizens had only to subscribe and a profit of " £8 a day or £2,920 per annum, more than the whole paid up capital of the company " (which was 500 shares at Rs. 100) was in their pockets. Certain ice *and* £8 a day; who could resist it? The precise fate of this radiant venture is obscure; its prospectus was published in the *Madras Almanac* of 1865 and reappeared in that of 1866 but it never advertised its wares (as did other contemporary producers) and has left no other trace upon the records. One is forced to conclude that the ice consumers of Madras failed to make the " very small effort " which was to assure them the promised benefits and that the Company never got going at all. As against this stands the fact that Parry's 1875 ledgers show W. H. Crake as holding ten 100-rupee shares in the " Madras Ice Company "; but of course, as science unfolded her marvels and the making of ice became something much less like magic, other ice factories (such as Venkatachellam's) came into being and Crake's holding may have been in one of these. The otherwise complete silence of Parry's ledgers on the subject is difficult to explain on any other theory than that the child of 1865 perished still-born.

In the warm sunshine of cotton at nearly a rupee a pound Parry's naturally expanded in other directions; the Cuddalore branch was already firmly on

its feet, the cotton boom had turned Tuticorin into a full-scale office under a permanent Assistant, and now the Wynaad interests were demanding another at Calicut. But by May of 1865 Crake—certainly no shirker of fences—was drawing in his horns and counselling the reduction of establishments. It began to look as if the show was over and the hat might soon be coming round.

Crake was indeed wise in his generation; in 1866 the nemesis of the cotton boom fell like a thunder-clap—not mitigated by the outbreak of the Austro-Prussian war. The Bombay market went to pieces and the entire commerce of India was brought to a standstill by the chaos in London where bank after bank closed its doors. These included the Agra (the old original Agra and Masterman's version) and the Commercial Bank of India; the spectacular crash of Overend Gurney and Co., one of the biggest firms in the business, rippled through the east like a seismic wave. At the end of the year, according to Sir Compton Mackenzie, only seven exchange banks in India were left on their feet; at its beginning there had been forty-six in Bombay and Calcutta alone. Parry's profits fell like a stone and their losses plumbed the depths on the other side of the line. In Parry's case the disaster was temporary and recovery was prompt; the smaller Indian banks and business houses were not so fortunate; for them it was a black and terminal year.

As if in sympathy with these financial furies, the elements combined to play their part. 1864 had been disfigured by the shocking tidal wave at Masulipatam which strewed the flats of the Kistna Delta with corpses—those of the women decked out in all their jewelry because it was the feast of Dipavali; now 1866 brought an even more serious misfortune—the Orissa Famine. It was disgracefully mishandled and a quarter of the Province's population died; the *Madras Almanac* was almost libellously critical of the

Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Madras, however, did not directly suffer—though there was exceptionally virulent cholera, a local drought, food riots, mob violence.

And there was another disquieting murmur—which time has again made unhappily familiar—that was whispered round the Club and the Board Rooms and the columns of the newspapers—" what are the *Russians* up to?" The Russians, as it transpired—and as it may transpire again—were not up to anything very much; but there they were, sitting on the North-West frontier, a part of India yet foreign to Madras as Patagonia. There they were, perfecting their technique of upsetting the world simply by sitting there and being there and doing nothing—like a big gun pointing from the horizon. One *said* the gun had no ammunition, would never be fired; but was one sure?

* * *

The last rabbit which the 1850's and 1860's produced out of their capacious hat was the Suez Canal; it was opened in 1869, two years after the establishment of the weekly England-India mail, and it brought to a climax that long series of accelerations which had so revolutionised the Oriental voyage. Once again the great achievement produced no immediate effects on Madras; there would be a few more steamships now but not many, nor was their number likely to multiply, whatever might happen at Suez, until Madras itself had a harbour fit to receive them. The Canal did, of course, deliver the final death-blow to liners which still followed the old route round the Cape; but most of these had already gone out of business long since. Indeed, it very nearly delivered the death-blow to the P. and O. as well. The French had no intention of spending four hundred and thirty million francs for the benefit of the shipping of other nations, and before the Canal was even opened, fourteen handsome liners of the Messageries Imperiales

de France (as the Messageries Maritimes were called till Louis Napoleon's débacle put Imperials out of fashion) launched themselves on the route to India, China and Japan. They were elaborately and specially built for the entire run from Marseilles to Tokyo, no matter how the climate *en route* might vary; whereas the P. and O. had so far been employing a cold-weather type of ship from Southampton to Alexandria and a hot-weather type from Suez onward. Moreover, the P. and O. were drawing four shillings a mile as mail carriers from the British Government; the new Messageries drew from the French in one way or another something more like a pound. The situation was for a time precarious, but by making a very remarkable effort the P. and O. succeeded in simultaneously rebuilding their fleet and screwing a better contract out of the Post Office. The danger passed and British enterprise, including the mercantile community of Madras, could again view the new Canal with unalloyed satisfaction as the eighth wonder of the world.

It would be pleasant to record that, in an age when marvels were exploding into life all round her, Madras went forward with similar alacrity herself. The fact, however, is otherwise. Round about the deadline of the mid-century a curious apathy appears to have possessed the leaders of Madras society and affairs; from the days of Elphinstone onwards they had a series of rather inconspicuous and unenterprising Governors, retired and elderly soldiers, who may have set the tone of *laisser-faire* that filtered downwards through the ranks. At any rate little was done—or even attempted. For generations the roads both of City and Presidency had been notoriously primitive; in 1837 the Chamber of Commerce under Dare had fulminated against them, declaring that those on the West side were atrocious while in the East the cost of shifting cotton from Coimbatore to Porto Novo was one-eighth of the cost of the crop. The same

lament was heard from Tinnevelly while, to the northward, the roads were so negligible that the only means of reaching the interiors of Kistna or Vizag was to travel by sea to the nearest port and thereafter by palanquin; this in the '50's, the age of the railway and the telegraph. Yet it was not till 1856 that a Commission was appointed to see just what the P.W.D. had been doing—or not doing; it found the old military roads mainly in ruin and a country thrice the size of England and Wales supplied with only 3,400 miles of "made" roads, most of which had never been made at all. It was the same story with the water supply to the City; the old source at Seven Wells, obviously inadequate or bound to become so, was regarded with complacence till 1861 when the Korteliyar-Red Hills scheme was put into operation—so defectively and inadequately that it had to be re-done within forty years. Not till 1861 did the port (where the P. and O. steamers had been calling for twenty years) get the length even of a pier. A handful of Parry's partners and their colleagues were striving, as we have seen, to rouse the communal conscience; but where were the Pophams and the Clives, the Bells and the Andersons, of this lotus-eating age?

In population the City grew—slowly and fitfully; how many citizens it harboured no one knew. As always, men came into it when times were bad and food short up-country and returned to the villages as soon as things improved; nobody came to Madras in search of work because there was none in it to be got. In 1863 Sir Charles Trevelyan (who should be kindly remembered for his foundation of the People's Park and his opposition to the Income Tax) persuaded himself that his capital must contain at least a million souls; he had overestimated by more than a hundred per cent, but no doubt they looked—as they still look—innumerable. When, in 1871, a formal count of the inhabitants was at last undertaken, the figures were found to be less than four hundred

thousand—to be exact, 397,552; throughout half of the sprawling semi-rural area the density was less than twenty-five to the acre. From the Report on this Census—perhaps the best, as the first, of a distinguished series—a few sentences are worth quoting. "The most stupid and least public-spirited section of the community appears to have been found among the European residents, some of whom, with a delicious if somewhat troublesome *naiveté*, regarded it as an impertinence that they should be called upon to answer the same questions as were put to the Indian population. Some took the schedule but did not return it. A few wrote vulgar remarks on it"..... Delicious indeed! Not a very great deal, perhaps, was to be expected from a European community who thought along lines like these.

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It has just been said that the port of Madras had not even a pier until 1861. Nor had it; but within the next few years very large developments began to impend. The inherent drawbacks of Madras as a port have already been sufficiently emphasised; it is almost incredible that any mercantile community should have put up with them as long as the Madras mercantile community did or that such lines as the P. & O., the Messageries Imperiales and the B. I. should continue to pay quite sizeable harbour dues (Rs. 12,652 in 1867) for what the Chamber of Commerce described, with some understatement, as "advantages of a very negative description". Except that the substitution of steamers for sailing-ships had made the Madras Roads less of a death-trap than of yore, conditions in 1868 were for practical purposes exactly as they had been on the day when Thomas Parry landed; vessels still lay at anchor outside the surf and *masulah* boats struggled backwards and forwards through it. Ingoing and outgoing cargo was dumped haphazard on the beach. It was not the fault of the

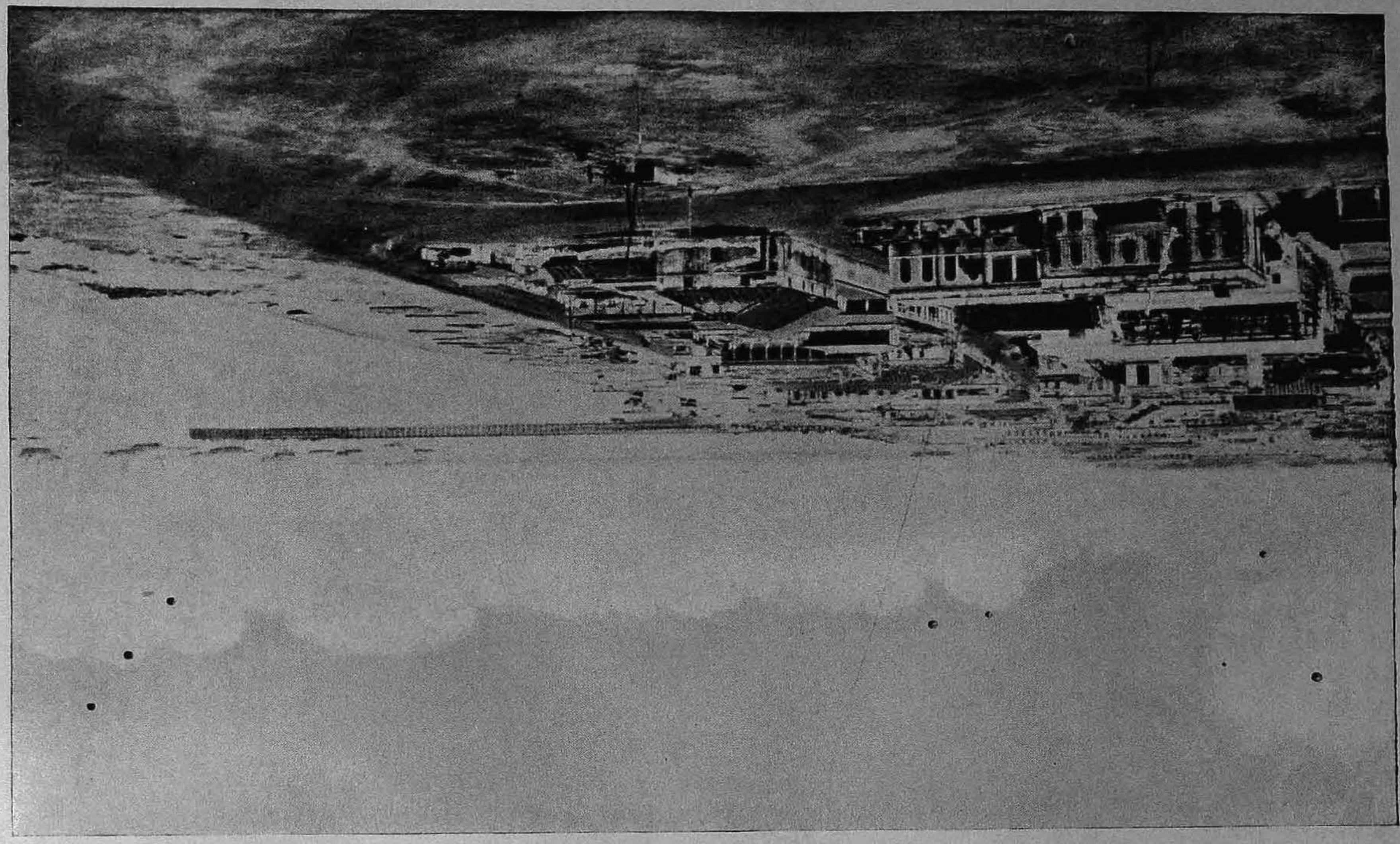
mercantile community that this unsatisfactory, indeed disgraceful state of affairs persisted; Parry, Dare, Nelson, Crake and their compeers of other firms had repeatedly protested and urged reform. But they had struck invariably on two formidable obstacles. The first was the conviction of the East India Company's Directors, dating from the building of Day's first Fort and bequeathed eventually to the Viceroys, that Madras was a useless place, run at a loss of a million a year and not worth spending money on. The other was that curious school of philanthropists who, whenever the question was raised, cried out that a harbour would deprive the *masulah* boatmen of their livelihood. Why anyone should have wasted sympathy on the *masulah* boatmen is not clear. They were a gang of rapacious scoundrels who knew themselves to be indispensable and traded on it; they charged at will and pleasure anything up to ten times the regulation fares and rates, they treated the cargo entrusted to them with the utmost roughness and carelessness and they stole and pilfered like brigands. Had Madras fronted a waveless lagoon, the extortions of the *masulah* boatmen and the loss and damage they caused would alone have justified the construction of a harbour.

The first person to suggest as much as a pier was Warren Hastings in 1769 as a member of the Fort St. George Council and the Committee of Works. His idea was a pier projecting beyond the surf; conditions at Madras, he thought, were much the same as those at Margate, the Margate pier would do as a model. A plan of the harbour at Ramsgate was actually got out from London and a pier based on sunk caissons with piles was recommended. But Hastings went away to be Governor General and his plan retired into the pigeon-holes for a century.

Thirty years later, in 1798, another man ahead of his time, Captain Lennon of the Madras Engineers, went a stage further; in a memorandum of fifty pages he proposed not only a pier but a closed harbour.

PARRY'S CORNER IN THE EARLY 1860's

It is unfortunately impossible to date this picture with exactitude. But it is post-1861 (because the pier exists and is apparently working) and it is pre-1866 (May) because Parry's office buildings still lack their third storey. If a closer shot must be made, certain evidence, much more conjectural, would suggest 1864.



This he thought—with considerable prescience—would have the incidental effect of shifting the merchants from the Fort to Blacktown which would thus become "much more respectable". The Board in Madras passed on this interesting proposal to the Directors at home; Captain Lennon's memorandum joined the plans of Ramsgate harbour in limbo.

Despite sporadic agitation from the Madras merchants the pier question did not seriously emerge again till the middle of the nineteenth century. (There had been a breakwater scheme in 1836 but it ended in fiasco.) By 1850 there was, however, in Madras a Pier Company in which Parry's, needless to say, held shares, and this body and others like it did their work so well that in 1861 a screw-pile pier was actually built; Parry's Henry Nelson, assisted by the Governor and the C.-in-C., screwed down the first pile. It was a rather flimsy structure though it was 1,000 feet long and 40 feet broad and carried four lines of tramway with fixed and moveable cranes. It cost £108,000 and it went a little way, but only a little way, towards solving the problem of landing goods at Madras; the *masulah* boats, with all their disadvantages, must still ply between vessel and pier, and still greatly preferred the beach.

In 1868, its Chairman for the past two years having been Alexander Forrester Brown of Parry's, the Madras Chamber of Commerce took up in earnest the question of a closed harbour and once more assailed the Government. A French barque had just been driven in a storm clean through the pier, putting it out of action for a twelvemonth. Railways were converging on Madras; what use were railways without a harbour? Government were sufficiently impressed to appoint an investigating committee (on which no member of Parry's appeared) and immediately this much-afflicted project ran into a fresh impasse; to the parsimony of Government and the plaints of the *masulah* boatmen was now added the

clash between conflicting "expert" opinions. Should there, in the first instance, be a closed harbour at all or merely a continuous breakwater running parallel to the coast from the Light-house to Royapuram? The general view was that no closed harbour could keep clear of silt—and silt in quantities with which no dredger could cope. The President of the Committee on the other hand, Colonel Carpendale, R.E., was persuaded that no silt would enter the harbour and that there would be no need for dredging whatsoever. An "expert" from Leith was brought out, made a flying tour of the Presidency ports, wasted a couple of years and produced nothing. Time passed, "experts" contradicted one another, but in the end the majority on the Committee were over-ruled and the plan submitted by a Mr. Parkes prevailed, namely a pair of breakwaters running out parallel to one another at right angles to the coast and then curving round in pincer formation to leave an opening of only 500 feet between their pier-heads; the enclosure thus formed would accommodate nine steamers at time. This plan, which eventually commended itself to Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State, had the powerful backing throughout of Alexander Forrester Brown. Mr. Parkes' qualification was that he had constructed a successful harbour at Karachi, his disqualification was that he had never in his life set eyes on Madras.

Long years had passed in "great argument about it and about" and though the Prince of Wales had succeeded in laying the foundation stone of the harbour in 1875, it was not till 1877 that work could be begun. Parry's John Jones was now the Chairman of the Chamber (J. C. Loch as well as A. F. Brown had held office during the argument years in 1869 and 1873). The project nearly received its death-blow *in limine* owing to the antagonism of the new Viceroy Lord Lytton who adhered strongly to the "Madras not worth it" school; fortunately the Secretary of State, maintaining the principle of conflicting autho-

rities, overruled him. The work, proceeding even then at no breakneck pace, was nearing completion when the cyclone of 1881 burst upon it in fury. Half a mile of the two breakwater arms was demolished and one hundred and fifty lakhs worth of work was washed about the harbour. The collapse of the arms was not perhaps surprising as their summit had been designed to be no more than two and a half feet above the crest of the normal Madras surf.

The fury of the elements gave way again to the fury of the experts. For a further period, again running into years, battle raged between them as to whether the harbour should be rebuilt with a North-east or, as per Parkes, a due East entrance. Another ad hoc Committee of distinguished engineers—in London—decided that no ship could enter or leave the harbour on the North since the prevailing wind was always northerly. The Captains of the P. &. O. and B. I. steamers, on the other hand, backed by the Madras Government (for once apparently trusting the man with local knowledge, a trust they rarely extended to their own servants) were unanimously confident that entrance and egress at the North would present no difficulties as the prevailing wind was always from the South! On this somewhat bewildering evidence the Secretary of State—a Daniel indeed—ruled that the engineers were right and that the Parkes plan should be completed with the entrance due east. It was so done and in 1896, nearly thirty years after the Chamber had fired its opening shot, the work on these lines was at last completed. And then and thereafter—steadily, remorselessly and in tens of thousands of tons—in came the sand.

To round off this protracted story, on which the comments of Parry's successive partners must have been worth hearing, we must take a long jump forward to 1904 and the arrival of Sir Francis Spring as salaried Chairman of the Harbour Trust Board—to become the Port Trust a year later. Sir Francis

gazed in horror at a harbour, " with full scope for the swell to roll in nearly all the year round ", landward "a flat sandy slope with surf rolling in on it but little less violently than outside", a few "confused and unregulated railway sidings and two or three exiguous sheds" and a beach "at all times littered with timber, coal, railway materials, general cargo, machinery, liquors, etc., all in dire confusion ", the cargo of one vessel dumped on the unremoved deposits from the one before it. Such was Madras Harbour, after so much cogitation and so many words, in 1904. No wonder that consignees waited weeks or even months for their packages; no wonder the outside world had so long regarded Madras as a poor place " not worth spending money on ". It was a depressing sight for Sir Francis; but by the time he left in 1919, Madras, really and at last, had a harbour.

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We left the main stream of events in 1871 with the European community cold-shouldering the census. Their spirits, lowered by this unpalatable insult, were cheered two years later by the sudden abolition of the Mutiny Income Tax which, in one form or another and with only one short respite, had been oppressing them since 1860; their present joy might have been tempered had they realised that the exemption was to last for four years only, after which time there was never never to be any exemption again. In 1873 also there was a general lightening of export and import duties. Yet the '70's as a decade were not a bright time for business. Now began that slow but persistent decline in the price of silver, and with it in the exchange value of the rupee, that was to overhang the markets for the next twenty years and was to reappear in a more catastrophic form after the First World War. At the moment its ostensible causes were two—the sudden flood of the metal from the Comstock and Bonanza " finds " in

Nevada, and the equally sudden decision of Germany to adopt the gold standard and to hurl uncountable millions of demonetised thalers on the world. But in point of fact slumps in silver were nothing new—though each fresh occurrence tended to be hailed as an unprecedented Act of God; Thomas Parry had met one three years after his arrival in Madras and, as was repeatedly pointed out during the bimetallism controversy of the '80's, the metal had really no fixed and dependable value. Yet a gold currency could never, for some reason, be made a working success in India; on silver, with all its distressing fluctuations, the finances of the country had to be based. The immediate slump in the silver price in and just after 1873 amounted to a drop from 59 to 46 pence per standard ounce (a figure which in 1914 would have been considered extraordinarily high) and the rupee naturally dwindled downwards with it from its original two shillings to the one-and-three-pence at which it bottomed twenty years later. The fact would seem to be that this last figure was much nearer the true value of the rupee for modern purposes than the higher values to which it occasionally jumped; unfortunately this was a fact which the financial advisers of the Government of India were slow to recognise.

The fall in the '70's put Parry's, in common with other firms as with the ordinary man, in serious difficulties over their remittances and constituted an additional drag on business conditions which were, at the moment, in no need of discouragement. Piece-goods remained stagnant; Crake's considerable dealings in the late '60's were not repeated. Among commodities sugar was still a very dull market even though the three per cent duty on exports to foreign countries had for some time been removed; prices fluctuated considerably at low levels. The coffee position is again, so far as Parry's are concerned, confusing; the product was heading the export figures for the Presidency but

Parry's were apparently backing out of it. They had held the Agency for the South India Coffee Company in the Wynaad (capital twenty lakhs) since 1865 but the name disappears from their books in 1880. Tea—mainly on the Nilgiris—was on the upward move after a decade of virtual neglect; Parry's were already investigating its possibilities which perhaps accounts for their decreasing interest in coffee. But this may rather have been due to the appearance in the Wynaad of a new and glittering siren; in 1875 Parry's became agents for the South Indian Alpha Gold Mining Company Limited (capital one lakh). This was getting in on the ground floor with a vengeance, for the report of Brough Smith, the Government of India's mining engineer, did not come out till 1879. It was favourable, but—a siren the Wynaad gold remained.

That the prospects of Indian cotton were fading again as the Southern States of America recovered from their War is indicated by the fact that Parry's now sold their premises at Tuticorin to C. J. Barter who had been their agent there, and by the larger and gloomier fact of the closing down in 1876 of their St. George Steam Press at Madras with a loss of well over a lakh. With a characteristically magnificent gesture, Crake, the old cotton hero, rushed to the rescue. "I shared", he wrote, "in the more prosperous times of your cotton trade and I am not unwilling to share in the loss now ascertained..... debit my capital account with the sum of Rs. 137,000-11-8". This munificent—and exact—surrender was qualified by the rider that the firm was to pay to "one or other of my sons so long as he is resident in the Presidency of Madras the sum of 600 a month". Parry's must have undertaken this relatively trivial recompense with great goodwill; though they may have felt a little apprehensive as to the difficulty of deciding, in the event of *two* Crake sons simultaneously making their homes in Madras, which should have the money.

The ledgers show that the general export and import trade continued on well-worn lines. Office expenditure was still very moderate; of the twenty-four clerks employed in 1872 only two drew upwards of one hundred rupees a month. The average monthly salary bill of the lower office staff in 1872 came to 1,303 rupees; it remained practically stationary around that figure for the next fifteen years.

Seasonally, the decade was again disastrous. On the 2nd of May 1872 occurred a sensational cyclone; John Fortune half a century afterwards could remember its waves bursting on the very compound wall of Parry's corner—a useful reminder that First Line Beach was still in fact what it purported to be in name. All cyclones, however, were eclipsed by the great Madras Famine of 1876-78 which practically brought all business to a standstill, though on its credit side it put paid to the Governmental policy of laisser-faire in the matter of grain prices and led to the first measures for famine relief. At one time in October of 1877 more than one and a half million people were being given free food. Parry's of course were forward in these errands of mercy, their partner John Jones being a member of the Famine Relief Committee at the Monegar Choultry; his proposed cable to the Lord Mayor of London was not considered by his fellows long enough or strong enough, though with its "extremely grave.....must intensify..... hundreds dying daily.....terrible mortality" it seems to the eye of posterity sufficiently alarming. His Parry's colleague J. C. Shaw on the other hand was averse to the "manipulation" of public sympathy by "sensational telegrams".

In the middle of the Famine, on the 1st of January 1877, Disraeli achieved yet another of his Oriental triumphs and his Queen was crowned Empress of India. The event produced no violent repercussions on Indian politics. In Madras these had been drifting along the course set for them by Gazulu

Lakshminarasu thirty years earlier. In 1873 the Cosmopolitan Club was founded, its object—never very fully realised—being to afford a meeting-place for Indian and European gentlemen. There was a spate of new (and good) Indian-run newspapers; a series of false starts—*Public Opinion*, the *Madrasee*, the *People's Friend*—coalesced in 1878 into the *Hindu*. But in India famine and political activity have rarely run together; the politics were to blossom in the next decade. There is no reason to suppose that Parry's regarded these embryo strivings of the Indian Nationalist ideal with other than a benevolent sympathy; albeit—like others—they were blind to their significance.

It was getting on for a century since Thomas Parry, Venus-like, had risen out of the surf and passed through the Sea Gate of the Fort; he would have had difficulty now in recognising the setting which then met his enquiring gaze. The sea front of Madras was filling up rapidly, the line from Clive's Battery to San Thome was becoming something as we see it today. Royapuram railway headquarters, the General Post Office, the Presidency College, the Senate House were all either in process or in being—though the wrecks of the cyclone of 1872 still lay within stones-throw of the Senate House's doors. And Blacktown was changing its character again—if only because the remote, discouraged but finally effectual energies of the tenacious Miss Florence Nightingale were at long long last getting something done about the age-old problem of its drains. Yet even as its amenities improved, the better among its denizens began to desert it. Till the '60's people of position had still inhabited its old sequestered houses with their fine wide verandahs and their fine easy stairs; now the exodus was setting in. The sea, taking vengeance for the Harbour, was gnawing savagely at its frontage; per contra, the Harbour had made that frontage the only possible location for the merchant trader with his office. Thus from one cause or another, Blacktown as a residential

area was dying; it was becoming The City, Wall Street, a place whose motto was to be " no admittance except on business ".

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It was never Parry's habit to be dulled by dull times; after the flatness of the '70's we find them as usual questing round for fresh outlets for their energies. These took two forms—the Emigration Agencies and the Nilgiri and Wynaad goldfields. That the Emigration was never much more than a burden and the gold a positive loss was not their fault.

The principle of Government-assisted emigration was based on the sound idea of exporting India's surplus population—or such of it as would go—to Colonies where labour was needed. This idea was not new; small parties of emigrants had gone out to work in the sugar plantations of the West Indies and British Guiana in the early '40's—as soon as the abolition of slavery gave them an opening. Others had been sent to Mauritius. But the main channel of emigrants was to South Africa, to both the Transvaal and Natal, but especially the latter. This began in 1866 but the Agency for it finds a place in Parry's books only from 1885 onwards. In 1884 A. B. Fortune was recruiting under their direction in Madura and A. P. Millar in Tanjore, the former for Natal, the latter for British Guiana.

For a time affairs went smoothly enough. But by the early '90's friction was developing; the Indian emigrants were not welcome in Natal and in 1893 the locals expressed their sentiments by forcibly preventing the landing of a party from Madras and by extracting anti-Indian measures out of their new representative Government. With the turn of the century the whole thing became inevitably caught up in the vortex of Indian Nationalist politics. Gandhi's championship of Indian subjects in South Africa led to his imprisonment there and feelings throughout,

India naturally ran high. Nor were the Indians left to plead their own cause for themselves; the Madras Chamber of Commerce, under the Chairmanship of, and possibly stimulated by Parry's A. J. Yorke, put its views before the Chambers of Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town in unequivocal language; it used such forthright expressions as "persecution" and described Indian indignation as "deep and genuine". "European opinion in Madras", it continued, "deprecates alike the treatment which appears to have been accorded to Indians of education and good character in the Transvaal and any undue interference with the Colonial authorities by the Imperial Government, and this Chamber now addresses itself to you in the belief that the exchange of views between, and the co-operation of those bodies which are materially interested in India and South Africa, may do much to remove misunderstandings and bring about a compromise". It is a significant declaration—one of the earliest concrete signs that the Madras merchants were ready, when need arose, to enter the political arena and in interests not specifically their own.

As might have been expected, the South African Chambers did not reply to these overtures with any conspicuous cordiality. As might also have been expected, the principle of emigration itself and the alleged ill-treatment of the emigrants became ever increasingly a political target as the new century advanced, and though successive Commissions of enquiry reported very favourably on the working of the scheme (one going so far as to say "the man who makes the errors of the past a pretext for closing the door against emigration in the future will be doing lasting dis-service to his fellow subjects in India") the Government, disgusted, decided to drop it. This was not formally done till 1917 but in January of 1911 J. R. Murray, then Parry's London partner, wrote out to Jackson in Madras, "It looks as if it

(Natal emigration) has been *officially* knocked on the head but I am told that emigration will continue and that *unofficially* you ought still to be able to make a business of it by laying yourselves out as a kind of natives' Cook & Sons". Parry's in Madras did not greatly fancy themselves in the role of Cooks for Coolies but were willing to try; later in the same year we find A. J. Yorke writing in turn from London, "Straits Migration: I hope we shall be able now to make a start. Fiji etc.: I await further news with interest. I agree that we should make our terms moderate enough to secure the business". Parry's followed up the Fiji agency but, as will be told in due course, this came—for various reasons—to nothing. They handled, of course, for many years—and indeed still handle so far as it still exists—a flow of returning emigrants homing from South Africa to India at the close of their indentured periods.

The other new interest of the '80's, the gold mining, had begun, as we have seen, in the previous decade. The industry itself had been started in the Wynaad as far back as 1868 by a body of miners from Australia and in 1879 Brough Smith, the Government of India's mining engineer, established the existence of gold in the South East Wynaad and the Nanjanad valley "in sufficiently large quantities to make gold mining a profitable industry". In 1881 there was a gold boom, or at least boomlet, and something that could almost have been called a rush developed. No fewer than forty-four mushroom Companies sprang up in Mysore and the Wynaad with a capital between them of five and a half lakhs—which on the face of it was hopelessly insufficient. Of these Parry's took on the Agencies for the South Indian Alpha Gold Mining Company already mentioned and the Devalla Central Gold Mining Company; Arbuthnot's, less cautious, became agents for no fewer than seven.

The story of the boom is quickly told. In 1883 to '84 the Madras Administration Report recorded

that the gold mining enterprise in the Wynaad had "almost collapsed"; in 1884 to '85 it had collapsed altogether. On the Nilgiris in 1884 to '85 one of the ten existing Companies had extracted 363 ounces of gold (value Rs. 16,330) and another 90; the rest *nil*. By the following year the number of Companies was reduced to six, two on the Nilgiri plateau and four in the South East Wynaad; the former had no funds and had done no work, the latter were "said to have" obtained 1,174 ounces valued at £4,328. None of these can have been Devalla which was already wound up. Parry's estates, which in the first flush of enthusiasm for the new love had been taken out of coffee and put into gold-bearing, were restored to them and put back under the more prosaic but more reliable crop. In 1888 seventeen coffee estates in the Wynaad are listed in their ledgers with a total value (no acreage given) of nearly five and a quarter lakhs; this was nearly double the current valuation of Nellikuppam.

Irrespective of gold and emigration Parry's of course carried on their old business, marking no doubt with satisfaction the at times spectacular rise in sugar exports during the '80's. The ledgers of 1887 show them interested in fresh Abkhari contracts under the new Abkhari Act of 1886 which consolidated and improved the old renter system on which Parry's had enjoyed the right of vending and distributing spirits since its inception in 1872: they now had bonded warehouses at Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Erode, Madura, Tinnevelly, Chingleput and Arkonam. Other activities were the long standing Kallakurichi, Bandepollium and Nellikuppam "concerns", casuarina growing, oil mills, salt-pans, and the surviving Vellore indigo works. Nor did Parry's overlook their share in the public affairs of Madras; in 1883 they subscribed a thousand rupees to the new Town Hall and when the Viceroy Lord Ripon visited Madras in the following year on his way to Hyderabad to install the Nizam,

Parry's J. C. Shaw, now risen to be Chairman of the Chamber, lost no time in getting at him about the harbour. Parry's joined too in the outcry that arose when, in 1888, the P. & O. suddenly decided to cut out their call at Madras; to the Chamber's protests against the abrupt suspension of a service which had been running since 1842 "to the satisfaction of both parties", the P. & O. acidly replied that if this last had been the case they would not have been likely to withdraw.

In 1881 the second Madras Census was taken; the Europeans, who seem to have behaved less childishly than on the previous occasion, were found to number 10,838 (7,326 males and 3,512 females). This meant a decrease of 25% since 1871, which was attributed to the transfer of troops. Beyond the walls of Madras their Calcutta compatriots were binding themselves into the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association, "to represent the interests and promote the welfare of Europeans of all nationalities, Anglo-Indians, Americans, Armenians, Eurasians and others associated with Europeans by a community of sympathies and interests"; J. C. Shaw and his Chamber were warmly in support of this—perhaps rather ominous—sign of the times. Nerves were a little frayed all round; the Russian bogey in Afghanistan was fee-fi-fo-fumming more fearsomely than usual and presently a cry went up that the Madras defences were inadequate—as indeed they were and always had been ever since the limitations of Fort St. George had horrified Grandpré. Caustic remarks were heard to the effect that the money just spent on building the Marina would better have been devoted to a new battery and a few torpedoes. The Chamber of Commerce was prepared to sacrifice even its cherished harbour in the cause of improved defences; at all costs the gun carriage and gun powder factories must *not* be abolished. These clouds passed away in time to allow unrestricted enjoyment of Queen Victoria's

jubilee, though the celebrations were marred by a fire and panic at the People's Park involving the loss of nearly four hundred lives.

In December of 1883 died that colossal figure William Hamilton Crake, with a balance at Parry's of over six lakhs; despite the best efforts of a succession of German spas he had never recovered, it was said, from his interminable sessions as foreman of the Tichborne Jury. His son William Parry Crake, who had now been with the firm for some time, was admitted as partner on 1st January 1882 with a 5/60th share to be increased to 10/60ths on 1st January 1885. William Parry Crake, however, did not wait for the increment but prudently retired (with two and a half lakhs) on the 12th of December 1884. In his early days in Madras he seems to have been the Perfect Bachelor—handsome, first-class at games, a ready and generous host; it was in keeping that the lady he married, besides being the great-grand-daughter of Thomas Parry's original partner, should be also the lady tennis champion of Madras. His portrait in the Board Room shows that he grew in time to be the equally Perfect City Man of the '90's. His son, Eric Hamilton Crake (who would have joined Parry's in his turn had his health not failed) distinguished himself by scoring a century for Harrow against Eton; but then W. H. Crake's grandson could hardly have done less.

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William Hamilton Crake died in harness as one of the two partners in Crawford Colvin and Company, the other being Robert Wigram Crawford, a Director of the Bank of England; and perhaps this may be the appropriate point at which to summarise the long history of Parry's London representation, a connection going right back to Thomas Parry himself. Thomas Parry, as was natural, began with his sponsor and brother-in-law Gilbert Ross and

his firm of Mill Ross and Burgie. This continued smoothly till the year 1806 when Parry wrote to Mr. Alexander Colvin of Calcutta that he "had it in contemplation" to place the management of Parry Neill and Co. with "my old correspondents" Mr. Bruce and Mr. Bazett. In this and other letters of the same period Parry explained that Mill had died, Burgie was very ill and Ross had long retired from business and continued to handle Parry's affairs only out of a feeling of brotherly obligation. To Ross himself Parry wrote, "as it must be attended with much inconvenience to you now that Mr. Burgie is so unwell to be plagued with business, I am about to make arrangements with the house of Bruce and Company to act as agents for our firm in London. We are agents for the house of Colvins and Company at Calcutta, who are connected with that of Bruce and Company. At present our business in London is not considerable but it is likely to increase next year as we expect to make large consignments of indigo on account of a constituent with whom Colvin and Company have some transactions". The constituent in question was of course our old friend Colonel Cullen.

The full style of Parry's new agents was Bruce, de Ponthieu, Bazett and Company and their office was at 71 Old Broad Street. The partners in this firm and its various branches were, besides those already mentioned, Colvin, Farquhar and Crawford; in Parry's ledgers all six appear in almost every possible permutation and combination. Eventually, however, in 1834, they crystallized into Crawford and Company and in 1836 to Crawford Colvin, and Company in which form they remained for half a century. They continued to occupy the premises in Old Broad Street until the days of Crake and R. W. Crawford. On Crake's death, however, the firm seems to have collapsed and to have closed down in 1885 when its name ceases to appear in the London Directory.

Parry's transferred their agency, either immediately or very soon afterwards, to Messrs. T. H. Allan and Company who held it until 1892. In 1893 Parry's apparently decided to manage their own affairs in London for themselves and "Parry and Company, London" appears in the records. There were no further changes till the incorporation of Parry Murray and Company in 1907, to which we shall come in due course.

With the establishment of their own London office Parry's fell into line with Arbuthnot's, Binny's and other Madras firms. A London office was not, however, a wholly unmixed blessing—as at least one of these firms was to learn to its cost; there was always the risk that the London office might take the bit in its teeth and from the representative might become the ruler. There were cases where this happened; but, despite a brief period when appearances were to the contrary, it did not happen to Parry's.

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The year 1885 must always be a political milestone of the first magnitude in Indian history for in the last month of that year the Indian National Congress was founded—among others by a British ex-Civil-Servant Allan Octavian Hume who had once been a Secretary to Government, and with the avowed object of improving Indo-British relations. According to some, the actual genesis of the Congress took place at the Adyar in Madras a year earlier under the aegis of the sparkling Madame Blavatsky; if so, it is not surprising that in the early days of its history the Congress was much more partial to Madras as a meeting place than it afterwards became. Full sessions took place there in 1887, 1894, 1898, 1903, 1908 and 1914. The original 1887 meeting must have been an interesting occasion of which, generally speaking, the most was made by both sides. The main target of Nationalist oratory was,

rather ominously, the Arms Act; the delegates ranged from firebrands like Vijiaraghavachariar to such impeccable figures as Sir T. Madhava Rao and the Maharajah of Vizianagram—Grant Duff's " Prince Charming ". There were still European delegates—John Adam of Pachaiyappa's college and Eardley Norton; and it was still possible for the Governor, Lord Connemara, to invite the entire gathering to a garden party at Government House. It seems a sad pity that, through faults on both sides, these pleasant relations so rapidly and so gravely deteriorated. There were limits to fellowship even then, however; when, in '88, the Congress wrote quite humbly to the Madras Chamber of Commerce and suggested that " now that you have been able to see for yourselves how thoroughly orderly, loyal and full of goodwill towards all sections of the residents in India our proceedings are ", the Chamber might like to join the Party, the Chairman (not one of Parry's partners this time) replied coldly if correctly that to accept such an invitation " would not be consistent with the object for which the Chamber was and is established ". Historians may speculate with interest on what would have happened if the Chamber's decision had gone the other way and whether, had the proposed union been effected, the " goodwill towards all sections " could have been maintained.

At the 1894 session in Madras the Congress was still beholden to Sir George Moore, President of the Madras Municipality, for " much timely help ", and the 1898 session was innocuous. But it had a Bengali president and by 1903 the Bengali delegates had succeeded in dragging in Curzon and his shortcomings and the hope of a friendly atmosphere seemed to be passing away. In 1914 Lord Pentland made a desperate effort to recover it by visiting the Congress in full session; he was greeted by " the spontaneous rising of the Assembly and by hearty applause ". He deserved it for it was a fine and statesman-like gesture,

the first of its kind. And the last; by the time the Congress again met in Madras—in 1927—the atmosphere had changed irrevocably.

As has just been shown, the storm of Indian Nationalism broke slowly and gently. Slower and more gentle still were the Government's reactions to it. In 1885, when the Indian National Congress was born, the Madras Government consisted of the Governor, two senior I.C.S. men and the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army (to be abolished in 1895). Its Legislative Council was made up of these *plus* eight nominated members of whom two were officials. By 1892, the Government of India had got the length of increasing this nominated eight to twenty, but there was still no question of elections or of anything but an official majority and though the "House" as a whole could argue about the Budget it could not vote on it. There were no further reforms till 1909, when seventeen whole years had been lost; by which time it was a little too late.

So India's administrative and parliamentary arrangements offered scant opening for such as Parry's partners, however willing, well-disposed and experienced, to play their part in the politics of their adopted country. One cannot help feeling that Henry Nelson, surviving from the '50's, could have shown the Government of the '80's a thing or two.

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In the 1890's science, the prolific fairy god-mother of the Victorians, delivered the last of her breath-taking gifts—the internal combustion engine. In 1894, doubtless to the astonishment and delight of the lieges, the first motor-car appeared in the City and was positively driven "some distance" down Mount Road. Whether it was pushed home again history does not say, but at any rate there it was. It is doubtful whether many of the spectators of that gallant outing realised the revolution in transport implied

in what they saw; even five years later, when Parry's Alec Macdonald went to "a motor-car show" in London, and wrote out about it to Yorke, he was still in the stage of elementaries. "Both the Motor Carriage and the Steam Wagon and Carriage Companies" had promised estimates but Macdonald thought the "Daimler motor-car using petrol" would be the most suitable. But then, would importation of fuel oil into India be allowed? And would Government permit these queer new-fangled vehicles to run over their roads and bridges? And would petrol taint such goods as sugar or seeds? Parry's early interest in the new horseless transport was not, in any case, sustained; they were to have their chance later of entering the industry but they turned it down.

The petrol engine more or less terminated the century's amazing strides in the field of communications; till the coming of aerial flight and "the wireless" there would be no further advances of comparable degree. On less exciting lines, however, the Buckingham Canal was now, in 1890, completed for the whole of its imposing length, though the project to run steam services on it had to be abandoned. In May of 1895 Madras City saw her first electric tramways—a full six years earlier than any other city in India, to say nothing of London. One other marvel of the age, the telephone, was now coming into its own; Madras had been very go-ahead in the matter of telephones and it had enjoyed a Telephone Company as far back as 1881; but now, in 1893, the Oriental Telephone and Electricity Company rose to its first directory. It included 75 lines of which Parry's were responsible for three—Parry & Co., General (No. 38), Parry and Co., Produce and Shipping (No. 28) and Parry and Co., A. J. Yorke (No. 40). Domestic electricity tarried; as long ago as 1879 an enterprising Frenchman M. Amedée Vernes, had demonstrated in the People's Park an apparatus for providing electric light but though the Municipality

bought his machine (and very cheap) for Rs. 7,000, the hour of " lights and fans " was not yet.

The early '90's could have borne with some illumination for they were again a sombre period. German aniline dyes were now entering India to the tune of half a million pounds a year, thus administering the coup de grace to the long moribund industry in indigo whose devotees in South Arcot were already being drawn away from it by the lure of the easier and more profitable groundnuts. The Indian Railways were in the red to the extent of ninety-two lakhs, though the Madras Railway was better off than most. Strikes—a pleasing novelty—were breaking out among railway employees and among weavers, and there was a general trade depression. The rupee which had been falling since 1873 seemed now to have bottomed round about 1/3d.; the Government of India, following the recommendation of the Herschell Committee, decided to put a stop to the coinage of silver and by thus controlling the number of rupees in circulation establish a fixed rate of exchange at 1-4d. or fifteen rupees to the pound. It was, as Sir Compton Mackenzie remarks, " a painful process for the mercantile community ".

In 1894, however, the Mofussil Warehouse and Trading Company (which still survives) was formed in Madras with a capital of one lakh and Parry and Company as its Managing Agents. Its centre was Cuddalore where it was to carry on the business of warehouse keepers, commission agents and coal factors. Four years later, in 1898, Parry's became Agents for the B. I. S. N. Company at Cuddalore and Trivandrum; the former of these offices they still retain.

We have not heard of Cuddalore for some time but Cuddalore had been moving steadily forward. Parry's had begun there in a small way with some sort of " indigo house " in the time of Sugar Campbell, but the establishment of the Bandepollium and

Nellikuppam concerns in the early '40's brought the area into importance and an office was acquired in the New Town. In 1886 Parry's went a step further and bought their present Cuddalore office for Rs. 10,000—a remarkably good bargain considering that it had been valued sixty years earlier at nearly a lakh. This office was none other than the old "Factory House" of the East India Company—not the original Factory House which the French destroyed in 1758 (and which would have fallen down in any case had they not) but the ambitious structure thereafter raised upon the ruin. So ambitious was it that the East India Company Directors stopped the work in panic and horror as soon as they saw the bills—which is why Parry's now inhabit a building consisting of one finished wing with terraced roof and pillars and one shabby wing with tiles and no adornments at all. Among its many previous tenants was one name familiar to us in these annals—that of the ubiquitous George Garrow who was Collector of South Arcot from 1802 to 1804. Since his occupancy it had been steadily going down in the world—from Collector to Commercial Resident, from Commercial Resident to Customs House, from Customs House to Jail.

Parry's Cuddalore business had fluctuated almost as freely. It began with indigo, hides, groundnut oil; shifted to Abkhari and banking; shifted again to coal, groundnut and sugar. Between 1875 and 1890 the acquisition of casuarina plantations and salt factories in the neighbourhood added to the miscellany. In 1894, as has just been said, the firm embarked on the warehousing business and with it began building its own boats.

Parry's were naturally interested in the fortunes of Cuddalore and were from time to time exercised over their possible improvement, though never to any great purpose. The Cuddalore-Vriddachalam-Salem railway, that dream to which they had so often reverted,

did at last materialise in the 1930's—but like most things, a little too late. The port was not without promise and in 1906 was officially described as " most flourishing "; at one time it had worked up an export and import trade to the annual value of no less than 200 lakhs. But its overseas business perished with World War Two, its coastal trade dwindled and died, and with the embargo on the export of groundnuts, on which it had really subsisted and depended, it fell back into the minor position it occupies today.

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On the 3rd of April 1895 a foundation stone was laid at Ranipet on which in time a very considerable structure was to rise. The inscription reads " Arcot Sugar Works and Distilleries. The foundation of this building was laid by Sydenham Henry Wynne Esq., B.A., I.C.S., on the 3rd April 1895". Although Parry's had nothing at the moment to do with it, the stone marks the beginnings of their Ranipet enterprise and it is in the wall of their chemical works there that the relic may still be seen.

The story of Ranipet is a fascinating illustration of the maxim that one thing leads to another or, if preferred, that *l'homme propose mais Dieu dispose*. No single item in its history developed in the way originally intended by its promoters or was foreseen as the consequence of the stage immediately preceding it. Yet the development took place in an entirely logical progression in which step followed step with what seemed (after the event) like inevitability. Those who believe the British Empire and the British Raj in India to have been a series of planned and predatory grabs would do well to study what follows here, for the history of the British Raj was much more like what happened at Ranipet.

The Arcot Sugar Works and Distilleries were sponsored by Arbuthnot's and were under the management of a Morison who must surely have been a

descendant of Parry and Co.'s old partner of the Kallakurichi days; the financial difficulties into which they presently ran were reputedly due to extravagance in buildings. It is open to doubt whether they ever produced any sugar at all. An old employee at Ranipet, Mr. Abdul Rahman who joined in 1901, asserts roundly that they did not; a still older employee, Mr. Parthasarathy Iyengar who joined in 1895, insists that sugar was made for a period of seven or eight years—he saw it being done. The said sugar was made entirely from palm jaggery, the nearest cane being seven or eight miles away; Mr. Parthasarathy Iyengar is circumstantial as to methods of transport of the jaggery and the contractors involved. From this—characteristic—conflict among experts no answer emerges. It is certain, however, that the Arcot Sugar Works possessed a distillery, which suggests they must have had something to put into it.

The query though interesting is not material, for quite certainly by the close of the century the Arcot Sugar Works and Distilleries were in deep waters; so much so that their properties passed from their hands into those of the Commercial Bank. Regarding their new acquisition much as they might have regarded a promising but intractable white elephant, the Commercial Bank turned to the firm who did know about sugar—Parry's. From this grew presently the new Madras Consolidated Sugar and Spirit Factories Limited whose importance was that they took over not only Ranipet but Parry's South Arcot factories as well, together with such miscellanea as the relics of Morison's Palmaner distillery. The Company seems to have been rather hastily formed and on a financial basis unequal to the magnitude of its commitments; presently it too was in difficulties. It gave way therefore to the final figure in the chain—the East India Distilleries and Sugar Factories Limited, a more powerful Company incorporated in the United

Kingdom which took over all its assets. Parry's became the E.I.D.'s Managing Agents.

To the history of the E.I.D. we will come presently; let us finish meantime with that of Ranipet even although it will carry us considerably beyond our period. After the Arcot Sugar Works and Distilleries came to grief, sugar was abandoned at Ranipet partly because of the uneconomic conditions then prevailing in the industry and the resultant policy of centralisation, partly owing to the severe outbreak of bubonic plague which ravaged the Madras Presidency in 1898. The distillery plant was dismantled and moved to Nellikuppam where for a long time it gave good service. The question then arose—what was to be done with the existing factory buildings? The first suggestion was a tannery, this being an industry already widely practised on a small scale by the local inhabitants; Parry's larger enterprise, however, failed because of a sudden slump in hides and because the tanning expert brought out from home was insufficiently acquainted with local problems. It was then that inspiration or fortune brought from Villivakam to Ranipet the first bone-mill; according to tradition, this was the property of the Commercial Bank (who had taken it over as a bad debt) and was sold to Parry's by Mr. W. W. Kenny, a member either of the Commercial's staff or that of the Bank of Madras. The connection between tanning and bone-milling may seem at first sight obscure but it exists; tanneries demand a lavish supply of hides and if a creature has a hide it must also have a skeleton; moreover the many small local tanneries had attracted to Ranipet a population of Muslims and of lower-caste Hindus who would not be averse to handling the bones. The original product of the mill was bone grists as raw material for the gelatine industry—mostly exported to Melbourne and Antwerp, but the need to find a market for the finer particles of bone pushed Parry's into the sale of bonemeal and so into their first venture

in fertilisers. Thus from Mr. Kenny's bone-mill was presently to stem out the Presidency Manure Works—a concern which, though living under E. I. D.'s roof at Ranipet, was purely Parry's.

The bone-mill, however, was to stem out into more than that. Bones were all very well but phosphates were better; phosphates treated with sulphuric acid became super-phosphates and therefore better still. Sulphuric acid is awkward stuff to handle and transport; obviously it would pay E. I. D. to set up a plant at Ranipet and make it for themselves; what was not used in the works could readily be sold to satisfy a wide demand. So said, so done. The sulphuric acid, coupled with magnesite from Salem, furnished a useful sideline in Epsom salts of which the current output (1954) is five tons a day. (Happily this does not imply an acute and nation-wide constipation; most of it goes to the tanneries.)

So the bone-mill led to the sulphuric acid and the chemicals. But the sequence was not yet at an end. For a difficulty arose in regard to jars for the sulphuric acid; these became increasingly hard to procure and of deteriorating quality; in 1908 the final inspiration dawned—why not make our own jars for our own acid? From this momentous decision grew the best known and most popular branch of the Ranipet industry—the pottery. From plain jars for sulphuric acid the pottery moved to plain jars for anything else, to not so plain jars and—carrying on the tradition initiated by that magnificent object of 1819 with its mahogany case and its lead piping—to what is politely known as "sanitary ware"; from thence to cups and saucers, to vases and ornaments, to little moulded figures, to more ambitious figures. There is no knowing where or why it should stop.

The progress of Ranipet may be shown not only as a beautiful unfolding sequence almost divine in its orderly inevitability but also under straight figures. In the entire year of 1906 the output of sulphuric acid

was forty-four tons; today the same amount would represent the output of less than twenty-four hours. In 1929, a quarter of a century ago, the down-draught kilns in the pottery could cope with fifty tons of clay a month; today the tunnel ovens cope with three hundred.

Ranipet's is indeed an instructive history; here were two separate initial failures wrenched round, upon different lines, into separate successes; could there be a richer illustration of business adaptability? And all built upon the diminutive foundation stone of the Arcot Sugar Works and Distilleries laid on the 3rd of April 1895.

* * *

It was said a few lines back that the East India Distilleries and Sugar Factories Limited was incorporated in London in 1897 to take over the whole of the existing assets of the Madras Consolidated Sugar and Spirit Factories Limited, including Parry's factories in South Arcot. We must now consider this concern a little more closely.

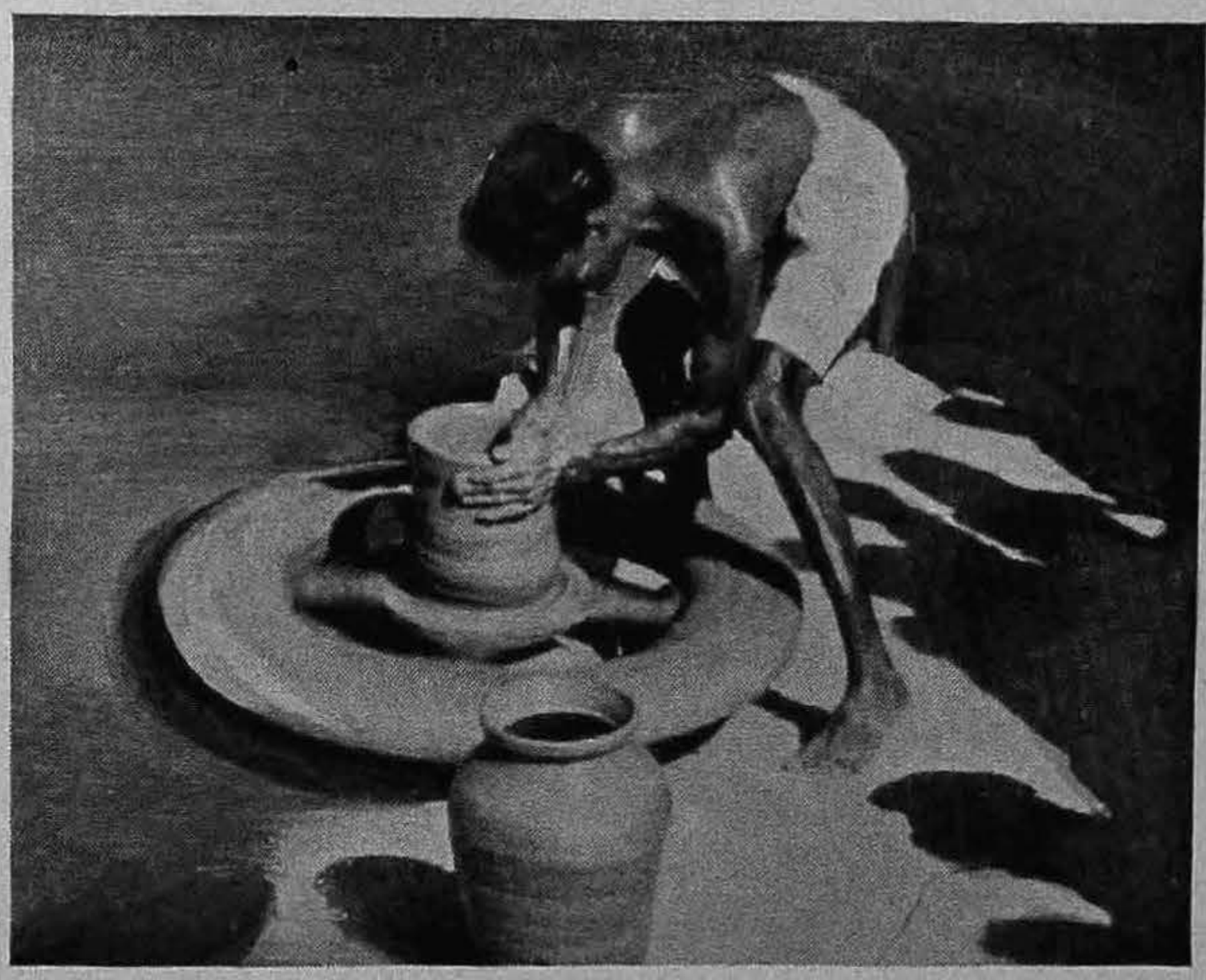
To understand all this sudden interest in sugar it is necessary to note briefly the current conditions of the industry in Madras. It will be remembered that its prospects, long negligible, were strongly encouraged round about 1840 in consequence of the abolition of slavery in the West Indies and the removal of the discriminatory duties between West Indian and East Indian sugar; and that these prospects received in 1845 a compensating back-hander in the shape of the British Government's adoption of the Free Trade policy which all but annihilated them. The industry remained for long years prone under this untimely blow but towards the end of the century there was at least an atmosphere of revival. Businessmen began to talk sugar again; they pointed out among other things the absurdity of sending indentured emigrants to Mauritius to grow cane, the manufactured sugar

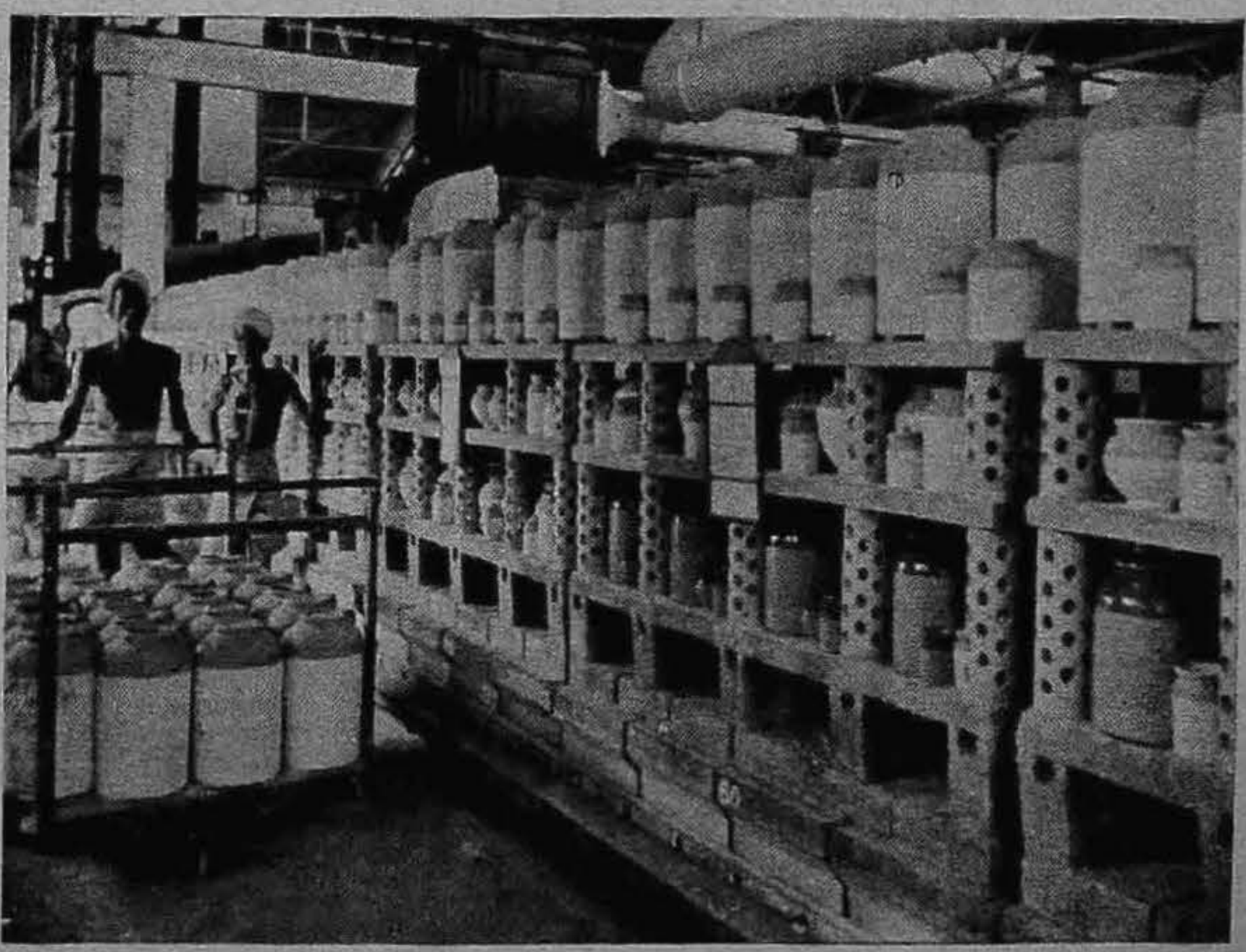
POTTERY AT RANIPET

(1) The village potter

(2) Part of a morning's output on the kiln cars.

"From plain jars for sulphuric acid to not so plain jars...to cups and saucers...to little moulded figures, to more ambitious figures."





from which would eventually find its way into India; why not keep the men and the cane at home? The Secretary of State was besought to rescue the backward sugar industry of India by doing something to improve the " wretched character " of the product so that India might turn out (as Mauritius was already doing) " raw sugar properly made by modern processes ". This India, it was alleged, could do, as Messrs. Parry at Nellikuppam and Messrs. Binny in other places had demonstrated; and could become instead of an importer, a supplier to the world. All this, however, could only be effected by large-scale operations quite beyond the compass of the ryots who, according to one writer, " do not extract one-third of the sugar that might be extracted from their crop and make that third in a shape that looks more like manure than sugar "; the remedy was therefore a central factory modernly equipped and depending for its supplies on indigenous Indian cane.

The trade in both refined and unrefined sugar, except for a flat spell round 1880, had been rising steadily through the years; a leap from 400,000 cwts. (nineteen and a half lakhs value) in 1873 to 1,478,600 cwts. (eighty and a half lakhs) ten years later was certainly impressive enough for anyone. The upward move was mainly due to increased consumption of sugar in India itself where the bulk of the *refined* sugar manufactured in Madras (almost solely at Aska and Nellikuppam) was taken up. This was a recent development and a direct if delayed consequence of the new refineries. Of the Madras *unrefined* sugar the bulk went to foreign countries—two-thirds of it to Great Britain. The demand in London was brisk; consumption of sugar followed the steadily increasing consumption of tea; coarse sugar could be refined there very cheaply or could be utilised for brewing or cattle food. (It sold for this purpose at a penny a pound in 1884.) Now as compared with the rest of India, the sugar industry in

Madras had certain definite advantages. Madras possessed, as other parts of India did not, an area under date and other palm only slightly less than that under cane (31,000 acres in 1884 against 36,000). Madras scored therefore in its palm-tree jaggery from which it could produce a cheap sugar, not good but good enough to capture the not over-fastidious taste of Bengal, Bombay and Burma. Cheap sugar involved cheap costs which in turn involved large-scale manufacture and centralisation. Given these, the prospect was not unattractive.

Against all this the adventurer in sugar had to set the sugar bounties operated by more countries than one and in more forms than one, and the increasing inundation of the world's markets by subsidised beet-sugar grown on the Continent of Europe.

Such then was the background of hopes and doubts against which first the Arcot Sugar Works and Distilleries and then the Madras Consolidated Sugar and Spirit Factories Limited and finally the East India Distilleries and Sugar Factories Limited were launched; and this was their guiding principle—large-scale operations at central factories equipped with the last word in machinery. Clearly a strong financial backing was here of the first importance; the new Company's capital was to be £250,000 supported by £150,000 in Debentures, and the E. I. D. invited subscriptions for £100,000 7% £1 Cumulative Preference shares and £100,000 5% Debentures, both at par. Its prospectus was optimistic but could show some good cards—"the well known and old established business of distillers, sugar manufacturers and refiners successfully carried on by Messrs. Parry and Company, Bankers and Merchants of Madras, in their Nellikuppam and Tiruvennallur factories", together of course with the Arcot Sugar Works and Distilleries at Ranipet; "the practical control" thus secured "of the sugar and spirit trade throughout the Madras Presidency"; a five year Abkhari contract dating from 1-7-1897 for

exclusive manufacture and sale of spirits in Mysore; one hundred and forty spirit depots in Madras; probable sales one and a half million gallons a year, duties £250,000! Profits should be £53,000 per annum based on 20,000 tons of refined sugar at a profit of £1 a ton, two million gallons of spirit at two annas a gallon profit and 10,000 tons of molasses at £1 a ton. We shall see in due course how far these expectations were fulfilled.

Parry's function in the new Company was, as already mentioned, its Managing Agency. A word should perhaps be said about this peculiarly Indian institution which as high an authority as Sir Percival Griffiths has called the most important British contribution to the Indian economy of the nineteenth century. It arose from the special circumstances of India; a country with enormous resources in raw materials and also in capital—provided confidence could tempt that capital out into the open—but lacking in persons sufficiently conversant with business management to be trusted by the ordinary investor. In its orthodox form (of which E. I. D. is not a typical example) the Managing Agency system supplied the necessary technical financial and administrative skills where Indians desiring to develop their country's industries by the formation of Companies supplied the necessary funds; this it might do for a fee or in return for shares in the Company to be formed and managed. Its obvious danger, of course, goes down to the fundamentals of human nature; idle or unscrupulous Managing Agents had the opportunity to misconduct themselves pretty thoroughly. But a system of wide and practical usefulness should not be judged by its (very few) rascals and the Managing Agency system generally was not; the Indian Industrial Commission of 1916, which included Madan Mohan Malaviya, thought well of it and in very recent days, when the 1954 Companies Bill was discussed in the House of the People, Managing Agents still had their supporters

"on an objective assessment of the present structural organisation in our trade and industry". On the other hand, the Trade Union element in the same debate condemned the system as a relic of Colonialism and stigmatised it as "feudal"—perhaps the very last thing it was.

To return to E. I. D. in 1897. Among the Directors of the new Company was E. S. Ormerod who was to remain with it for a long time to come. Its Chairman was John Henry Tod, whose grandson, G. N. Noel-Tod, is a Director of Parry's at this day—yet another example of Kipling's devoted families, since Noel-Tod's father and three of his uncles spent their service lives in India. E. I. D.'s Secretary was a live young man called J. R. Murray of whom we shall hear much and to whom Parry's had subsequent cause to be grateful; the Commercial Bank held its funds. With these and other assets the new Company took the saddle with confidence while compliments flew between Gracechurch Street and First Line Beach. But it was some little time before Parry's in Madras could realise that they were, like the Macgregors, "landless, landless, landless"; or could get over a slight sense of dislocation in the joints of their noses.

* * *

In 1897, the natal year of E. I. D., Parry's office buildings at the Corner received a curious addition. This was the so-called Lawyers' Block designed to afford accommodation and offices for the solicitors and vakils doing business in the recently-built High Court near by. It was an odd arrangement and architecturally the Block was as incongruous as its purpose and clashed as fiercely with Thomas Parry's staid old Georgian as did its academic advocates with the matter-of-fact merchants next door. For what reason—apart of course from the fact that they drew rents from it—Parry's put up this peculiar

structure is not clear. But it *may* have been a thank-offering for not being turned out of their Corner by the High Court. The obvious site for the Court having been at first turned down, Parry's Corner was one of the alternatives canvassed; its backers were restrained, however, by the sobering thought that Parry's would never willingly sell and that the cost of compulsory acquisition, if resorted to, would be too monstrous to contemplate. Parry's doubtless assumed the attitude—" over our dead body ", and the invaders, thinking better of it, drew off.

It would be agreeable at this point to consider in detail the history of Parry's office buildings since the days of the "Persian Writing". But the materials, the facts, are lacking. An entry in the ledgers of July 1846 records that one G. Lawrence was paid sixty-three rupees for " throwing down the old roof of the lower story "; but why this was done or which "lower story" was involved is not stated. The books of 1866 show the third storey rising gloriously out of the cotton profits after the American Civil War. But the rest is silence. Be this as it may, the old building with its great deep cave-like verandahs and its dignified pillars stood for many a long day as it was designed in or soon after 1803. It was not till after World War One that the talk of new offices on a grander scale became anything but just talk and it was not till the eve of World War Two that the talk became stone and concrete, glass and steel.

The old building, which was " thrown down " finally only in 1952, may soon be forgotten; what was it like? There is a picture of it in this book and we have also what may be a very early description. One morning in 1810 that clear-eyed observer Mrs. Maria Graham came ashore at Madras from H.M.S. *Hecate*. She had business with her Agent and entered one of the " fine buildings with colonnades to the upper storey supported by rustic bases arched, all of the fine Madras chunam, smooth, hard and polished

as marble". It does not seem altogether fanciful to suppose that Mrs. Graham jotted down these notes sitting in the old office at Parry's Corner, in the sixth or seventh year of its long life.

* * *

The end of a century is an arbitrary and man-made scratch across time which may or may not correspond with the real divisions as laid down by circumstance; but once again the historian is tempted to regard this punctuating line, however artificial, as a moment for taking stock. The words "a hundred years ago today" have to him an irresistible allure.

In 1799 Parry's had been a small firm, still located in and confined to the Fort; its senior partner had deserted it to take service with the Nawab of the Carnatic, its junior was about to desert it in favour of his career as a Government servant. It might survive, one would have said, it might not; in the turmoil of the times the betting was against rather than otherwise. In 1899 Parry's had four partners—W. S. Shaw, A. J. Yorke, A. D. Jackson, and A. S. Paul—and six Assistants, none of whom had any intention of deserting it for anything or anyone, or any doubt whatsoever as to its survival. It advertised twenty branches at Cuddalore, Nellikuppam, Tiruvenanallur, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Madura, Tinnevelly, Trivandrum, Bangalore, Vellore, Masulipatam, Bezwada, Bellary, Cuddapah, Salem, Coimbatore, Erode, Ranipet, Cocanada and Renigunta. Not all of these of course were of equal importance; at best they were, as at Cuddalore, substantial well-staffed offices doing a large and representative business; at worst they were a house or a shed with the name of Parry and Company somewhere conspicuously displayed. At headquarters in Madras the old lines of banking and agency had been retained and expanded along the new lines of the Managing Agencies of the E. I. D. and the Mofussil Warehouse and Trading. These Parry's

supported with a string of agencies; seven insurance companies, the Sun (which had appeared in their ledgers for over fifty years), the Imperial Life, the English and Scottish Law Life, The Eagle, The Royal Exchange, the Ocean Marine and the Merchants' Marine; the Natal Direct Line of steamers and the B.I.S.N. Company (Cuddalore and Trivandrum); the Natal Immigration; the Carbonite Syndicate; the Army and Navy Co-operative Society and Whiteley's; Hatch Mansfield & Co., of London; the Aeromotor Company of Chicago; and Charles Ewing's Patent Single Rail Tramway. It was a creditable advance over which to ponder on the eve of the Twentieth Century and the partners, sitting in their old office that now looked out upon a harbour at least of sorts, may well have thought so. Could it—would it—be maintained? That no man could tell; but if the Parry policy, old as the founder, was itself maintained —never be defeated, never be satisfied, never rest, be always on the look out for something new—then there must be at least a solid and substantial hope.

PART THREE
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
(A) 1900—1913

THE harlequinade to the Victorian pantomime; so has been described the Edwardian Age in Britain; the last sunset whirl of the gnats and midges before the fall of night. Yet if the creatures danced, they had—or they appeared to have—excuse. There was, to begin with, that heartening thing a clean slate; for most of the lieges it was the first time in their lives that their sovereign had changed and this was a remarkable excitement in itself. Victoria the Wonderful had passed away; but she had had a long and fine innings and—there had been repressions. Now Edward the Popular, so long kept out of his throne by his imperishable mother, at last—after that preliminary flurry over his peritonitis—ascended it; now we should see some fun! At last too the Boer War came to the end of its story—not perhaps a very creditable story so far as the fighting had gone but at any rate an end. There was no reason why, under the new monarch, an era of peace and prosperity should not ensue; and if anything happened to Edward (who was not of course in his first youth) a successor stood ready, trained much in his own mould with only his rougher edges polished away. If the definitive limits of Society with a capital 'S' had been somewhat eased and extended, never was Society smarter or more dashing, more invested in privilege, more distinctly demarcated from society. The proletariat had not yet learnt to resent this, they were in fact quite proud of it; some knew of a rather tedious writer called Marx but no one had yet heard of a Communist. Orville Wright went up in an aeroplane; hope everywhere took off and soared with him.

The age was not of course without its alarms. There was, for instance, that dark shadow at Algeciras when it looked for the moment as if France and Germany must tumble into war over the Moroccan crisis—with just those consequences for mankind which

were in fact to follow a similar *émeute* eight years later. Yet even here the blithe spirit of the Edwardian Age could turn terror into jest; for it was over the Algeciras affair that Parry's in Madras blotted their General Knowledge papers badly. On 14-2-06 London cabled out to them, "Algeciras political prospects are gloomy". Madras (who, to do them justice, had their hands full of trouble at the moment and on the spot) replied innocently, "Your yesterday's telegram not intelligible. Please repeat first word after checking", thus enabling J. R. Murray to write one of those pungent letters from the London office with which he so greatly enlivened the firm's correspondence. Madras's insouciance, he said, in regard to "the little Spanish town where all Europe in solemn conclave assembled are making history" was the "only gleam of sunshine" that had fallen upon Gracechurch Street; he had been badgered into sending the warning Algeciras telegram which he would fain have spared them—and lo! they had never heard of the place. Madras were not altogether to be blamed; many people much nearer London were hazy about Algeciras, its whereabouts and its implications, and, as has been said and will be shown, Madras had her own troubles in Moor Street without looking to Morocco.

Yet if political earthquakes rocked the Mediterranean and a real earthquake more than rocked San Francisco, the Edwardian Age danced merrily through the tremors. It was gay, highly-coloured, quick-moving, butterfly, brief. Perhaps, in Britain at least, "harlequinade" was the word for it.

But it was no sort of harlequinade on First Line Beach.

* * *

The guidance of Parry's affairs throughout these notable years was largely in the hands of four men—W. S. Shaw, A. J. Yorke, A. D. Jackson and

J. R. Murray. To Murray we will come in his proper place, but a word should perhaps be said here about the others whose names will constantly occur in the following pages.

Shaw was the doyen of the four; he first became a partner in 1886 and was linked to a still earlier decade through his elder brother J. C. He was thus in essence a Victorian and he did not altogether readily adjust himself to the rapid changes of the twentieth century. To such ideas as *Swadeshi* and Indianisation he was not very sympathetic; he took refuge in the wishful thought that they and all their kind would come to nothing. His main interests in the firm were in produce, especially tea and timber; he believed strongly in the latter, moderately in the former. The distilling interests also lured him—and in a sense lured him to his death. But in so far as he was ready to try anything and try it hard, he was a typical Parry's man.

Yorke, who was to lay down so much of the firm's policy in the early 1900's, actually joined it in 1878 when he was recommended to A. F. Brown as a "clever, industrious, hard-working fellow" with plenty of go in him. This last was certainly true; the same idea was otherwise expressed by Murray when he said, quoting Kipling, that Yorke had too much Ego in his cosmos. When Yorke wanted a thing, he wanted it badly and he wanted it here and now; Murray was constantly having to remind him that while Parry's might be able to make their will immediate law in Madras, it was not quite the same thing in London. Yet Yorke believed in compromise rather than battle—probably because he thought it the quickest way of achieving his ends. Again Murray differed diametrically; "this may be Indian business principles", he wrote in reply to one of Yorke's suggested appeasements, "but thank God they don't prevail here". If Shaw was a little in arrear of the times Yorke was sometimes ahead of

them and he often saw his ideas, at first rebuffed, come to fruition; he had thought, for example, of Murray's partnership, of better housing for cooly labour, of the transfer of E. I. D. to India, long before any of these things came about. He has left us a pleasant picture of himself hunting what he spelt as the "dear" on Exmoor; two sons and a daughter were with him and Yorke was "the only man up with the huntsman when we brought the dear to bay"; he was rewarded with a slot and marvelled at the number of "oddments" into which a "dear" could be cut up. In World War One, at the age of fifty-nine, he put himself without hesitation into a Motor Ambulance Corps and quite evidently enjoyed it. Like many other partners, he sent his two sons into Parry's; that his heart was very deeply in the firm there can be no manner of doubt.

Jackson was considerably Yorke's junior, he was brought out in 1890 specifically to resuscitate Parry's import trade in piece-goods; this he certainly did—though with an eventual result he would not have wished. But it was also apparently from Jackson that the idea first emanated—much later, of course—that Parry's might make their own confectionery. It was Jackson again who, with the stout assistance of Prest, held Parry's Corner through the earthquake of the Arbuthnot failure and its dismal repercussions in 1906. The Arbuthnot experience was enough to make any man walk carefully for the rest of his days but Jackson had always earned a reputation for looking before he leapt; Yorke once wrote, with a tinge of spitefulness, "I do not think you run the firm into much risk in agreeing to anything that Jackson agrees to!" It was at once a jibe and a testimonial. Jackson was certainly no believer in risks or in sprats thrown to catch whales; "our business", he wrote (speaking with special reference to fertilisers) "is to give the best possible value for money, and that ought to be sufficient to command a market". He and

Yorke must frequently have annoyed one another, but his steady caution was an excellent foil to Yorke's eager impatience and the pair ran successfully, if at times uncomfortably, in double harness.

Murray was solely London, Shaw practically so during the period with which we are now dealing. Yorke shuttled to and fro between London and Madras till he left Madras finally in 1909; sometimes he writes from the one and sometimes from the other. Jackson was—one might almost underline the word—Madras till he was brought home in 1914 to take over the management of the London office. Unlucky in his generation, he endured there first the War and then a renewal of his 1906 experiences when Parry's faced another hour of deadly danger in the exchange disasters of 1920.

* * *

In Madras the Edwardian Harlequinade opened badly; not unjustly did the *Almanac* describe 1900 as a year of "great trial and tribulation". It had been ushered in by extensive famines in Western India—six million people on relief; though Madras was less severely hit, the number on local relief was still over half a million. The Boer War was almost at its nadir, producing a depression and bewilderment which succeeding generations, raised on still more disillusioning conflicts, can hardly understand; for the first time the Victorian slogan "we've always won" had been called in doubt. South Africa had begun that drain on man-power, that culling of the nation's flower, which Flanders was all too shortly to consummate; for the first time the Empire knew a dearth of young adventurers. Those Younger Sons, for instance, for whom their parents (wishing to dispose of them at a distance but with prospects) might have bought up Parry's eligible coffee estates in the Wynaad were otherwise employed; as Yorke wrote, with an unwonted touch of cynicism, they were

" almost all provided for meanwhile at the Cape and in many cases that provision is likely to be permanent". In the meantime the coffee estates—like most other business—languished.

Tea and coffee generally were not in a good way. France had just doubled her duties on these commodities and on spices from foreign countries, which of course included India, and seemed disinclined to listen to suggestions from the Government of India that she should take them off. The remedy put forward by the United Planters' Association was a "commercial combination of Great Britain and her Colonies and India" versus the world; the Madras Chamber of Commerce, approached with this ambitious scheme, thought it all very well in principle but requiring wide and heavily organised support before it could begin to work. Not unnaturally Parry's Wynaad coffee estates were showing a deficit; Yorke found Vellaramulla "very depressing" and Shaw allowed himself the pleasant pastime of being wise after the event; "we should not", he wrote, "open another acre of coffee..... How much better off the firm would have been if we had left coffee religiously alone during the last fifteen years". Later in the year Jackson in Madras proposed to give up coffee altogether, concentrating instead on tea; London thought this rather too drastic but agreed to the abandonment of two or three of the least hopeful estates. As to tea, Shaw was more favourably disposed—as he always had been—and would not have shrunk from opening "another fifty acres or so", but this view was not shared by his fellow partners whose attitude was—open nothing.

Other industries were variously menaced. In tanning the American successes with the chrome method had cut the Indian trade in tanned goat-skins by about half, and chrome tanning in Madras was not at this stage regarded as a practical proposition—mainly on grounds of climate. Madras was falling

back on the export of raw skins, but the price was dropping. Yet Messrs. Begg Sutherland at Cawnpore could pay dividends of 30%; how was it done? Perhaps Parry's were neglecting the local market for finished leather; perhaps their "expert" brought out from home was unsuitable for the work, being a buyer rather than a tanner. From whatever cause, the trade in Madras slumped. Parry's were presently to abandon this, their very first child, but the chrome tanning was to thrive in other hands.

Sugar too was undergoing another of its periodical recessions; so much so that E. I. D. decided that a restart at Ranipet was out of the question. The Indian merchants had won their counter-vailing duties but had the mortifying experience of seeing them regularly evaded; Parry's complained to the Madras Chamber that since the duties came into force seven hundred tons of British refined sugar manufactured from bounty-beet had gone into Rangoon duty-free and twelve hundred more were on the way. The Continental beet-producing countries were ready to resort to any subterfuge; Austria, for instance, was paying the entire Suez Canal dues (some 300,000 florins a year) of a fleet of Austrian-Lloyd steamers voyaging monthly between Trieste and Calcutta and loaded to the gunwales with sugar—a state of affairs which Shaw, with some understatement, characterised as "somewhat serious". The seriousness of the bounty system was indeed more than "somewhat"; it meant that in the half-century from 1854 onwards sixty million tons of sugar were thrown on the world's markets at less than production cost. The Chamber of Commerce took up the matter, as did the Government of India, and there was a great deal of talk and argument; when the Viceroy, Curzon, visited Madras in late 1900, Yorke was prompt to enlist his sympathies. But despite it all, beet sugar went merrily on with its gate-crashing career for another decade and yielded then only to a still more formidable rival—Java.

In view of these depressing conditions, it is not surprising that some of Parry's partners—notably Jackson—began to flirt more vigorously with the firm's old and original love, piece-goods—as an import, of course, not an export; in 1907 London was asked to send out a piece-goods assistant junior and piece-goods men began to multiply. The revival did not develop immediately but was to swell to large, indeed to dangerous proportions.

There were other possibilities. The first of these was coal—one of the staples in the Mofussil Warehouse and Trading Co. and a commodity which Parry's had handled as long ago as 1835. Murray wrote out that he was in touch with the agents of the Borea Coal Co. in regard to Parry's taking their agency in Madras and perhaps in other southern ports. Coal was also being required in increasing quantities for Nellikuppam to supplement the consignments from Bengal; could any arrangement be made with the Japanese? Coal naturally brought up the old question of iron; Major Mahon had just issued his report in which he envisaged a large-scale works producing three or four hundred thousand tons of steel annually and located somewhere on the Bengal coast not far from Calcutta. Yorke signalised his election as the 1901 Chairman of the Chamber (the first Parry's Chairman for seventeen years) by urging the counter claims of Madras; what could be a more suitable site than Salem, whence in another age the Porto Novo venture had drawn its ores? In the end, however, nothing came of it.

At the close of 1901 the Ballcotton Spinning and Weaving Mill Co., Ltd., put out its prospectus with a capital of twenty-five lakhs and with Parry's as its agents and bankers. Its idea was to induce the South Arcot ryots to grow a superior type of American cotton instead of the poor stuff already existing in the District; the improved product could then be locally spun and woven. The ryots

were to be given advances upon security; this of course was no novelty, for the system, as old as Edward Campbell, had long been practised in the case of sugar-cane at Nellikuppam—where the curious may still see the old bonds of 1864 and 1865 and may learn that the descendants of some of their signatories are still supplying cane to the factory. Towards the new proposal, however, the ryots felt no urge; the Ballcotton Company, like the iron and steel, had no future.

More hopeful, both in immediate prospects and in the actual outcome, was the revival and rehabilitation of the West Coast agency at Calicut. An agency had been in existence there, as we have seen, in the past; but it had succumbed to the axe of the Wynaad retrenchments and Parry's agent at the time had taken shelter under the wing of Messrs. Peirce Leslie. Subsequently he set up for himself, continuing to handle Parry's business. Yorke, noting some changes in the existing menage at Calicut, was persuaded that 1901 was the moment to restore a full Parry agency in Malabar which could " cut into the West Coast business " in such lines as copra and coir. The agency at least materialised (though the " cutting in " did not) and has remained in operation to this day; it now ranks as a sub-branch of Cochin whose new harbour has altered the order of West Coast precedence.

In the sphere of mechanics and facilities one left-over from the Victorian magic-box of inventions made its tardy appearance on First Line Beach in the early years of the century—the typewriter. The revolutionary effects of this apparatus on office routine need no description or comment. Parry's had office typewriters as soon as anybody but it was a very long time before any of their partners equipped himself either with the new device or with a stenographer, and the private letters to London continued to be written by hand. Fortunately the hand was almost invariably

good and clear but the partners' unprogressiveness has furnished the historian with a grievance; he is left struggling with bound copies taken by the old wet process on flimsy paper which the passage of years has reduced to an impalpable film crumbling at a touch, disappearing at a breath and precluding him on the hottest day from the comfort of the gentlest of fans.

Two other miscellaneous items of the period are worth our notice. In 1903 the Madras Chamber of Commerce, ever on the qui-vive to adapt itself to unfolding wonders, besieged the Government of India to connect Madras by means of the new wireless with the Andamans; timely news of an approaching cyclone might thus be received in Madras where it was most needed—news which in the old days might have saved many a life and many a gallant ship. The second of these miscellaneous events took place in London in the opening year of the century. There one day a young assistant accountant, whose name was William Owen Wright, chanced to take round some cheques for the signature of one of the Directors of the South African firm for which he worked. The Director chanced again to be J. R. Murray and after signing the cheques he enquired "quite casually" whether Mr. Wright would care to fill a vacancy on the staff of Parry's in Madras. Mr. Wright (who was still so young that any agreement he might have signed would not have been legally binding) had never heard of Parry's, but after some enquiry and consultation he decided that five years experience of India would do him no harm. His experience was in the event to run to very much more than five years; and it did Parry's no harm either.

* * *

At the beginning of 1902 a shadow spread over Madras which was to be the precursor of still darker shadows to come; the highly reputed and respected firm of Binny & Company, with its proud name for

steadiness and security, was known to be in difficulties. It succeeded, though only after a period of acute anxiety, in extricating itself; and this was accomplished partly through reorganisation and the self-sacrifice of one of its partners, but partly also by means of assistance and adjustment in which Parry's played a prominent part.

Binny's most serious and most immediate problem was the loss, said to amount to four and a half lakhs, sustained by the Deccan Sugar & Abkhari Company Limited of which they were the Managing Agents and on whose Board more than one of their partners had a seat. This was a concern operating on much the same lines as E.I.D. but in a region far separated from it; its activities centred round the sugar factory at Samalkot in Godavari District, the scene of Dr. Roxburgh's experimental coffee garden and not so far from that Razole where the unfortunate Mr. Rundall had given up the ghost, defeated by lack of funds. The Deccan Company, in contradistinction to Parry's sugar concerns in the south, used no cane but worked only from palmyrah jaggery of which there was a plentiful supply in the Kistna and Godavari deltas. The Company had been exposed, like E.I.D., to all the concomitant drawbacks of the industry at the time, but in addition to these it stood on a much less satisfactory financial footing. Its capital was only some six and a half lakhs and was overhung by a very heavy issue of Debentures amounting to as much as twenty-four lakhs, the repayment of which seemed likely to absorb all possible profits for a long time to come. In any case there were at the moment no profits but a disastrous loss instead. This loss unhappily coincided with a sudden large-scale withdrawal by one of Binny's banking depositors and with the redemption of their mills Debentures; inevitably they found themselves hard pressed.

Binny's, being unable to continue as Managing Agents of the D. S. and A. Company, invited Parry's

to come forward on terms and take their place. The proposition could not be described as in itself attractive; on the other hand there was much to be said for a policy under which Parry's could combine the sugar in the south of the Presidency with that in the north, thus more or less embracing the entire industry under a single control. It was necessary of course to consult E.I.D. about this and the matter was laid before the Ordinary General Meeting of that Company on 30th December 1902 when the following terms, already sanctioned by the Board as from the 1st of May, were approved—Parry's, as Managing Agents of E.I.D., to be Managing Agents of the Deccan Sugar & Abkhari; in consideration, D. S. & A. to issue to E.I.D. shares equivalent to Rs. 336,000 of capital, to be held as to 100,000 absolutely and as to the remaining 236,000 in trust so long as Parry's retained the management; all interests under the latter holding to be for E.I.D. during such period. Binny's retained three seats on the D. S. & A. Board as against Parry's two.

Quite naturally, no one at Parry's Corner felt particularly enthusiastic about the new development. Once again, as when their founder had taken over Sugar Campbell's indigo works at Chidambaram, it was the case of a step which would not have been chosen but which seemed to be the better of two evils and to contain the germ of possible advantage—provided always that the initial outlay could be faced and met. The E.I.D. accepted the situation with reluctance and some nervousness lest the new commitment should affect their own finances; Alec Macdonald put their attitude fairly when he wrote to Jackson "generally accepting" the position that "you preferably to anybody else should have the Agency". Whatever else the move implied, it meant that Parry's were linking their fortunes more and more closely with sugar and not all their partners viewed this with approval. "Although it may be for the best",

Macdonald wrote, "I must confess I do not like to see our resources getting so tied up with sugar as they at present are". For at that time, be it remembered, there was nothing at Ranipet but a derelict tannery, not so much as a bone-mill. It seemed indeed as if all the eggs were going into one basket and that too not of the strongest.

The D. S. & A. Company, by no means innocuous as a trouble-raiser, was eventually to make good and to vindicate the agency-merging policy. But it is not surprising that for a long time it ran at a loss and that no dividend was paid to its Ordinary shareholders till 1921.

* * *

H. F. Sandeman, for many years the head of Parry's Accounts Department, was wont to point to a certain almirah and remark that it was the most expensive piece of furniture in the office. Asked why this should be so, he would reply that it had cost Parry and Co. the sum of five lakhs; and he would then go on to explain that the almirah was the sole remaining asset of the Indian Minerals Exploration Company, Parry's loss on which had been the figure he had just mentioned. (He was perhaps a little pessimistic about this but then he was an Accountant.) The Indian Minerals Exploration Company did not begin its operations until 1907, but the first whisperings of its advent were heard early in 1902 and must therefore be considered here.

For in 1902 Parry's were about to demonstrate that the burnt child can still be fascinated by fire. Gold-prospecting and gold-mining had been in the past no friend to them; their previous adventures in the Nilgiri-Wynaad had resulted in nothing but disappointment and loss. Yet once again, from 1902 onwards, their eyes were rivetted on the old irresistible lure. In the correspondence of 1902 we read the overture, the first sowings of what was to come—

not to fruition but to fruition's opposite—in a few year's time. The move came from Madras; but the dominant part in the drama was played by J. R. Murray in London.

Murray was a London City-man par excellence who had been appointed, as has already been said, Secretary of E.I.D., a work for which he was eminently fitted. Simultaneously he became Parry's representative in London—and indeed, for a time, he was often a good deal more. His mind was cast in a different mould from that of the typical Parry's partner; not specially interested in business *qua* business, he had something more than a flair for finance. He knew his way minutely in and about that curious world, so bewildering to the uninitiate, that centres round Moorgate Street and Finsbury Square and London Wall, that world where Companies are "launched" and money "found" for them. To the historian he endears himself by his letters in which he combined a geniality of manner with a freedom of expression not altogether usual in business correspondence even of a demi-official character. He faced his world with realism leavened by philosophy; he could write of a refractory and threatening shareholder—"Blackmail, as I told him and turned him out", and of High Finance in London he remarked more in sorrow than in anger—"Bribery, though we don't use the term, from the highest to the lowest, is practically an unavoidable necessity". Bold, outspoken, practical, sharp but never unfair, brilliant in financial strategy and wise to every trick of the trade, he was the mainstay of Parry's London office for many a long year and their debt to him was extensive.

The Indian Minerals Exploration Company—or rather, the material from which it sprang—was laid before Parry's in Madras by a certain T. B. Cass who held a mining licence in the Nizam's dominions. Murray once wrote of him that he was "highly gifted

with powers of persuasion" and so quite obviously he must have been, but there is no reason to suppose for a moment that he was other than an earnest believer in the genuine merits of his proposal. This was, briefly, to prospect for minerals in that old happy-hunting-ground of the treasure seeker, Hyderabad. By "minerals" were understood in the first place coal, copper, magnesite, plumbago, granite (if granite *was* a mineral) and china clay, but there was also—and much more excitingly—gold; there was talk too of diamonds. Cass's idea was that Parry's should take out the necessary licences, should form a company to prospect and in due course a further company to undertake the actual mining operations. His figures and expectations were based on the reports of two local Indian prospectors, Billa (or Bella) and Arogyaswami. He succeeded in convincing Yorke in Madras that the proposition was not only sound but seductive; Yorke thought Billa's notes "very encouraging".

Diamonds had been in the air since 1900 but the earliest definite reference to the new project in the existing correspondence is Murray's enquiry to Yorke of 21-2-1902, "if you have anything further of interest to tell me about the Hyderabad business I should be glad to hear it". Macdonald also had news of the project and hoped "the big thing" would come off "as we want a slice of luck". The affairs of Binny's and the Deccan Sugar and Abkhari Company now supervened, however, and Yorke had nothing to tell Murray for some months. The alluring diamonds were still in the picture because in September 1902 Murray wrote out that he had "some people" who would share in any hopeful venture so "trot out your facts..... in the meantime you must furnish me with all the data on which you found your belief that diamonds exist—they are much more disappointing than gold". By November the correspondence had reached the question of ways and means; Murray

suggested starting under the form of a private syndicate and thought he could raise the necessary money in London without much difficulty. "If you have anything good to sell you can always sell it here and more profitably than where capital is more or less restricted". Later he advised Jackson, who was characteristically looking this gift horse very hard in the mouth, "no risks, no plums".

But *were* there plums? Yorke and Cass visited Secunderabad together in December of 1902 and Yorke was impressed by the way in which the Resident "who as a rule never calls on anyone" came to see them and "talked shop freely". Licence to prospect had been applied for and a local investigating syndicate—the Nizam's Dominions Prospecting Syndicate—had been formed in Madras. Murray, however, suggested that some of the syndicate's funds (say Rs. 25,000) should be spent on obtaining a check on the local prospectors by a British firm; he proposed John Taylor and Sons who would be ready, he thought, to sign a report on surface indications which should suffice to reassure the main operating syndicate ultimately to be brought into being.

Here for a time the matter rested, partly because E.I.D. and its troubles began to claim everyone's attention and partly because of the flattening effect of the Russo-Japanese war. A mining engineer named Munn was sent out and made a report but in November of 1905 Murray was still urging Yorke to strengthen himself with Taylor's findings before "beginning to talk about the venture..... you certainly won't get together a syndicate representing anything like £250,000 on the unsupported testimony of your anon expert". Murray, however, had shown keen interest from the first; Yorke was eager; the Indian Minerals Exploration Company was definitely on the way.

* * *

The words "E. I. D. and its troubles" have just been used; these were of the nature common to embryo Companies but were above the normal in gravity. The Prospectus of 1897 foreshadowed, after paying interest on Debentures and dividends on Preference shares, profits of the nature of £32,000; the first accounts presented, those for the year ending 31-8-1899, showed on the other hand a loss of £4,608, which Murray bluntly described as "a smack in the face for all concerned". The Board fell back on the well-worn excuses of bounty beet-sugar and the bubonic plague that had closed down Ranipet and had affected other areas in varying degrees; but at least one shareholder—he with whom Murray dealt so faithfully—was sufficiently dissatisfied to threaten legal proceedings. The accounts for the year ending 31-8-1901 showed another loss of £2,017; beet-sugar was again blamed and it was indeed a fact that the imports into India of this indomitable invader had more than doubled within a twelvemonth—having already increased in the last decade of the nineteenth century by nearly a hundredfold. The 1902 accounts, however, showed a much more formidable loss of £13,610 and though the Directors gallantly volunteered to forego their fees entirely until dividends were paid and though the Chairman was able to announce that the Government of India were "taking steps" to protect Indian sugar, it was sufficiently clear that this downward progression could not go on.

It was Murray who now came forward with one of those magical manoeuvres so self-explanatory to the financier, so stupefying to the ordinary human being. In view of the better prospects for the sugar industry, could Parry's, he asked, guarantee to show a profit in the forthcoming year? Both Shaw and Yorke assured him, with figures, that they could. Murray then proposed the expedient of writing down, by Court's order, E.I.D.'s £1 Ordinary shares (at the moment for practical purposes worthless) to sixteen

shillings; this would have the effect not only of effacing the existing £20,000 loss from the Company's books but would give Parry's their commission on profits and their dividends on their holdings and would, of course, materially increase the general credit of the Company and its stocks. The proposal went through; Parry's estimate of the forthcoming profits proved to have been a little rosy, but there *was* a profit of £21,466 and the Directors could recommend a ten and a half per cent dividend on the Preference shares. "The meeting", wrote Murray, "went off very well. No unpleasant remarks and butter laid on thick on all concerned". Magic or no magic, his medicine had worked; and though it was long before the Ordinary shareholder saw any regular dividends, E.I.D. never thereafter seriously looked back.

It was Murray, too, who proposed raising Second Debentures to buy up the E.I.D. shares held by the Commercial Bank, as to whose stability he had misgivings—which the event was to justify. After long negotiations seemed complete, the Bank's representatives in India thought fit to haggle; whereupon Murray addressed them thus—"Had we for one moment imagined that your Bank's request implied a proposition so childish and so utterly absurd we obviously should have declined to interest ourselves in the matter, as it is incredible that any would-be buyer in full possession of his mental faculties"—and so on. The pen is the pen of Murray but the voice is the voice of John William Dare.

In 1905 Parry's secured the Central Provinces Abkhari contract for E.I.D. and were negotiating for that of the Nizam's Dominions. Madras's notions of how to raise the necessary extra capital seemed to Murray somewhat naive and his characteristically avuncular comments and advice are again worth reading. Parry's at the time were also embarking on the production of carbonic acid gas (CO_2) at Nellikuppam and were ordering the necessary

machinery; the gas, given off in course of fermentation, had hitherto been regarded as a waste product but the rising fashion for aerated waters was finding a use for it. In regard to its marketing Yorke showed an unexpected ruthlessness; he thought Parry's might buy a number of small soda-making machines by means of which "we can easily set up a sodawater factory to compete with any non-buyer and *after bringing him to terms* could move on to the next town". The italics are mine.

The disgruntled shareholder of E.I.D. forbore from launching his suit. Parry's must have been relieved for they had had enough of litigation for the time being. A success versus the Consolidated Sugar and Spirit Factories had been more than wiped out by the adverse judgment in the case of Warburg versus Simson, Simson being Parry's broker in respect of a consignment of Madras goat-skins. "The costs will be heavy I fear", wrote Murray, "as much again as the damages, so leaving us say £5,000 to pay and look as pleasant as we can over". He went on to point a moral—"the folly of working a business that the partners cannot fully control. It matters not a bit whether the inability to control comes from amateur ignorance as in this case of ours and in Binny's in sugar or from distance as in . . . . . our own Travancore mining. The moral is always the same. I hope we have learnt it". The hope, reasonable as it was, was not to be entirely fulfilled.

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The outstanding item in the world background to these various domestic events of the earlier Edwardian Age was the Russo-Japanese War which broke out in 1904 and completed its brief but spectacular course in the following year. Like the Boer War, it produced an effect on current faiths and shibboleths which is well nigh incomprehensible to the generations of today. This was the first time that an Oriental and a Western nation had been in full-dress combat; to the

amazement of all beholders and the chagrin of some of them, the Orientals won hands down. The mounting tale of Russian blunders and disasters was viewed with stark incredulity. Nor is there a better example in history of the impermanence of human values; it is difficult to believe, comparing 1904 comment on Russia and Japan with that of 1944, that the two are written on the same subjects. In 1904 the hero of every boy's story was a Japanese; every new dog was called Togo; the 1904 pantomime audiences roared themselves hoarse over *Farewell, My Little Yo-san*; "with Britain and America united, my boys", bawled the music hall patriots, "we'll be pals to the plucky Japanese". Nobody was anxious, it seemed, to be pals to the Russians, plucky or otherwise. Yet forty years later, these emotions were entirely reversed. The Russians were at Stalingrad, the Japanese at Singapore. It is a theme on which the political moralist may well ponder.

Amongst the European community in India pro-Japanese sympathy was less ardent; quite evidently the resounding successes of Admiral Togo and his comrades must have an inevitable repercussion on the rising spirit of Indian nationalism. Indian opinion, so far as it was capable of judgment, was sharply divided; many Indians instinctively mistrusted the Japanese but would have been less than human had they not gloried in seeing the Asian up, the European down. Russia lost the war and paid for it heavily in cash and possessions but Japanese victory did incalculable damage, loosed incalculable forces, over an area wider and less apparent to the eye.

Parry's had never gone further with their project for shipping Japanese coal and "Manila raws" to Cuddalore; they had no direct business with Japan, though there may have been some indirect connection by way of piece-goods. Where the Russo-Japanese war particularly affected them was in the brake it imposed on the negotiations for the Hyderabad minerals syndicate. Murray's excursus on the wheels

within wheels (written on 10-6-1904) is interesting; the French, he said, were the mainstay of the mining markets at the time, especially the South African, but the French were also believed to hold colossal quantities of Russian bonds. In the event of Russian disaster or collapse these bonds must fall heavily in value; in which case, the French would "throw out their mining shares broadcast, knock the bottom out of prices here and consequently make the English speculator in things mining and speculative still more shy of embarking in floating ventures of the (Hyderabad) kind". Let Madras, however, assemble meantime and produce when wanted all possible *facts*. In view of the eventual outcome of the Hyderabad expectations, Murray may perhaps have found himself sometimes wishing that the Russo-Japanese war had gone on for ever.

All progress, however, in this era was not backward. The age of lights-and-fans was dawning in Madras; no greater domestic revolution was to take place till the age of plumbing more than thirty years later. In 1906 the Madras Electric Supply Corporation Limited was registered and in 1907 it began to offer electric current to the public. Electricity in Madras was not of course new; in 1904 the Madras Trades Association had been up in arms because the contracts for electrical work in the High Court and the Government Press had been given to a Calcutta concern without call for tenders from local firms, of which, the Association claimed, there were several. Now, however, all self-respecting citizens must either light and ventilate their dwellings by the new method or be accounted backwoodsmen.

And there was another portent of the modern age, of Madras as we see it today. That pioneer vehicle which had been driven "some distance" down Mount Road in 1894 had begotten progeny; on 13-9-1906 Mr. W. H. Oakes sent Yorke, who was in London, a draft prospectus of the Motor Car

Company which he was endeavouring to float, with an invitation to become its chairman. Oakes thought that a separate Company having a "decent capital" (he apparently envisaged something round about a lakh) would be more likely to succeed than a motor department in his own variegated business. He had secured an "excellent position" and a Manager "who has succeeded in getting the confidence of pretty nearly everyone who owns a car" (would there were such another in Madras today!). He was scrapping his own stock of Locomobiles which were "quite dead" and was looking for a "*good cheap* car"—because (foolishly, he thought) cheap cars were the only cars the motorists of Madras would buy. He asked for a reply by wire to his invitation; there is a pencil endorsement on the letter, "replied regret unable—Yorke". Was a great opportunity missed? Opinions on the point would differ. The motor industry in Madras was a cut-throat business for many years and suffered, as the Chamber protested in 1925, under "intolerable burdens"; not till the amalgamations was much made out of it. But when Oakes wrote his invitation to Yorke, it could still have been cornered. If Parry's had put into it what they put into Hyderabad?.....

Be the times backward or progressive, Parry's continued their Good Works. They contributed a thousand rupees to Lord Kitchener's relief fund for the earthquake in Northern India, and Yorke, as its chairman, led the Chamber of Commerce in offering a hundred guineas to the Imperial Defence Fund launched by Lord Roberts from the Mansion House. He also, on behalf of the Chamber, sent a verbal solatium to Lord Curzon resigning in dudgeon in August 1905.

* * *

The shadow of the Russo-Japanese War, dark as it had been, was radiant sunshine compared with what

DIRECTORS' BUNGALOWS : OLD AND NEW

(1) Bens Garden, Adyar; pre-1820

(2) Malmesbury, Adyar; 1952

"The age of lights-and-fans was dawning in Madras."





was to follow. For Madras had now reached the year nineteen-six than which there had been no more disastrous season for her mercantile community since *eight*een-six, nor has been since nor, it is to be hoped, will ever be again. The catastrophe was not without its premonitory rumblings; we have seen the shaking which Binny's endured in 1902, and in 1904 the firm of Dymes and Company became insolvent. But the worst that even well-informed men like Shaw anticipated from these portents was some stickiness on the part of the Exchange Banks in regard to advances. On South India as a whole the Arbuthnot Crash fell like a thunderclap. It was a thing no one had thought possible—though in fact it had been much more than possible for a long time.

The firm of Arbuthnot and Company had a long and honourable history. The family hailed from Peterhead in Aberdeenshire and could trace their origins there back to the 16th century. They first made contact with Madras in 1809 when Thomas Parry was a merchant of only twenty years standing and Dare had not been heard of; in that year George Arbuthnot set up as a free merchant, at first in partnership with Lautour (who had been in business since 1777) and subsequently on his own. His brother William, as Lord Provost of Edinburgh, received an impromptu Baronetcy from George IV at the Royal visit; Wellington's Mrs. Arbuthnot was the wife of a collateral of the same house. Like the Rothschilds, the Arbuthnots believed in keeping the firm in the family—the seemingly foreign names, Hunter, Gough, vans Agnew, came in merely by marriage; unlike the Rothschilds, the family was unable to live up to its ancestors. Their registered motto was "Innocent and true"; if the former was not exactly suitable for a house of merchant-bankers, the latter was, for nearly a century, nobly sustained.

Arbuthnot's did business on First Line Beach; their London house, P. Macfadyen and Co., was in

Winchester St. Both presented petitions of insolvency on Monday the 22nd of October 1906. On the morning of Saturday the 20th Macfadyen in London had died by his own hand and the London house suspended payments. The Madras house, having closed on the Friday evening, never reopened its doors and notified suspension first thing on Monday morning.

The crash was colossal. In India alone the firm had on its books some two thousand three hundred banking accounts involving liabilities of twenty-seven and a half lakhs, together with fixed deposits from some four thousand depositors totalling two and a half crores. It had employed twelve thousand persons on a payroll of nearly nine lakhs per annum, the Madras office alone accounting for a lakh and a half. The total deficit as revealed by the Preliminary Report of the Accountants amounted to the staggering figure of 268,66,524 rupees. Few—or fortunate—were the families of any standing in the Madras Presidency who were not heavily hit.

Reams were written at the time and after it in the endeavour to assess the causes of the catastrophe, but it has been generally agreed that the following were at least among them:—(a) the Nilgiri-Wynaad gold rush of 1880-1886 with its get-rich-quick notions involving the neglect of duller but more legitimate business; here too originated the fatal practice of carrying forward losses without write-off or cover in the hope that all would yet, by some miracle, be well. (b) the almost simultaneous retiring or paying-off of several senior partners leaving Macfadyen, a forceful daring and magnetic creature, supreme among juniors. (c) The collapse of coffee and indigo and the shrinkage to vanishing point of the export produce business; out of these assets, whether they succeeded or failed, had to be paid the interest on the vastly increased deposits whose principal had been sunk in them. (d) Ruinous speculation in London nourished with funds from Madras at a time when the

rupee exchange was at its lowest; by the loss of some £120,000 in American Rails in 1893 the firm practically received its deathblow; further losses of £100,000 in London in West Indian sugar, and in Madras in Consols and South African golds did nothing to stave it off—losses which again were never faced or cut. (e) Mismanagement in the office where balances had not been struck, ledgers had not been kept current, and "masses of so-called assets", as the Accountant's Report called them, had accumulated, "beyond all belief, worthless, which crumble to dust when touched".

These, so far as the ingenuity of accountants could discover, were the main causes of this terrible and all-embracing failure. But perhaps there is something to be said also for Murray's diagnosis in the unfortunate suit of Warburg versus Simson—"the folly of working a business that the partners cannot fully control". Arbuthnot's Madras office—unlike Parry's—had no control whatsoever over the London office nor had possessed any since it was founded in 1887; to their own undoing they fed money to London which London either lost or did not lose—Madras hardly even knew which. Among its other salutary lessons their final crash would seem to include an endorsement of Murray's dictum.

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It has been necessary to go into these disagreeable details in order, in the first place, to show what Parry's had avoided—for example, by pulling out of the wild-cat Wynaad gold and honestly writing off their losses; and in the second, to show the predicament in which Parry's found themselves when the crash came. There were at that time three major firms of private bankers in Madras—Arbuthnot's, Binny's and Parry's; when Arbuthnot's fell, no human power could have averted a run on the remaining two. Binny's were unable to stand up to it and

suspended payment. The suspension was only temporary but no one was to know that at the time; the entire flood of the depositors' fears and anxieties fell like a tidal wave upon Parry's.

Murray in London was quick to hear the news by that strange bush-telegraph that connects financiers; on Sunday 21st October he cabled Madras "Macfadyens failed". This of course was no news to Madras who replied that Arbuthnot's had suspended payment and made anxious enquiries about the progress of the Hyderabad Minerals negotiations and whether a loan against security could be obtained in London in case of need. On the 24th they regarded the outlook as "very gloomy" and feared heavy failures. The magnitude of the Arbuthnot disaster had surprised everyone—even Yorke in London who had not been without his suspicions—and for a time its terrors swelled to the dimensions of nightmare. The general attitude in South India towards Parry's was apparently that of the outside world towards Britain in the darkest hours of 1940—they would make a fight of it but they were done for; it transpired later, for instance, that Mackinnon Mackenzie in Bombay had wired their Madura Company representatives to be ready to take over Parry's B.I. agency at Cuddalore. In London Parry's name stood high but the situation was not improved by mischievous paragraphs in some of the home papers; these were contradicted but, as everyone knows, a rumour contradicted is a rumour still. Yet Parry's position was in fact sound; they held some 24 lakhs in constituents' current and deposit accounts; this was covered by 20 lakhs in Government paper and 2½ lakhs in cash; shares in the Company were 28 lakhs and retired or deceased partners' capital 5½. On the other hand, the margin, in the face of a general run by *all* depositors, was narrow enough; and a general run there seemed likely to be, for the belief of some of Arbuthnot's depositors that they had been somehow tricked

and swindled was, however ill-grounded, infectious. In the first week after Arbuthnot's failure Parry's depositors drew seventy-five thousand rupees and ten days later their withdrawls amounted to three and a half lakhs—an alarming sum, though Shaw thought it less than might have been expected. Meantime, however, Binny's position was looking better; they had paid 25% at once and proposed to pay another 25% shortly; Sir James Mackay (the embryo Lord Inchcape) told Shaw he hoped they would pay in full—as in fact they eventually did. The Commercial Bank were not so fortunate; in February of 1907—there being then "no improvement" at Parry's—they went down.

The situation in Madras was graphically described by Jackson, the senior partner there, in a letter to London dated 5th November. "We have had a strenuous week since A. and Co. went and I do not want another fortnight like it, but since Binny and Co. followed suit, it has been an absolute panic. All day and every day we have been inundated with telegrams and letters telling us to transfer current accounts or asking for the immediate return of fixed deposits..... On Friday afternoon it was widely circulated and was widely believed that P. and Co. had shut up and my wife who, all unconscious, went to the Gymkhana, was the object of much curiosity and sympathetic attention. The notice with Lovelock and Lewes' certificate which got into the Madras Mail on Saturday night and which will be in all the papers this morning should do good to our European constituents but whether it will stop the rot among our native depositors remains to be seen. They are so thoroughly frightened that I fear this will have little effect. If the rot stops, the trouble so far as we are concerned is perhaps at an end but if not, then it will be absolutely necessary to raise large sums on our securities of the less liquid sort and this must not be left to the last moment"..... Jackson

concluded his letter dolorously, "I have had a thundering bad cold all week and feel very cheap". He well might.

Parry's fought their battle coolly and effectively. They announced their readiness to pay all deposits actually falling due but not others; this, if it tended further to alarm the more nervous depositor, at least afforded a necessary breathing-space. Their next step was to call on their auditors, Messrs. Lovelock and Lewes, for a special audit at lightning speed; the auditors' certificate, which was published by 5th November, stated that after check with the books and examination of securities they believed Parry's financial position to be distinctly strong, there being a large surplus of realisable assets over liabilities. Murray had suggested that "with reasonable publicity from time to time" Madras would find "native confidence less shaken" than they imagined, and London now urged that copies of the certificate should be posted to all depositors and to up-country branches for distribution and publicity; it was done. The effect was not, however, so marked as might have been reasonably hoped; the run continued and it began to become clear that while Parry's could no doubt meet any demand made upon them by way of withdrawals, they could not comfortably do so and at the same time carry on and expand the many enterprises and undertakings they had on hand. Some form of assistance would therefore have to be found.

The first resort was naturally to the Banks with an offer of E.I.D. shares as security. Jackson was pessimistic about this, Shaw confident; Murray thought the general situation not so bad and was against seeking help before it was absolutely necessary. The Banks in any case were disinclined to oblige, sustaining Jackson's view as against Shaw's and—characteristically, a merchant would have said—withdrawing their proffered umbrella as soon as it began to rain. (Murray's comments on this are altogether

too pungent for quotation.) For the moment things looked depressing; then Murray, with his intimate knowledge of the London financial world and his many potent friends therein, came to the rescue; he succeeded, early in 1907, in arranging a loan of ten lakhs from the house of Cunliffe Brothers. The security offered was a mortgage on the Wynaad estates (valued at Rs. 2,26,000) and the office buildings at the Corner (valued at Rs. 2,57,000). The last time the Corner had been put forward as a pledge was when Thomas Parry offered it to Robert Campbell, Sugar Campbell's brother, in March of 1807, almost exactly a hundred years before. Campbell was generous enough to waive the offer; a piece of chivalry which Cunliffe Brothers, in the tougher conditions of their time, did not contemplate. The preamble to the loan agreement (dated 21-2-1907) is, however, sensibly stated; "Whereas in consequence of recent failures in Madras and the general want of confidence created thereby, the borrowers expect a general withdrawal of money deposited with them as Bankers which may render them unable to carry on their usual business without releasing at a great disadvantage securities of considerable value" ..... and so forth. If one considers the state of others in Madras, it is a tribute to Parry's that their difficulties could be truthfully formulated in such relatively reassuring terms.

It is pleasant to be able to conclude this rather doleful passage in our narrative on a much more agreeable note. Parry's were not unmindful of the debt they owed to Murray and on 22nd February, the day after the execution of the Cunliffe agreement, Shaw wrote to Yorke in Madras to the effect that Murray might be given a little souvenir "and would suggest it took the shape of a gun with an inscription on it". The gun was duly purchased and presented; it cost sixty-four pounds—a biggish price for a gun in 1907. Murray had always been interested in

guns; several years earlier he had urged upon Parry's the desirability of manufacturing and marketing a cheap gun for sportsmen in Madras; he even had a prototype constructed at a cost of six pounds fifteen shillings. Parry's had been able to resist this temptation; but recollection of the incident may have aided them now in the choice of their present.

* * *

It might well be expected that the horrors of the 1906-07 cold weather would have driven the Hyderabad minerals project deep into limbo; but such was not the case. Viewed from one angle, indeed, they positively encouraged it; as Yorke wrote, seeing some straws in the Arbuthnot wind a couple of months before the crash, "For P. and Co. the best preparation for the resulting disturbance if it comes will be to have Hyderabad placed and as well as possible". The thing thus became a vicious circle; "because of these troubles you must push on with Hyderabad"; "because of these troubles you cannot". For of course the London financiers, already made chary of Indian securities by the current political developments, were in no way reassured by the sequence of catastrophes in Madras.

In view of the more than unfortunate sequel it is extraordinary how many knowledgeable people were ready to commit themselves to the belief in the Hyderabad gold and diamonds; Cass must have been persuasive indeed. It is not even as if the moment were specially propitious for large financial ventures and speculations; long before the Arbuthnot crash the skies had been darkened abroad by the Morocco crisis and at home by the 1906 general election. "I consider", wrote Murray on 23rd February 1906, "any approach to 'good times' is a long way off yet—and this Radical and Labour Government has more shocks in store for us". (It certainly had.) The gold-mining market was especially affected, especially

flat. Yet when Yorke told Madras that Murray was "quite bitten", it was less than the fact; for Murray himself was writing almost on the same day, "it is really stupendous especially if half Cass's anticipations are true and it is a very big and difficult job that lies before us..... It looks to me as if this was going to be the effort of our lives—and we are called on to make it at the most inauspicious moment that fate could possibly choose". But he made no suggestion that the effort should be deferred. He did counsel patience; "we are in the necessitous position of grasping at every straw held out by outsiders"; haste would only suggest straits and would "cheapen the proposition". He thought the scheme was looking "fairly healthy", but—"Yorke would like to put it through in a day! and on his own terms!! he must have been sadly spoilt in India!"

Cass was brought home and first tried his "powers of persuasion" with Oceana Limited in June of 1906; within a fortnight Oceana declined. Murray's next move was with Farrar Brothers from whom he had strong hopes of raising the necessary capital, as proposed, of £500,000. In spite of an encouraging report from Madras to the effect that they had found "very promising quartz Tangaldine (sic) pieces of rock containing visible gold" and that pannings gave good results, Farrars wrote on 5th July that they "did not see their way". In a moderately active market they might have made the attempt "although not perhaps quite on the terms you asked". This, which would seem to the layman a categorical refusal, was interpreted by Murray as meaning that Farrars believed the Hyderabad scheme to be a winner and would be ready to join "if other terms could be arranged". Once again Murray knew his world; it was as he said, and in November an agreement was signed with Farrars who immediately sent out two of their experts, Kimber and Little, to inspect the properties; Cass faithfully followed in their train.

In January of 1907 these gentlemen cabled their reports which were unanimous and depressing. As to gold, nothing of importance had been proved and the impression formed was unfavourable; the plums had already been culled. Diamonds and copper would not justify further expenditure or the formation of a company. The Ancients—on whose legendary discoveries much of the enthusiasm for the project had been based—had " thoroughly picked over " the area; and the Ancients were satisfied with a very low figure of gold extraction while their overheads were negligible. This, one would say, was sufficiently damping—it proved so at any rate for Farrars. But Murray was not damped; on the contrary. " A line of sympathy ", he wrote to Yorke, " in all sincerity with you and Cass over this smack—still, I think it is early days to despair ". Murray was not prone to despair; when he wrote, in another connection, " while there is life there is hope and I don't like throwing up the sponge ", it was a true self-portrait. But there are times when the sponge is better thrown.

* * *

Almost in the hour when he was refusing to despair over the Hyderabad minerals Murray was triumphantly bringing off the ten-lakh loan from Cunliffe Brothers. This looked like being a heavy and lasting imposition but it was in fact paid off much sooner than anyone had expected; a contributory cause to this happy result being the partial solution of that long-standing Parry's problem—how are we to get out of the Wynaad? In the course of 1907 this poser was to a large extent met.

The prime mover here was Shaw, a combatant in this battle for the last ten years. " I have felt for a long time ", he now wrote, " that Wynaud is out of our beat and we have never been able to give it anything like proper attention, added to which, it has been steadily a drain on the firm ". This was true.

Most of Parry's Wynaad territory had by now been moved from coffee into tea and though coffee at the moment was flat, tea was bright and lively—unusually so. Yet Parry's did not seem able to make a success of it, and there was much to be said for the proposal to get rid of the tea estates at a propitious selling time. The industry was, as Shaw said, out of their beat and the competition was severe; they had been struggling with it long enough.

Shaw began by calling for valuations of all the existing Wynaad tea estates but eventually concentrated on Pootoomulla and Cherambadi. His idea was to form a Company to take over as many of the Wynaad estates, Parry's and others, as it could be induced to buy and then to slip Parry's in as Managing Agents in Madras; on 28-3-07 he sent out detailed proposals to that end. Yorke agreed but Madras at first quoted impossibly high rates for the land, and London had to bring these down. Jackson supported Shaw and thought "we should not miss an opportunity of getting out at anything over book values". For some months the project hung fire, but as tea was booming the delay could be borne with equanimity. There was a further hitch because the prospective buyers wished to run their properties themselves, but on this point Shaw was firm—either Parry's get the Madras agency or Parry's do not sell. The buyers gave way over the agency and Shaw was able to make them a firm offer at £40 per acre for opened tea land and £2-10 for unopened. At the same time he suggested to Madras that an attempt should be made to buy up Arbuthnot's estates from the Official Assignee—who had already refused, at the instigation of the Indian creditors, an offer of £40,000 from a syndicate of Arbuthnot's partners and friends. The agents for the buyers of the Parry estates were Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield—the first time we have had occasion to mention the name of this distinguished firm.

At the end of September the deal was clinched and the new company took over. Its title was to be the East Indian Tea and Produce Company Ltd. and Shaw himself was included among its Directors. Harrisons and Crosfield were its agents in London, Parry's in Madras; its capital was £200,000. Parry's received £37,510 for Cherambadi and Pootoomulla; the estates of the Wynaad Tea Co., now wound up, brought in £29,000 and a couple of make-weights added another £20,000. Terms were two-thirds in cash, one-third in shares, but Parry's sold their shares within a few years. A separate company was to be formed to deal with the scattered Arbuthnot estates in Madras, Mysore and Coorg. Shaw thought the offer "a reasonable one taken all round"; to those who urged that the moment to sell out of tea was not when tea was booming he replied that things might change. And at all events, he might have added, we are Getting Out of the Wynaad.

It was Shaw too who made the prudent suggestion that as much as possible of the receipts from the tea deal should be devoted to taking off the market Parry's bills on Cunliffe's. "It will be a very good thing from our credit point of view and I should like to anticipate our annual instalments as much as possible". With this none could quarrel. When it came to the point, the flotation of the new Company did not run as smoothly as had been hoped; Mincing Lane thought well of it but in the "extremely unfavourable position of the money market" was rather surprised that it went through as well as it did. However, the East Indian Tea and Produce Co., Ltd., was launched upon its career—considerably to Parry's satisfaction and no doubt to that of Messrs. Cunliffe Brothers as well.

Parry's were not yet completely out of the Wynaad wood; they were still left with some of their holdings on their hands—the uncultivated lands and the relics of the old coffee estates at Vellaramulla and Kalpetta.

In 1906 attempts had been made to get rid of some of these for the purpose of growing rubber, in which the sudden demand for motor-tyres was creating a temporary boom, but Murray had been discouraging; he pointed out that land for rubber was being "offered broadcast by every soul in the East" and in Parry's case it was "land et praeterea nihil"—which appealed to nobody. (The rubber boom grew, however, and in 1910 Murray was applying for particulars of "anything we may have available".) Rubber or no rubber, a long time was to elapse and two world wars were to be endured before Parry's could finally rid themselves of the residue of their Wynaad possessions.

* * *

In the meantime, however, they were making headway in another and quite different sphere to which allusion has already been made—the production of sulphuric acid and other chemicals. Here the leading enthusiast was C. W. Prest, a senior Assistant who was to be raised to partnership—*pour encourager les autres*—during the Arbuthnot repercussions. (If a man would voluntarily put money *into* the firm, it must surely be all right.) Prest took the opportunity of being at home in 1905 to look over some glucose factories; his subsequent letters from Ranipet foreshadow a difficulty which, as we have seen, was to have large developments—that of the supply of sulphuric acid jars. On his return, in early 1906, Prest sent in detailed schemes for the Ranipet Chemical Works; he was also interested in pyrites and mercury, said to exist in the neighbouring Vellore hills. He left the firm, however, in 1908 before he could do much to develop these ideas. The pyrites (or rather pyrotite) revived as a possibility during the sulphur famine of World War Two and were finally abandoned only in 1954 after investigation by an expert from London.

Progress at first was not very rapid and E. S. Ormerod who, as Chairman of E.I.D., was of course directly interested in whatever was manufactured at Ranipet (except fertilisers) signified his disappointment. Ranipet was still a long way from the complexes of Mills-Packard Towers which distinguish it today. But by the middle of 1908 the critical step forward had been taken; in that year Yorke in Ooty had grasped the nettle and was writing to Jackson in Madras on the possibility of importing five tons of clay from Britain in order to experiment in the manufacture of acid jars. (The useful clay deposits in the neighbourhood of Ranipet itself were apparently not at this stage considered.)

The young W. O. Wright, whom Murray had "quite casually" lured into Parry's, was now in charge at Ranipet and the factory was forging ahead with that unsavoury but eminently practical side of its activities—fertilisers. The Presidency Manure Works Ltd. had been established and in June 1906 Wright was issuing circulars indicating types and prices. The business—which, although conducted on E.I.D.'s premises, was a purely Parry's concern—flourished; its output rose sharply from 194 tons in 1906 to 1,547 tons in 1911. (The production figures for sulphuric acid rise proportionately.) The Presidency Manure Works was not the only competitor in the fertiliser field, which Messrs. Stanes and Messrs. Peirce Leslie were already tilling. But there was a very distinct difference in aims and methods; Stanes and Peirce Leslie confined their dealings to coffee, tea and rubber plantations—and indeed mostly to those for which they were the forwarding and Coast agents; Parry's alone were attempting pioneer work with the ryot. Out of this distinction Yorke was able to make capital in 1909 when he journeyed to Hamburg to apply (but vainly) for the agency of the Kali (Potash) Syndicate; and later on, Jackson, while enlisting the sympathies of the

THE ACID TOWERS (1954) AT RANIPET

"The complexes of Mills-Packard Towers which distinguish Ranipet today."

Chamber of Commerce for more favourable treatment from the railways—empty acid jars to be returned free and fertiliser to be carried at the same rates as coal—stressed in turn, if not in very elegant English, the wider implications of the industry. "For the more intense cultivation required to meet the food requirements of an increasing population, concentrated plant food is required". Parry's fertilisers, he implied, were the required requirement.

Wright's enthusiasm began to envisage a corner in fertilisers which would make Parry's supreme in that sphere as they already were in the world of sugar. His idea was put forward but Murray in London was not impressed. Leave something, he said, for others; "the policy of fighting competition or rather anticipating possible competition by the acquisition of properties is unsound and costly and the E.I.D. has suffered badly from this". So Parry's were left to make good in fair fight—which they did.

In 1913 Sir Harold Stuart the Member in charge of Agriculture, in thanking Parry's for a pamphlet on Scientific Manuring, expressed his pleasure "that the results of your bold enterprise are beginning to be encouraging"; his Department long remained more sceptically doubtful of the wisdom of lavishing unlimited chemical manures on wholly uneducated husbandmen. But the main obstacle, of course, was exactly that which Sugar Campbell had encountered long ago with his West Indian cane—the innate conservatism of the South Indian ryots. "They are at present", Parry's told the Director of Industries in 1912, "content to employ such manures as they can obtain locally such as cattle manures, leaf manure, ashes and earth from old village sites". Too many of them remain almost equally content to this day, but Parry's efforts to interest them in scientific fertilisers have never flagged and the ultra-modern campaign for the Japanese method of paddy

cultivation—which involves intensive manuring—has at least opened wide new possibilities.

* * *

Before leaving this review of Parry's activities in the later Edwardian Age, it will be as well to round off the story of the Hyderabad minerals. Despite all discouragements which, as we have seen, were neither few nor ill-founded, a company—the Indian Minerals Exploration Co. Ltd.,—was incorporated in March of 1907. Its Directors were Parry's A. D. Jackson, and Messrs. H. P. Hodgson and S. Orr. Its capital had dwindled from the ambitious £500,000 originally aimed at; it was now five lakhs—the exact sum at which Sandeman assessed his almirah.

The Company had the wide objective " to prospect for minerals in Hyderabad "; it held a general licence issued by the Nizam's Government in 1905 to Parry's original syndicate formed in that year, the Nizam's Dominions Prospecting Syndicate. The exciting or story-book side of the adventure still lay in those deposits of gold, diamonds and rubies out of which the Ancients had built up their fabulous treasures, but there were also plumbago mines in Godavari and a coal-field, the Pisgaon coal-field in Berar. The last of these items involved the construction of a railway. It was not—or would not have been—Parry's first connection with railways, for they had been taking a keen interest in the District Board lines under construction in Tanjore and other Districts, and the Cuddalore-Vriddachalam-Salem railway had long been a project very dear to their hearts. Indeed, they were on the point of becoming Light Railway owners themselves.

We may first deal with the plumbago because this was the only item on the list which ever showed any tangible return; it was a substance not new to Parry's for they had been mining it without success in Travancore as far back as 1898. A consignment of the

Godavari plumbago was actually shipped and sold in 1907; it fetched the uninteresting sum of Rs. 247-11-1. Overheads were high, freight and barrels caused endless difficulties and it soon became evident that the Godavari plumbago was no more likely to provide a fortune than its Travancore predecessor.

Next the coalfield. In April of 1907 there was a nibble from Killick Nixon in Bombay offering to float a company to develop the Pisgaon field, including the railway; Madras were ready to accept this but London turned it down on the ground that much better terms could be obtained at home. In any case Killick Nixon's London principals proved to be no more anxious than Parry's. London also grumbled that they had not received the lease or even the Government's sanction to start work; to Cass's ingenuous query, "Won't these people take your word for it?" Murray replied sternly, "This is not business". A considerable amount of correspondence followed and there were protracted negotiations first with Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Co., and finally with Messrs. Ogilvy Gillanders. Both firms in the end found themselves uninterested; the project therefore lapsed. Its only tangible result was the decision of the I.M.E. Committee that "in these circumstances the Company's finances no longer allow it to retain the services of Mr. Cass"; his salary was to cease as on 31st May 1909 and he could persuade no longer.

In point of fact, "the Company's finances" no longer allowed it to retain anything. Its ewe lamb and confident hope, the gold shaft at Narwinshal in South Hyderabad, had petered out. At 120 feet some water had shown; it was all that ever did show. By October of 1907 the shaft had been sunk to 161 feet and cross-cuts were being driven; they revealed nothing and early in 1908 it was decided to abandon the undertaking. At the end of 1908 that solitary plumbago sale, such as it was, remained the

Company's only credit item. This could not go on; the grim word "liquidation" was in everyone's mouth and at an Extraordinary General Meeting on 20th September 1910 winding-up was formally proposed. The liquidator reported at the end of 1911, when the Balance Sheet showed (in round figures) the following—*By Good Will:* Purchase of concession by the original syndicate, 3 lakhs; Development account, 2 lakhs. *To Capital Account*: 50,000 shares at ten rupees, 5 lakhs. The credit or "Good Will" side represented of course a solid loss.

It is easy to be wise after the event and say that all this need never have happened. But the men who engaged in these transactions on the spot were no fools; their hopes must have been more securely founded than would now appear from the records. The original misguided enthusiast was, of course, Cass; but the shrewd Murray in London was equally deceived and equally persistent. As to the question of Parry's losses in the venture, they lost all they put into it but it is not clear just what that was. They held, as Parry's, 20,542 shares, representing just over two lakhs. There was a first call on the shares of the company in 1907, another in 1908 and a final call in January of 1909; it would seem therefore that the share capital was fully called. In that case, if the celebrated almirah did not cost the five lakhs of Sandeman's estimate, it must have cost a minimum of two; and the Indian Minerals Exploration Company became Parry's biggest individual loser since the remote days of the two *Wellesleys*.

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We must now turn from these domestic activities of Parry's to glance at the wider Indian background against which they were carried on. It is not a very pleasant picture. The deterioration in Indo-British relations which was beginning in the '90's had inten-

sified in the interval; Indian Nationalism had discarded the goal of equal partnership with the British on terms of friendly association and had become, in the hands of its most extreme and therefore for the moment most effective members, anti-British altogether; its aim was now expulsion, its motive was hate. The years 1904 to 1911 were the age of Aurobindho Ghose and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, leaders of a very different type from their predecessors. It was the age of violence, the pre-Gandhi age when it was still believed that Independence could be furthered by murder and when obscure and half-crazed young "heroes" won an everlasting martyrdom by shooting down some wholly unsuspecting official. Ashe, the Collector of Tinnevelly, was so murdered on the platform of Maniyachchi Junction; there were bomb outrages in Bengal and at Poona; London had not been so worried about India since the Mutiny.

South India has always enjoyed a reputation for level-headedness which the North might envy, but even here feelings were intense; that the campaign was fought on issues with which South India had no close concern made no difference. The Partition of Bengal and the "brutal dismemberment of the Bengali nation" had as little to do with the populace of Madras as had the employment of Chinese labour in the mines of Kimberley with the populace of Britain, but both were political incendiaries successfully used for their purpose. South India did not resort to bombs; her methods of protesting against an administrative re-arrangement which did not affect her and which she did not in the least understand were two—the student with his pistol and the mob. The violence of the latter was, like all mob violence, aimless; when Parry's premises at Tinnevelly were stoned it was not because of any ill-will towards Parry's but simply because they happened to be the sanctuary where the European Principal of the College, hotly pursued, had contrived to find shelter.

The mercantile community of Madras would not have been human if they had not viewed these outbreaks and the Government's apparently ineffective measures against them with alarm and despondency. In 1908 Yorke as Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce (his third tenure of that office) called for the "active intervention of the authorities". The so-called "safety-valve" policy in regard to freedom of speech and publication was, the Chamber thought, unfitted to India and now stood self-condemned by results. The danger was not only political but economic also—capital was already beginning to leave the country. Let the Government enforce the laws "relentlessly" ..... "and on the other hand by organised measures enlist the active assistance of the many throughout the country who are interested in the preservation of its peace". In a private letter written about the same time Yorke deplored the removal of the many small garrisons formerly dotted about the Presidency; "if still there, Cocanada, Tuticorin and Tinnevelly would not have forgotten themselves". He also deprecated—and many would agree with him—the practice of supposedly intimidating shots fired over the heads of the mob.

The Government's apparent answer to the Chamber's clarion call was the announcement in 1909 of the Morley-Minto Reforms—possibly the finest example of too-late-and-too-little in the whole history of British imperial policy. Their outstanding feature in Madras was the appointment of the Rajah of Bobbili to the Executive Council—the first Indian to be thus elevated. The reforms did, however, admit the principle that constituencies had the right to choose their own members and they did allow for the representation of specific interests; inadequate as they were, they opened the door to a new relationship between the mercantile community and the governing powers. Dare in 1836 had done little more than make the Madras merchants vocal; Nelson twenty

years later had perforce to be content with hurling recommendations at the Government to which they need not—and in fact did not—pay any attention. Now came the tacit admission that Government and merchants might well work hand in hand. Under the new Government of India Act of 1909 one seat in the Madras Legislative Council was thrown open for election from the Madras Chamber of Commerce; another for the five affiliated Chambers—Cocanada, Coimbatore, Tuticorin, Cochin and Calicut. Parry's turn duly came when Jackson, Chairman of the Madras Chamber in 1912, was almost *ex officio* elected its representative on the Council; Chairman again in the following year, he was again naturally re-elected. He had already served on the Madras Corporation. By assuming these offices he set an example to his successors; it may fairly be said that as soon as Parry's partners got the chance to participate in affairs of state, they took it.

The new Governmental policy of collaboration and consultation had already announced itself in other ways. In 1908 an Industrial Conference was summoned at Ootacamund; the Madras Chamber of Commerce chose Yorke, its contemporary Chairman, to represent it. In accepting the invitation Yorke said—in effect—that these opportunities of laying the difficulties of industry before the Government would be of great value provided and only provided that the Government really meant business. As regards the development of local industries, he stressed the paramount importance of agriculture. As regards removal of difficulties, the Government—and such quasi-Government bodies as the railways—might well start with an overhaul of their own regulations. "In industry", the Chamber said in its memorandum, "there is no racial question as such whatever. If industrial managers can get any given work done as well by an Indian as by a European, the former, if cheaper, as he always would be, would certainly get

preferential employment". But as far as technical education was concerned, "commercial enterprises are not conducted as schools"; they had no time to find out *why* a man was inefficient—they got someone else who was otherwise.

A good deal was heard at this conference of the proposal—in which Chatterton, the Superintendent of the Madras School of Arts, had been specially active—that Government should become industrialists themselves to the extent to developing "selected industries" and pioneering new ones. Especially it was suggested that there should be a number of small sugar factories driven by oil engines under Government management; the blessed word "experimental" was freely used. Yorke, following the sound lead of the Famine Commission of 1880, was strongly against these notions, insisting that industry was the field of private enterprise and should be left there. He could not have been popular with the Member in charge of Industries; but he received a special compliment from the Governor when the conference closed. In the event, the Government of India over-ruled the Madras view but were in turn over-ruled by the Secretary of State; laisser-faire continued and the Government's benevolence was restricted to demonstration only.

It was on the return journey from the Industrial Conference that Yorke *motored* from Ooty to Madras by way of Mysore and Bangalore—a feat not so common then as it is now.

The example set by Industries spread to other departments. In February of 1909 Education sought advice as to the most suitable trades which might be taught to Indians who had been awarded technical scholarships in Europe. Jackson suggested glass and pottery as long-felt wants which might be filled; he instanced his own difficulties (now soon to be overcome on the spot) in regard to acid jars, and the dearth of glass bottles to meet the rapidly growing taste of the

Indian for aerated waters. Government next wanted to know if a charcoal factory should be set up on the Nilgiris and if so, whether by Government or private enterprise. Jackson had no difficulty about that one; "my very strong feeling is that the function of Government in relation to trade is to supply information and remove obstacles and not enter the field themselves even as pioneers only". Finally, Jackson was consulted as to a suitable "non official Indian gentleman" who would go to British Guiana, the West Indies and Fiji for a year to enquire into the condition of Indian emigrants; Jackson was also—a more delicate task—to suggest "the remuneration which should be offered". He suggested Dr. T. M. Nair on Rs. 2,500 a month—which was adopted.

The importance of all these conclaves and contacts lay not, of course, in the weight of their results but in their proof of a new spirit in the air. It was partly a broadening of the official mind, partly the fact that Fort St. George was beginning to find it necessary to look round for support and to count its friends—an idea which would have been incomprehensible to it in the days of Nelson and Crake. If the gap between the Government and the Indian politician remained unbridged, the gap between the Government and the European merchants was certainly narrowing.

* * *

Meanwhile, new adjustments were also taking place within the domestic structure of Parry's themselves. On the 1st of January 1909 the following notice appeared in the *Times*:

"IT IS ANNOUNCED that Mr. William Sissmore Shaw, Mr. Algernon Joseph Yorke and Mr. Austin Downes Jackson all of the firm of Messrs. Parry & Co., of Madras have entered into partnership with Mr. John Robert

Murray and will carry on business as East India and General Merchants at 70, Gracechurch Street, London E.C. under the firm of Messrs. Parry Murray & Co."

This was the expression of the negotiations of the preceding year. In December of 1907 Jackson had written out to Yorke in Madras suggesting that a partnership for Murray might be considered; at which Yorke must have smiled because he had made exactly the same suggestion himself seven years earlier. Murray's stock stood high at the moment, largely as a result of the Cunliffe loan; and he had so long guided the firm's affairs as a good Sergeant-major guides his Captain that his elevation to Commissioned rank was only fitting.

An even more notable change was being canvassed at the same time; this was the addition to the words "Parry & Company" of the word "Limited". In the early months of 1907 a good deal of correspondence was passing between Shaw, Yorke and Jackson on this subject. Yorke and Jackson were evidently in favour of going ahead and perhaps Shaw would have agreed. Murray, however, considered that in view of the recent troubles in Madras business circles and the arrangement just completed with Cunliffe Brothers, the moment was inopportune, and Shaw eventually concurred. The proposal came up again in 1910 and 1912 and early 1914 but was then side-tracked for what seems a curiously lengthy interval—even allowing for the war years; for it was not until 1928 that Parry and Company Limited came into being. Had the suggestion gone through in its earlier stages, Parry's partners between the years 1921 and 1924 might have slept more comfortably in their beds.

The elevation of Murray to a partnership brought to a head the question of the London office and its status; for a time there were vigorous wrangles as to

how it should function and indeed whether it should function at all. Yorke was, generally speaking, anti-London; Jackson generally pro. One of the difficulties was the continued friction between Parry's in Madras and the E.I.D.; even yet Parry's had not got used to the fact that their sugar fields were no longer their own, and there is no doubt that since the coming of the E.I.D.—and Murray—the London office had been more and more in the ascendant. In 1908 Jackson went so far as to put forward the suggestion that as Parry's policy was now being directed and long had been directed from London, the head office of the Company should be in London and not in Madras. This idea which, if adopted, could have had awkward and possibly disastrous consequences was fortunately shelved. In 1911 Yorke entered the lists with the contrary theory; the London office, he urged, was originally opened to receive produce from Madras, and produce from Madras had practically come to an end; why therefore continue a permanent drain on the Madras profits in the shape of the London office—a drain which could only become heavier if the proposal for a Limited Company went through? Jackson, however, declined to part with Murray—who must have gone if the London office had been closed down; if the London office could not be made self-supporting, then it must be subsidised and Madras " must be content to pay the price". (He remained of the same opinion in 1916.) Yorke was unconvinced; pursuing his original line, he went quite a long way in sounding T. H. Allan & Company as to their willingness to resume the agency they had given up in 1892; he had even planned such details as the lay-out in Allan's office and the names on the doors. He was defeated, however; the final decision was taken in October of 1913 when proposals were put forward for Jackson's recall to take charge of Parry's in London. Not altogether to Jackson's delight, these proposals

materialised in the following year and with them Murray's London supremacy, which both Yorke and Ormerod had been finding a trifle irksome, came to an end. There was no further question of making London the Head Office; control remained steadfastly in Madras—a fact from which, ever since and in increasing measure, Parry's have drawn strength.

There were other changes than those implied in the manoeuvres we have just been considering. Within the space of a twelvemonth, three notable figures disappeared from the register of Parry's men; H. B. Irwin, W. S. Shaw and A. F. Brown. Irwin, a young and promising Assistant with only a dozen years service, was killed at Cuddalore as the result of an accident. Shaw, perhaps beyond the age when he should have attempted anything so strenuous, had resumed active service as senior Partner as his share in the efforts to reassure the public at the time of the Arbuthnot crash; on the 31st of October 1909 he wrote to Jackson from the Taj Hotel in Bombay with which he had been greatly delighted. Nine days later he was lying dead at Kamptee where he had gone to inspect a distillery; in the Parry's tradition, he had not spared himself. A. F. Brown's death in November of 1910 was a more remote and impersonal occurrence; it was thirty years since he had retired from Madras at the end of a long career, and few of the staff or partners could now remember one who in his younger days had sat on the same Board with W. H. Crake and Joseph Goolden.

In January of 1909 Yorke left Madras for good; he had, in addition to his other duties, been acting as Chairman of the Executive Committee to the Famine Relief Fund. It was over twenty years since he had joined the partners in the Board Room. "Until I came to actually depart", he wrote (with a fine disregard of the split infinitive), "I did not realise what a wrench it was". He might have quoted that speculating philanthropist Dr. Bell, in the same

position more than a hundred years before him; "I know not who would quit India; I know not who does but to repent of it".

* * *

Through all these vicissitudes the sugar industry continued its placidly irregular course. Crops and prices fell in the opening years of the century but recovered. The recent tendency in the industry being all towards centralization and concentration, it was Nellikuppam—enlarged in 1904 to a nine-roller mill—that eventually survived as E.I.D.'s central stronghold in the South. The original starting-point at Bandepollium was sold in 1909 for Rs. 16,000; its buyers did little with it and its ruins, consisting mainly of brick chimneys, may still be seen decorating a grove of coconut palms. Tiruvenanallur went out of active business in 1904; it revived again between 1907 and 1930 while it made jaggery and thereafter for a further period as a depôt for fertilisers; it is now no more than a relic surrounded by a few acres of cane. Kallakurichi has long ceased to be identifiable even as a site.

Despite the advent of the D. S. & A. at Samalkot, South Arcot District remained and was to remain the centre of activities. Yet it was the existence of Parry's factories that made South Arcot a leading sugar-cane area rather than the other way round. Had early irrigation facilities throughout South India existed as they exist today, it seems unlikely that Parry's—or Campbell before them—would have selected South Arcot. But at the time when they launched their venture there was no better proposition; the district was as well watered as anywhere else and it had a sugar tradition which at least ensured that such cane as there was would come to the factory and would not be lured away, by suddenly tempting prices, to jaggery-making. In any case, once committed to South Arcot, the only course was to remain

there and develop. The South Arcot ryots, as has already been said, looked with no great favour on cane-growing; they thought it a heavy and difficult crop requiring a far more copious supply of water than South Arcot could depend on with any confidence. It fell to Parry's to revolutionise their outlook by demonstrating that cane could be grown profitably on dry land watered by lift. Neither Parry's nor anyone else, however, could remove the main drawback to South Arcot as a cane-growing area—namely that its monsoons come the wrong way round; the relatively light South-West while the cane is growing and the heavy North-East when the cane is becoming mature.

E.I.D. was now a prosperous concern; its profits were running from £12,000 to £15,000 a year. New capital had been negotiated by the indefatigable Murray in the first half of 1906; five years later he brought off a scheme he had long been planning and "got up a small friendly syndicate" to buy in the defunct Commercial Bank's holdings of E.I.D. Preference Shares, thus averting the danger that the Bank's liquidator might at any time hurl them suddenly on the market. The Company, having got over its early difficulties, went steadily forward, and in 1913, on the eve of the war, was purchasing extensive new machinery for Nellikuppam.

The D. S. & A. naturally could not present so rose-coloured a picture. Binny's, who were now firmly on their feet again, were anxious to resume control of their old Company as well as its Managing Agency and throughout 1911 and 1912 there were negotiations on the subject, centring round the question of whether Binny's would buy up Parry's holding of Preference shares and if so, at what price. These Preference shares and their dividends had an intricate and critical effect on voting rights and therefore on the control of the Company. Parry's were willing to sell and Jackson at least was in favour of handing back the

agency but the negotiations came to nothing and, so far as the Managing Agency is concerned, D. S. & A. remains with Parry's to this day.

On the abkhari and distilling side, Parry's policy was bold. By way of E.I.D. they held the contracts to supply arrack to Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Salem, the two Arcots, Malabar, South Canara and Chingleput, and by way of D. S. & A. to Kistna and Godavari, Guntur, Nellore and Cuddapah. From 1908 onwards they leased from the Madras Excise Department the Chowghat distillery for the manufacture of Malabar arrack which is based on coconut toddy; later on, cashew arrack was also made here. Nellikuppam was supplying 36,000 gallons of jaggery arrack annually to Coorg. Outside South India the Russa distillery at Calcutta was leased from the Government from 1908 to 1916 and the contract to supply over seven hundred thousand gallons of Mohwa arrack to the Central Provinces, secured in 1905, continued until 1922. These were wide activities; indeed, when Shaw confidently declared "you may take it from me that all the Directors will be in favour of going in for as many contracts as we can safely handle", it would seem that there were few worlds left to conquer. In a letter written almost on the same date he was at some pains to assure Jackson that E.I.D. was actually in the best traditions of *swadeshi*—a new word which was just coming into fashion; "I would point out that swadeshi means the fostering of the produce of India which is exactly what the E.I.D. do". Shaw rather damaged his reputation for prescience, however, by continuing "my own view is that swadeshi is dying steadily"; this, in July of 1907, was somewhat wide of the mark. The *swadeshi* question had arisen out of the clamour of the smaller Indian distilleries that they were being swallowed up by the new Parry giant; the Government had been obliged to take some steps to protect their interests by allocating to them definite spheres of work.

The old Parry's policy—never rest content—was still vigorous. In 1906 William Neilson, the sugar chemist who was Manager at Nellikuppam, was considering the possibilities of manufacturing sugar from rice, on which subject Yorke had sought his opinion; he sent Yorke some relevant literature which bore the somewhat disconcerting title of "Minutes of Evidences on Arsenical Poisoning". In 1907 E. S. Ormerod, E.I.D.'s Chairman, came out to see South Arcot for himself and it was probably at his instance that Neilson was sent to Java in 1909 to study cane cultivation and factory working as practised by that formidable competitor. "This tour", says Mainprice, "led to important improvements from which cane growers in South Arcot and the Company profited when competition from Java was checked by shortage of shipping during the 1914/18 war". Neilson at Nellikuppam was one of Parry's most successful importations; he turned out excellent work and it is good to see that he was appreciated not only by his employers, who suggested a "handsome commission" for him in 1915, but also by the local populace. When he left Nellikuppam in February of 1921, he was given a farewell and send-off which has become historic in that region. He received from the leading ryots a farewell address in a silver casket and "was taken", said Wright, "in procession to the station in a decorated carriage by a crowd of two to three thousand people headed by the Tanjore Palace Band. It was excellent evidence of goodwill between the Factory and the neighbourhood during the Neilson regime". Wright thought of engineering accounts of this pleasing function into the newspapers but decided that it would be better not to risk attracting agitators to a place where their work was obviously cut out for them. Ormerod remained unsatisfied on the general question for in April 1912, when the new machinery for Nellikuppam was being considered, he wrote that as regards sugarcane "we (self included)

are in our infancy". "Before we go in deep" he proposed to send out an expert on cane growing and machinery, but this project was temporarily shelved by the war.

Besides these miscellaneous developments two other sugar items require notice, one of which achieved success, the other not. The first was the confectionery works at Nellikuppam, the second the experimental factory at Kulasekarapatnam. The full story of both of these belongs to a later date but we have here their beginnings.

Parry's connection with sweets began in 1910 when Messrs. Glazebrook Steel and Company approached their Calcutta agency (needless to say by way of Murray) with the suggestion of doing confectionery business together. Glazebrook Steel were already selling large quantities of British sweets in Bombay and Karachi and thought Calcutta an equally promising field; they were sending out a trial consignment of twenty cases. Parry's continued to handle this business on commission for a couple of years when a thought dawned similar to that which had already struck them in the case of the acid jars at Ranipet—why not make our own? From this inspiration arose the confectionery works at Nellikuppam. These should have been in full activity before the war but, owing to the illness of James Dick, the first confectionery manager, were not ready to commence work until after the conflagration had begun. The confectionery works were of course directly under E.I.D.

E.I.D.'s second venture, at Kulasekarapatnam, was a courageous failure. Kulasekarapatnam is on the seaboard of Tinnevelly some thirty miles south of Tuticorin. We have already met this region in connection with cotton, but it was also one of the areas richest in palmyrah and date palm, the source of the jaggery—the "honey" of the ancients—on which so much of the sugar manufacture of the day depended;

"Coilsagrapatam" had been supplying jaggery to Bandepollium as far back as 1848. It was a long haul from Tinnevelly to the central refinery at Nellikuppam and the idea was mooted—would it be possible to manufacture sugar direct from palmyrah juice pumped from the trees to a new local factory, thus cutting out the intermediate stage of jaggery and the costs of its transport? In September of 1906 Yorke and Ormerod held a conference in London with those said to be knowledgeable on this subject; it was reported that in Queensland a sugar Company was able to send cane juice direct through a pipeline twenty-eight miles long. Lime was used for preserving the juice in transit—as it had been used in India from time immemorial to prevent the fermentation of jaggery. Yorke was somewhat dubious about this proposal, but Parry's were never a firm to play safety-first or to draw back from a voyage merely because of the absence of charts and signposts; they launched into the experiment.

As was natural in the home par excellence of the palmyrah tree, the region was practically a desert of sand, unsupplied with either fuel or labour. These difficulties Parry's proceeded to overcome; they imported coal, planted casuarinas for firewood, and for labour enlisted a tribe of local Koravas, one of the many Criminal Tribes in which the region abounds, undertaking to free the Police of the irksome duty of their supervision. The next difficulty was machinery. As has already been said, the Tiruvenanallur factory had been abandoned in 1904; it was decided to move most of its machinery to Kulasekarapatnam. This sounds elementary; in truth the task was Herculean; every item great or small had to be manhandled across heavy—and sometimes red-hot—sand. But it was done. The main boilers were brought to site by the simple expedient—borrowed perhaps from the old device by which the Iron and Steel Co's boilers had been floated down to Porto Novo—of plugging them,

shipping them to Kulasekarapatnam, throwing them overboard and leaving the surf to bring them ashore. The genius presiding over these operations was E. R. Logan, then with Parry's, and the establishment of the Kulasekarapatnam factory ranks not least among the epics of the firm.

Success had been not only commanded but deserved. But alas! the scheme failed at its critical point—the transport of the juice from tree to factory by pipe. Perhaps the climate of Tinnevelly was less favourable than that of Queensland, perhaps palmyrah juice reacted differently from the juice of cane. At all events, nothing that man could devise would prevent the juice fermenting en route and thus becoming perfectly useless for sugar manufacture. There was nothing for it but to fall back on the preparation of jaggery on the old lines with the old double handling charges. The whole object of the scheme was therefore lost.

Kulasekarapatnam, however, resembled Ranipet in the sense that there also, though to a lesser degree, one thing led to another. For the establishment of this new factory placed Parry's in the curious position of owning and operating a railroad. They had, of course, always been keenly interested in railway lines; they had negotiated over those of the Tanjore District Board and they had fought tooth and nail against the Government's dismemberment in 1907 of the old Madras Railway, but never yet had they found themselves owners, engine-drivers, guards, ticket-collectors and station-masters. The Kulasekarapatnam Light Railway was in truth not much more than a glorified tram-line; it was originally designed to carry jaggery to the factory but the South Indian Railway encouraged Parry's to contemplate something much more ambitious—a light railway connecting their area with the railhead at Tuticorin and carrying both goods and passenger traffic. This was a tempting proposal, with its appeal to the child surviving in all of us and

to those endearing memories of clockwork whirring and circling on the nursery floor. Murray, however, had forgotten his childhood and felt "very grave doubt and suspicion". If, he said, the line was to be a Parry's factory line carrying other goods and passengers as by-products, well and fairly good; but if the by-products were to be the first consideration, then "at least very dangerous", and he was not going to encourage his fellow E.I.D. Directors to play at trains. Play at trains, however, for a time they did; the Light Railway, covering some twenty-seven miles from the Kulasekarapatnam factory to Tiruchendur, ran merrily from 1915 till 1940; a beautifully printed cardboard ticket, No. 5342, Udangudi to Tiruchendur, fare five annas, still occupies a place of honour in the Dare House Board Room. But alas! the factory closed in 1926 and thereafter the buses, with their unfairly competitive advantages, multiplied exceedingly. In 1940 the Kulasekarapatnam Light Railway answered its country's call and its track, uprooted and deported, became the sinews of war.

The whole episode was a typical Parry's enterprise; a bold experiment boldly tackled, India at her most malignant faced and defeated, a battle so well fought that the word failure is only in a limited sense applicable.

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On the 1st of April 1912—*absit omen*—Parry's found themselves embarking on yet another new activity; as so often before, they were drawn into it not so much by deliberate choice as by pressure of circumstances. This was the Malabar Timber Yards and Saw Mills Limited.

This Company or its antecedents carry us back to the days of Goolden, Nelson and Crake—though none of these had anything to do with it. In the early '60's there were two young brothers in the Wynaad, Adolphus and H. W. Brown; one is tempted to suppose

them descendants or connections of Anjarakandi Brown but there is no evidence that they were. Adolphus was content to remain sessile in the Wynaad but H. W. descended to and upon Calicut and started a timber depôt at Kallai. He developed there a very flourishing cabinet-making business and in or about 1880, he introduced a steam saw mill on the banks of the Kallai river. This mill, known as the Malabar Steam Saw Mills, was a novelty in that part of the country and attracted a great deal of business—sufficient to tempt Adolphus Brown to descend from the heights and join his brother. By 1906 the two were sole suppliers of timber to the Kolar Gold Fields and were exporting large quantities abroad.

Apparently the Brown brothers supposed themselves to have reached their peak, for in 1906 they sold the Malabar Steam Saw Mills to a new Limited Liability Company which they floated under the name of the Malabar Timber Yards and Saw Mills Limited. Yorke saw its prospectus but thought there was "no great inducement in it for outsiders". There was apparently no great inducement for insiders either, for the enterprise did not thrive nearly so well as in the old unLimited days and by 1911 it had got into difficulties and was liquidated. The Bank of Madras were closely interested in the Company's affairs because they had advanced large loans against the stocks at Kallai; by arrangement therefore with the liquidator, Parry's were brought in as Managers on 1-4-1912.

Wright and Hodgson were Agent and Assistant at Calicut at the time and Mainprice, who had been sent across to open the new office at Cochin, was brought in to help. Yorke's feelings were still "decidedly mixed about going into this business"; he pointed out—in curious discord with the traditional Parry policy—that there was ample scope in the existing undertakings, which must suffer if partners were lured into fresh commitments. He relented, however, a

little later so far as to express his satisfaction that the agency had been got without any financial responsibility; he agreed with Jackson that the experience should be valuable. Meanwhile the men on the spot had thrown themselves into the work and by the 4th of November, Wright was able to report with characteristic cheerfulness, "we started tonight work on both mills instead of only one. We have any amount of outside sawing booked for this month and we are going to have a good month".

In March of 1913 the assets of the old company were sold to a new formation—the New Malabar Timber Yards and Saw Mills Limited with a capital of one and a half lakhs (increased to five lakhs in 1921) and with Parry's as Managing Agents. But it was now realised that none of the Assistants on the spot had any specialised knowledge of timber or timber-milling and that this was very much a specialist's business. In March 1913, therefore, Parry's in Madras sent out an S.O.S. to London for an efficient man to superintend the saw mills; this led to the engagement of Brace Brookes under whom so much progress was subsequently achieved—progress to be continued under his successor F. G. Colley. Meantime Parry's had been quietly buying in all the Bank of Madras shares in the undertaking and had thus made themselves virtually owners of the Company. This being so, there seemed no valid reason for the Company's continued existence as such and the New Malabar Timber Yards and Saw Mills Limited was eventually put into voluntary liquidation and became thereafter simply a department of Parry's.

The New Malabar Timber Yards and Saw Mills Limited was not the only way in which Parry's were associated with timber during this period. As far back as December 1906 they had made contact with Messrs. Steel Bros. of Burma, the lifelong rivals of the Bombay Burma Trading Company. Steel's representative in London told Shaw that they intended to

devote much more attention in the future to Madras timber and hoped Parry's would be able to place good orders for them. Six months later the relationship went a little further; Steel Brothers, wrote Jackson, would not definitely promise to abandon their existing direct business with Indian dealers, but "they admit that business tends to concentrate in our hands and that they are quite willing that it should do so". Jackson, with Shaw behind him, thought this was "an agency which we should do our utmost to cultivate". By the middle of 1908 Steel Brothers expressed themselves as quite satisfied with the progress made by Parry's in the matter of sales and were told by Parry's that much more could have been sold if Steel Brothers could have completed the orders sent to them. As in tea, so now in teak the man behind most of the movement was Shaw.

Side by side with the new developments in timber we must note the fortunes of the old staple interests of the firm, those on which Thomas Parry had founded his business a century and a quarter ago—piece-goods and banking. The former was in process of vigorous revival, the latter in that of gradual eclipse. It was not till the First World War that the import of piece-goods began to assume really gigantic proportions, but in December of 1913 Yorke remarked upon the continuous growth of piece-goods business in recent years, and he added the sinister comment "irrespective of possibly some over-trading in this year". The growth was to continue and perhaps also the over-trading; in any case the sequel was to be extremely unpleasant.

As regards the banking, private banking in Madras had never really recovered from the horrors of the Arbuthnot crash; the reflection, "there but for the grace of God goes Parry and Company—or Binny and Company" was too obvious to be ignored. Moreover, the tendency of the time, in banking as elsewhere, was towards merger, concentration and the extinction

of smaller competitors. Two years after the Arbuthnot cataclysm Shaw wrote to Yorke, "my view is that for the present we should continue our banking business for a year or so and if we then find it is still going away from us, we must consider what steps we have to take to get out of it". The banking did not "go away from us"—rather the contrary; but when legislation affecting the question was introduced in 1913-14 Parry's took the opportunity of nailing their colours to the mast. Under the new law it would be incumbent on all firms specifically styling themselves "Bankers" to register as public companies and publish their balance sheets. Yorke approved of this on principle as likely to impose a check on dishonest trading but he added, "it may be a question whether we should register ourselves as Bankers—if we wish to, no doubt we can pass any tests likely to be imposed but how far our banking department as such pays us nowadays requires demonstration". In the result Parry's decided to drop the title of Bankers—although Jackson was inclined to sigh for the lost "cachet of respectability"—and to call themselves henceforward "Financial Agents", thus circumventing the terms of the new enactment. It was generally understood in the firm that the banking side would be gradually dropped and in 1919/20, when Hodgson was in charge of the Accounts Department, this aspect of the business was finally closed down. There were still a number of current accounts on the books, both Indian and European; several of these firmly refused to withdraw. With their vivid memories of depositors clamouring at their doors little more than a dozen years ago, Parry's must have derived from this friendly and trustful attitude a very considerable satisfaction.

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While the sugar interests, the Presidency Manure Works and the New Malabar Timber Yards and Saw

Mills naturally claimed the lion's share of Parry's attention during the years 1909 to 1914, the firm was not unmindful of a number of lesser activities. In fact, as always, whenever they saw a promising opening they moved forward into it.

For instance, although they had declined to participate in the motor industry as such, they were not equally averse to considering some of its subsidiaries. The first of these was petroleum. In June of 1908, in that same conversation with Steel Brothers' London representative which proved so fruitful in the matter of timber, Shaw ascertained that the firm had acquired a half share in a large petroleum concern in Burma of which they had been appointed Managing Agents; they were prepared to distribute widely and at low costs. Shaw was quick to improve the shining hour by pointing out how well placed Parry's were for pushing a business of this kind which would fit in nicely with their sugar and spirit depots scattered all over the Madras Presidency; he had hopes that when the time came, Parry's would secure the Madras Agency. At the same time he invited Steel Brothers' attention to Parry's ability to supply large quantities of CO_2 and sulphuric acid, as they were already doing to the Burma Oil Company; Steel Brothers were astonished to learn that these commodities could be procured nearer than Great Britain. The petroleum hopes were dashed because Steel Brothers could not obtain a site in Madras for the erection of their tanks, shifted their base to Cocanada and announced that they proposed to handle their own business there for themselves. For the moment, therefore, nothing came of these enquiries beyond a useful investigation of possibilities.

More fruitful were the negotiations on the chemicals side with the then leaders in the industry—Brunner Mond. In February of 1910 Yorke, at Madras's suggestion, visited Brunner Mond's Managing Director in London and must have been at his most diplomatic

for he extracted a virtual promise that Parry's should become the Company's agents in Madras, Mysore and Travancore and possibly in the Nizam's Dominions as well. The commission offered was the low figure of two per cent but Yorke thought they might "spring a bit"—which they eventually did. Brunner Mond were specially interested in pressing soaps, soda-ash and other laundry materials on the Indian dhobies; viewing the vast army of these indispensables, Yorke thought the prospects rosy. The dhoby, like the ryot, proved conservative in his ideas but Parry's did their best with a peripatetic bullock-bandy decorated with Brunner Mond's colours and demonstrating to all and sundry. Three years after the agency was opened, Brunner Mond's Managing Director was reported as "extremely pleased at the progress we are making"; he envisaged wide extension. So far as Parry's were concerned this useful little agency ran on sound and satisfactory lines throughout its career, which came to a close at the end of 1927 when Brunner Mond became a constituent in Imperial Chemicals; by the terminating agreement Parry's were not to trade in certain chemicals during the next five years without Brunner Mond's consent, though they might buy them in the free market and also manufacture them at Ranipet.

One other agency of note was acquired during these years, this time through the medium of Parry's recently-established Calcutta office. This was the Madras Agency for the important German engineering firm of Orenstein and Köppel, centred at Calcutta, whose interest Parry's had tried to secure in 1909 for their cherished but unrealisable project of a light railway from Salem to Cuddalore. The Orenstein and Köppel agency did not seem at the time particularly exciting but was to lead in due course to unforeseen but major developments.

Amid all these novelties, one old friend reappears—Parry's agencies for emigration. The termination of

the Natal Emigration scheme, official only in 1917 but unofficial long before that, was a loss to Parry's not only for itself but because they were combining with it the agency for the Natal Line of steamships (Bullard King and Company) which they had secured from their rivals by representing the superior advantages of their position as emigration agents. They turned their thoughts, therefore, the more eagerly towards the corresponding agency for Fiji. Fiji emigration was not new; it had been going on since 1879, five years after the island became a Crown Colony, and with the usual unsatisfactory results; a practical scheme, sound and beneficial in itself, had drifted into the armament of political agitators who succeeded in driving a number of the emigrants home again to India—and did nothing for them when they got there. Correspondence on the Parry's agency question, beginning in 1911, dragged on otiosely for some time, but in October of 1913 Parry's were informed that a new Agent for Madras had been appointed by the Secretary of State and was on his way out; a sub-Agent, however, would be required for recruiting. Parry's, by request, made an offer to undertake this on a commission of Rs. 7 per head with a minimum salary of £500 a year; on average shipments of about three thousand emigrants a year, this should have been worth an annual £1,000 to the firm. Like many another thing, the Fiji emigration questionwas shelved by the outbreak of war and Parry's never in fact took on this agency. It could have had but a short life in any case as the axe was to fall on all Colonial emigration in less than four years. By that time Parry's views on emigration had changed; A. F. Buchanan was writing from Madras that emigration was better left alone and Jackson in London was thinking there was a good deal to be said for this view. Except for its repatriation side, which still continues on a diminishing scale, this branch of business therefore passes finally out of our annals.

Among miscellaneous minor Parry interests during the period we may note the Carbonite Syndicate, a German Company manufacturing explosives; this was a difficult proposition with a small and specialised market with which Parry's were never able to do very much. For a number of years Parry's were managing the affairs of that universal provider P. Vencatachellam; these included his ice factory, and perhaps Parry's current representatives may have glanced back at their firm's 1865 prospectus with nostalgic regret. From the other side of the world there came a glowing invitation from J. C. Shaw, now elderly and retired to far Vancouver, to act as agents for a company organising mortgages on property in that pleasant city; twice the interest obtainable anywhere in Europe and better security. "The experience of most investors in so called gilt-edged securities", wrote Shaw, "is very painful, steady depreciation for years; Consols in a few years from 114 to 71½ and others in like manner". Parry's as agents were to receive one half of one per cent on clients' money invested. In view of the domicile and habits of Parry's constituents, it was not a very promising proposition and Parry's did not go on with it. J. C. Shaw, however, testified to his belief in the city of his adoption by remaining there till he died in January 1918.

Parry's most prominent branches during the period were naturally those most closely connected with such major undertakings as the Nellikuppam refinery and the Malabar Saw Mills—that is to say Cuddalore and Calicut. Jackson had ambitious plans for the development of the former which Yorke answered by harking back to the inevitable Vriddhachalam-Salem railway; *if* this existed, Cuddalore could attract much of the produce now going through Madras and "with its dredged boat harbour might come on a lot". But the Cuddalore-Vriddhachalam-Salem railway remained but a dream for many years to come. In Calcicut Wright was going great guns

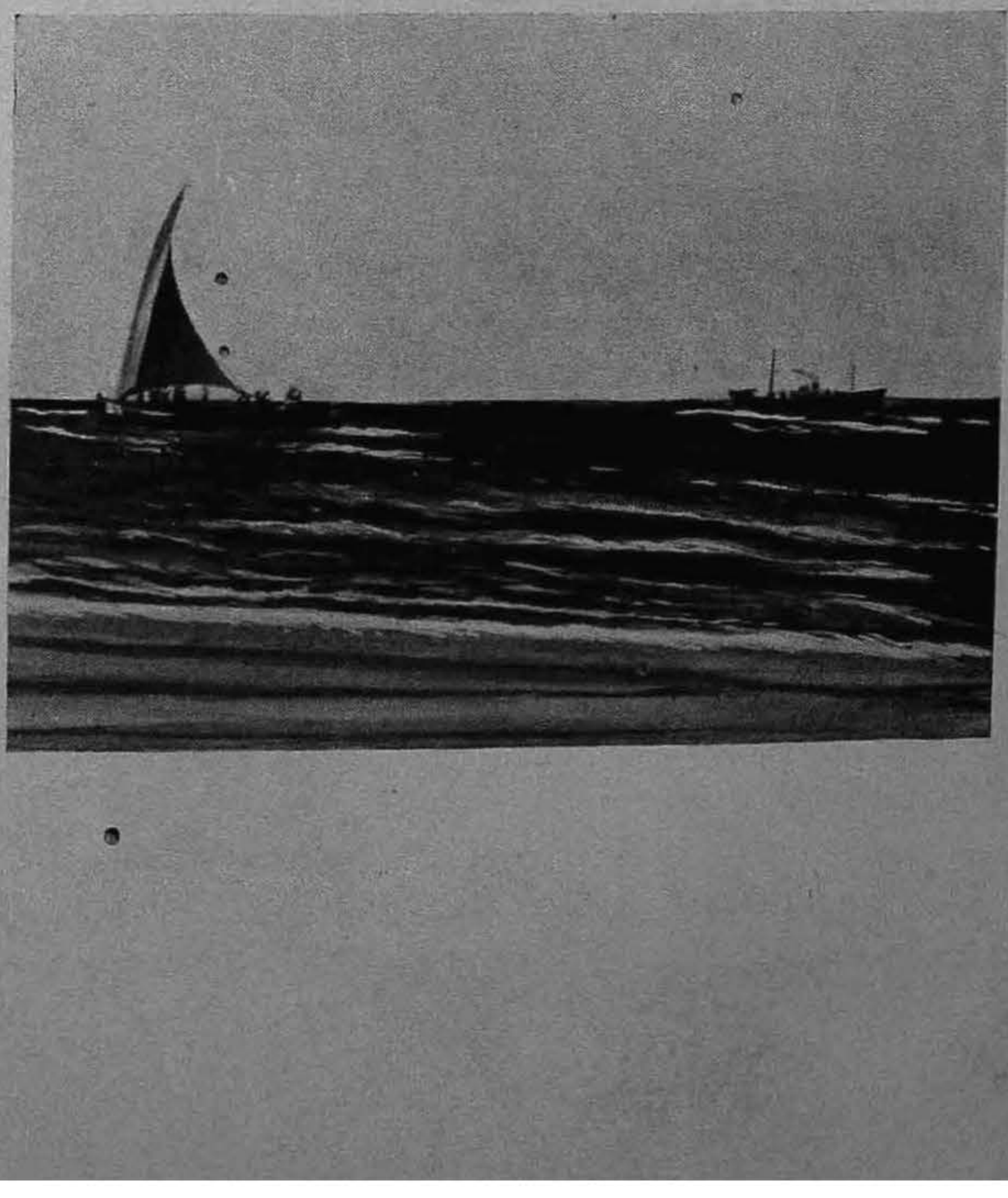
CUDDALORE PORT

(1) A lighter off Parry's wharf

(2) Bringing freight over the bar

"Cuddalore could attract much of the produce now going through Madras and with its dredged boat harbour might come on a lot."


CU.3



and earning the popularity amongst all classes that followed him throughout his career. Perhaps the best compliment paid him, as one of the earliest, was the endeavour of Harrison and Crosfield's local representative to steal him from Parry's. The new Cochin branch office survived its initial deprivation of Mainprice in the interests of Malabar timber and proceeded to establish itself securely.

At Calicut too that old seductress the Wynaad Gold crept stealthily in under a new guise—that of the Pactolus Dredging Syndicate. This was the conception of a couple of South African miners who appeared one day in Parry's Calicut office with the attractive theory that if there had ever been any quantity of gold in the Wynaad, much of it must have been washed by successive monsoons down into the Malabar rivers and must still be lying *perdu* in their beds. With Parry's as their Coast Agents, they formed a syndicate and brought out a shallow-draft steam dredger which was sent up river in sections by bullock cart and assembled at site. Rather unwisely the syndicate had chosen the burst of the monsoon for these operations and their dredger was torn from its moorings by a flood and carried down the river—a catastrophe which caused Hodgson, then temporarily in charge of Parry's Calicut office, a brief hour of anguish since the dredger was not at the moment insured. It was eventually found, however, a hundred yards from the river bank but undamaged. The Pactolus Syndicate did extract some gold but the poor prices on the eve of World War One were too much for its promoters' finances and by 1913 it had given up. Once again the Wynaad Gold had triumphed over human ingenuity.

* * *

If the harlequinade aspect of the Edwardian Age in South India was not very conspicuous, the years at least threw up one relatively comic figure. This was

the enigmatic Baron Schrottky. The Baron had come to India (ostensibly at least) with a view to resuscitating the indigo industry; he had friends in high places and the Madras Chamber of Commerce was called on for an opinion. Jackson, as Chairman, replied that the task would be at least difficult as the ryots had forgotten how to grow the plant and had long since turned their attention to better-paying crops. Undismayed, the Baron called at Parry's office late in 1913 full of his successes and the experiments he was about to carry out in Pondicherry. Unfortunately, he was almost simultaneously arrested on a civil warrant for a debt of Rs. 23,000 and his experiments in Pondicherry were probably confined to the objective so common among the sojourners in that emancipated city—how to avoid the processes of British law. On the other hand, it is an indisputable fact that with the outbreak of World War One and the cutting off of the German aniline dyes, indigo did enjoy a short but substantial boom, and the question presents itself —had Baron Schrottky inside information and did he know that this was coming? If so, he was perhaps not quite so comic after all.

* * *

Whatever one may say about the artificial endings and beginnings of centuries, it is common consent that the year 1913 closed one era and initiated another whose end is not yet. If we cast back to our survey of Parry's activities and interests in the year 1899 and read it with what has followed, we shall see the progress made; new positions attacked and sometimes conquered, long-standing holds consolidated. E.I.D., a doubtful proposition in 1899, was now securely on its feet and had been joined by D. S. & A.; the sugar industry had been overhauled and unified and thereby immensely strengthened. Fertilisers were a going concern and so was the Malabar timber; the Ranipet potteries had made more than a beginning; at Parry's

Corner the General Sales or Imports Department had begun to play its notable part. In February of 1912 Parry's sent the Director of Industries a statement of their varied produce between the years 1902 and 1911, which gives a statistical picture of the advance. Thus, while output of sugar had remained more or less steady at round 12,000 tons a year, spirit output had doubled—800,000 proof gallons in 1911 as against 400,000 ten years earlier. The cane acreage crushed had multiplied itself by four—though this followed to some extent the corresponding decline in the supply of jaggery. Fertilisers showed 1,547 tons against 194, bone meal and grists had nearly doubled, acids had risen from 44 tons to 397. Staffs, both Indian and European, had necessarily increased together with up-country stations; taking it all round, Parry's in 1913 was a far bigger and solider affair than Parry's of 1900.

But Parry's real triumph at the close of the Edwardian Age and the eve of the first Great War was to be there at all; to have held their course through one of the worst and bitterest storms that ever blew on First Line Beach; to have lived down alike the earthquake of 1906 and the Hyderabad disasters that immediately followed it; to have stood where others fell. Had there been no advance or development at all, it would have been something that the name of Parry's still figured in the forefront of Madras business. For the Edwardian Harlequinade in Madras was a period in which survival was in itself a major achievement and Parry's had done more—very much more—than survive.

PART THREE
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
(B)—1914 to 1954

EVERY man and woman who lived through the 4th of August 1914 must needs be perennially interested in the reactions of every other to that Rubicon day. The stunning novelty of the occasion is again something which the younger generation, nurtured from birth on international war or the threat of it, cannot comprehend; why, they may ask, so much fuss about what is after all a concomitant of daily life? The answer of course is—because at the time it was *not* a concomitant, it was the last outrage in the incredible. And to those who saw the dawn and the sunset of that earth-shaking Fourth the questions—what was So-and-so doing that day? how did A. N. Other take it?—are imperishably attractive.

We are fortunate therefore to possess the comments of J. C. Armstrong, Parry's senior in Madras, written as near the event as August 5th. "The outbreak of hostilities on the Continent has entirely dislocated business on this side and matters are practically at a standstill owing to the Banks refusing to operate. We have been very short of news up to this morning as all messages have been strictly censored and telegrams appearing in the papers have been unimportant. ..... News has just come in that England has declared war against Germany so that a complete cessation of business with any part of the Continent is now certain". In Armstrong's next instalment, a week later, no forward contracts were being made and the Banks were still "refusing to operate"; there was a great deal of military activity—"soldiers very much in evidence". "Guns were mounted in the Harbour and on the foreshore and were manned by the Artillery Volunteers with a view to capture any German merchant ship that might come into the harbour". (No German merchant ship was so idiotic.) "Foolish reports were current about German warships approaching but these have all blown over and in their place

an extraordinary feeling of loyalty is being displayed and handsome offers of help are coming in from Maharajahs etc. from every direction".

The immediate point of concern to Parry's was of course their consignments actually at large on the high seas. Fortunately these were confined for the moment to a hundred tons of bone meal on their way to Europe; although, later in the year, piece-goods to the value of £3,829 consigned to Parry's went to the bottom—a fate they shared with the Christmas toys for the Madras shops and the annual supply of wine for Government House. There was some trade with Germany in groundnut cake from Cuddalore; the London office was asked to take charge of these shipments when diverted and "do the best they could". The position as to war risks insurance was obscure and was slowly clarified. On the 10th of August London cabled that freight engagements were cancelled and rates advanced by 25%; deliveries—e.g. of rolling stock for the Kulasekarapatnam Light Railway—were very uncertain. (These difficulties of course increased till they affected stores and supplies of all kinds; they were accentuated by the shortage of labour caused by Lord Derby's recruiting scheme and still more by the modified form of conscription that was to come.) At home the Government had very sensibly declared a moratorium on payments due, and Jackson in London—rather against his inclinations—decided to make use of it; he thought that if Parry's, Binny's, Gordon Woodroffe and the other interested Madras firms got together, it would be easy to take concerted action. Mails were at first irregular but gradually steadied to a norm

Amongst all these fireworks Madras loosed off one super-firework of her own, achieving the undying distinction of being the first British possession to come under enemy fire. In the cloudy dark of a September night the immortal *Emden* slipped in from the Bay and loosed twenty-five rounds upon the city, the

Madras Artillery replying with three—all they had time for before the enemy fled. The *Emden's* bombardment fired two of the B.O.C. oil tanks, killed five non-combatants and did damage estimated at over three lakhs. "Numbers of pieces of shell", wrote Armstrong, "were picked up on this office roof and a fairly large one in the board room of the Bank of Madras"; to this London replied cheerily that these relics should form "interesting mementos". Jackson at the same time took a malicious and justifiable delight in calling attention to the protests of the Chamber, under his 1912 chairmanship, against the vulnerability of the Madras defences; he hoped the lesson would be "well rubbed in". It was rumoured in Madras that the *Emden* was coming back, but this did not happen. Armstrong at first wrote that "the natives took the bombardment very quietly" but later was obliged to modify this to a truer if less flattering estimate; "people are flocking out of Madras but so far our piece-goods dealers are all here, though they have sent their families off. Our bearers are frightened and are asking to go, but perhaps matters will settle down if we can only hear that she has been captured". Presently the happy tidings arrived; but no ship had sailed from Madras for a fortnight and only one came in. It carried, by a sort of bitter irony, a cargo of the irrepressible Java sugar.

The *Emden* was forced aground at Cocos Keeling, matters did settle down and the war went on and on; in Parry's correspondence files one reads its summary. By 1916 Armstrong is complaining of the cost of living—though rather on the general score of "motors and electric light" than on a wartime rise in prices. By 1917 the submarine menace was acute; and "not even the most *optimistic* think that the War can possibly be over before autumn". This was the time of the torpedoing of the *Worcestershire* outside Colombo, which event had "set up the bazaar very

much" and led to another exodus. The bazaars, it was explained, "pay little or no attention to the war news relating to Europe or even Mespot but a rumour, however vague, of anything unusual happening nearer home upsets them considerably". They were, in fact, not unlike the "bazaars" of London or anywhere else. There was said to be a mine-laying cruiser at work in the Bay (some, of course, had even seen her); when her last mine had been laid, she might try shelling, and Parry's in Madras made prudent enquiries as to the cost of insuring the Corner; when they found this to amount to Rs. 6,400 for six months, they decided to stand the risk. They were justified by the event—which was *nil*.

Throughout the long struggle Parry's in Madras had the benefit of comment from London, which was sometimes more and sometimes less acute. In August of '14, "things here are going on calmly tho' no doubt there are difficulties all round". Less justifiable was the statement, a month later, that "the war seems to be going well in our favour at the moment", though it was rightly added (and in contrary to the then popular view) that it would be unwise to reckon on its early end. By August of '15 the situation was "not very bright"; "keep a close watch on your cash position". By 1917 London was in the grip of "almost nightly air-raids" (as that term was understood in that innocent year); Jackson had concluded a deal with Brunner Mond's representative sitting in the Bank's strong-room during an alert; he proposed to close the office at four p.m. to let the women clerks get home before dark; "the tubes have been blocked every evening with people taking cover and last night I had to walk to Waterloo!" In January and March of '18 things were naturally "critical" and "exceptionally anxious"; yet when they took their sharp turn for the better, Jackson—like so many others—could hardly believe it. He could not see the war ending till June of 1919 at the earliest, and,

with the Armistice less than a month ahead, he issued another curious pre-echo of 1945; "the question universally asked is not 'how soon we shall have peace?', but 'how soon can we force Germany to an unconditional surrender?' That may still take some doing, and that is why I think the war may yet last for some months". Others, as we now know to our cost, felt less strongly on unconditional surrender than did Jackson.

The London correspondence threw up one ghost from what must have seemed the very remote past of 1907—that of T. B. Cass. On 29-11-15 Jackson wrote that he had been making enquiries about him; when last heard of "some months ago" he was in uniform—Jackson thought the Royal Artillery. What happened to him thereafter? We shall not know, for he is not heard of again.

Peace came and Jackson, disappointed of his "unconditional surrender", wrote out becomingly. "You will all have shared our feelings", he said; and, without enlarging further on these, went on to practicalities. What about staff? Staffs were a subject on which Jackson had no illusions; "age", he once wrote, "is no criterion; one man may be a genius at 25 and another a fool at 50—indeed it is often so". Now those who had gone to the war—and survived it—must be got back, old or young; new blood would be required; "send me a cable telling me briefly what sort of men to try for first. One thing you must bear in mind is that you are not likely to get men of any sort at pre-war salaries, and another thing is that while we may have finished with regular fighting, I am not so sure that real peace conditions will rapidly follow". There was, he explained, "labour unrest"; "labour has great power, and knows it!" For Jackson—and how rightly—the troubles of war were over, the troubles of peace beginning; and—once again with a prescience above the normal—he suffered from no delusions on the subject of the post-war millenium.

The Land he saw was not fit for Madras merchants to live in, let alone Heroes.

In that city which, at the time of the *Emden's* assault, Lord Crewe had described to Lord Pentland as "your quietly delightful capital" (a description which must have exacerbated Lord Pentland very much) the Armistice coincided with a cyclone which closed the doors of the Cathedral on the night of Sunday 10th November. Lights, telegraph and telephone succumbed to the blast and it was not till early on the Tuesday morning that bells, guns and—if memory serves—the sirens of steamers in the harbour rang in the new. Today someone somewhere, cyclone or no cyclone, would have "got it on the wireless"; but in 1918 mankind still lacked that doubtful blessing.

* * *

One of the more effective recruiting posters of World War One displayed a sweet little girl enquiring of a shamefaced civilian (who had obviously done nothing) "What did *you* do in the Great War, Daddy?" What did Parry's do in the Great War?

They did, as was to be expected, a considerable amount. Their first sacrifice was in the matter of staff; ere the war was a fortnight old London was cabling out, "Cardozo offered commission period war. Can you spare? Saunders already joined". Almost by return Madras wrote that Kerr and young H. B. Yorke had applied for commissions; the firm saw them off with a service revolver apiece. Old Yorke, A. J., not to be outdone by his offspring, joined the Anglo-American Motor Ambulance Corps at the age of fifty-nine and reached the front line trenches where he saw, *inter alia*, "one of our airmen being shelled—quite a pretty sight and exciting"; he drew the *poilu's* pay of one sou a day and was "frequently under fire". Others followed these examples; indeed applications—as elsewhere—were the order of the day. The general policy in regard to Assistants on

active service was laid down at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce in August of '14—places to be kept open and half pay during military service. At first the sacrifice of staff was willingly made; on 29-11-15 Jackson wrote in answer to a demur from Madras, "one can't put any obstacles in the way of men who wish to go and fight and we must just rub along as best we can". But as the years dragged on, the drain became insupportable; in May of 1916 Buchanan in Madras put his foot down. "We dislike very much having to refuse to let men go but there is a limit beyond which we cannot carry on in safety and this limit has now been reached". And a year later, in applying for the exemption of two partners and five assistants from other than local military service, Parry's put forward a list of the firm's activities which certainly did not make the least of them. There was no lack of patriotism in this, for Parry's were by this time working as much for the war as for their own interests.

The plea for exemption made no reference to local or part-time soldiering, but in the latter part of the war, with the Indian Defence Force in being, this became something of an infliction—more especially in the case of the staffs up-country. The nine members of the Nellikuppam contingent of the S. I. Railway Rifles had to undergo training at Villupuram (5-30 a.m. to 2-30 p.m. six days a week for seven and a half weeks); the five at Samalkot must journey to Cocanada (twenty-one hours absence from the factory); the Kulasekarapatnam party must take ship to Tuticorin (thirty-five miles each way, involving the entire day.) These sufferings were borne with resignation, but when London wrote out in mid-'17, "the Indian Defence Force is evidently going to give you a good deal of trouble", they made no error. Eventually, after battling, a modus vivendi was arrived at by which men were sent in batches to training centres for ten or fifteen days at a time—an arrangement which, with

a little commonsense at Army Headquarters, might very well have operated from the first.

There were the inevitable casualties among those who went into the regular forces. One of the earliest was Hugh Shaw—W. S. Shaw's son, who had been for a time with Parry's. The original pair of volunteers, Cardozo and Saunders, offer one of those contrasts in fate which seem to substantiate the idea of luck as something more than a superstition. Cardozo came, with a slight wound, out of an affair in which his battalion was practically wiped out. Saunders had the cruellest of ill fortunes; after a fine career in which he rose to commissioned rank, was more than once wounded, was four times mentioned in despatches and recommended for the M.C., he was killed three weeks before the Armistice. Elphinston was at one time reported missing but happily was found again—though he passed the duration in a German prison. Together with Hodgson, Farmer, Mainprice, and H. B. Yorke he saw it through, Yorke incidentally bringing away with him an M.S.M.—a decoration which did not grow upon gooseberry-bushes.

So much for Parry's staff. Financially, the firm was openhanded; they gave handsomely and regularly to the Madras War Fund and to the Hospital ship *Madras*, whose running expenses were in the nature of a lakh and a half a month. (On the Scottish principle, however, of "keepin' wur ain fish guts for wur ain sea-maws", they confined their donations to Madras and drew the line at contributing also to War Funds at home.) Where their plant was suitable, they gladly lent it in the cause of munitions; two lathes were sent from Nellikuppam to the South Indian Railway workshops free of charge for as long as wanted. Cars were placed at Government's disposal. The Ministry of Munitions also applied to Parry's in connection with the supply of Indian corundum—a commodity in which the firm had dealt as part of their mining interests in Travancore twenty

years earlier. And when, in February of 1917, Buchanan was summoned into the presence of the Governor to discuss the supply of leather goods—belts, harness, boots—to the troops in Mespotamia, he must have felt himself a reincarnation of Thomas Parry in the brisk days of San Thome. There was also a suggestion that jam and marmalade might be manufactured at Nellikuppam, but Buchanan's initial apprehension—that the fruit would be the difficulty—proved fatally correct. His suggestion of rum, however, was noted gratefully at the time—a gratitude those who eventually drank it would doutbless have echoed had they known whence this nectar came.

In the wider sphere of world events Parry's were not without their share. C. E. (later Sir Edgar) Wood was roped into the Ministry of Munitions in London who liked him so much that they insisted on retaining him for an extended period of service. In 1916 Parry's were one of several firms who put down a guarantee of Rs. 5,500 towards the cost of sending a delegation from Madras to Russia to stimulate post-war trade. The delegation actually went—it contained no member of Parry's—and brought back a report but the report was all it did bring back. In the condition in which the Russians found themselves from 1918 onwards, it is hardly surprising that an interchange of commodities with First Line Beach proved unworkable. A more hopeful rumour arose in 1917 to the effect that the Navy was about to increase greatly its use of Madras; encouraged possibly by the revived memories of their boots and accoutrement business, Parry's began to recall the great days of Dare and the Trincomalee Dockyards and to wonder if history could be made to repeat itself in another sphere. The Admiralty, however, declined to take a sentimental view of the past and in any case the Navy made no move at Madras; Parry's were left to console themselves with the well-deserved O.B.E. awarded at the end of the war to Wright.

On the whole Madras and its business stood up to the war very well. Indian industry gained by the removal of foreign competition; Indian trade might have done the same but for the crippling effect of so many losses at sea. At one time the Bank of Madras ran rather short of cash—mainly due to sudden and unadvertised Government withdrawals—and were inclined to take a severe view of such things as outstanding loans or advances for the purchase of jaggery. Buchanan was able to point out that Parry's had just sold sugar in Calcutta at half a lakh for 2,000 bags and that a further 20,000 bags were on the way there. The Bank was then, says Buchanan, " inclined to take a less gloomy view ". It well might.

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Before turning from the war and the international background we should perhaps glance again at the march of Indian politics during these troubled years. We have seen Armstrong, almost on the day of the outbreak, writing of the " extraordinary feeling of loyalty " everywhere displayed and indeed some of the pessimists had been more than a little surprised; the Georgetown cynics attributed it to the imminence of the *Emden* but this could not have accounted for the equally vigorous outburst in places where the *Emden* had never been heard of. There was justifiably proud talk of " India's Response "—to which the cynic replied, " Wait till we hear India's Demand ". The Demand was so far stilled by the progression throughout the war years to what were called the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (from the Secretary of State and Viceroy of the day who are known to posterity for little else) which found their embodiment in the Government of India Act of 1919. They introduced into India the cherished British democratic principle of Parliamentary Party Government; whether or not this conception was suitable to India is beside the point because it was what the Indians themselves

seemed to desire and had therefore to be given. The Reforms also initiated the system known as "Dyarchy" under which certain subjects were transferred to the control of Ministers elected by the community and responsible to the Legislature; this last was also now to control the Budget which, subject to the Governor's powers of restoration, it could throw out in whole or in part. All this caused considerable alarm among the European community (and a section of the Indian) and a slump in share values, and went but a little way towards satisfying the demands of the Swarajists. Adequate or inadequate, however, the Montagu-Chelmsford arrangements held the field for sixteen years and worked on the whole tolerably well.

Their chief interest for our present purpose is their expansion of the principle initiated in the Morley-Minto Reforms of ten years earlier and the increased opportunities they afforded the business men of Madras (and elsewhere in India) to take a hand in practical politics and legislation. Under the new regime the Madras Chamber of Commerce was allotted two seats instead of one; the Trades Association and the United Planters' Association (Upasi) had one each. There was a further seat reserved for the European Community on a communal electorate—the tardy realisation of an idea put forward by Henry Nelson some sixty years earlier. It cannot be said that every man of business in Madras rushed eagerly to grasp these new privileges; even Wood, a man unusually imbued with the ideal of public service, complained in a letter to Armstrong that anyone now accepting the Chairmanship of the Chamber must resign himself to losing touch with his business; how much worse would be the Legislative Council with its three-months session and its unpredictable demands on already well-filled time; Legislative Council posts, Wood thought, should be the preserve of the retired or semi-retired. This was a short-sighted view and

doomed to disappear; with the later Simon Reforms (so-called, though they were by no means what Lord Simon proposed) the mercantile community perceived that they *must* come into the game or perish by default and they took steps to implement this decision. And as a matter of fact Wood thought better of it and Parry's supplied an M.P. almost continuously from 1923 to 1947, Allerton being the last of a long series.

Despite India's Response and the Government's generous gesture (as they with some justification regarded it) the political seas throughout the war years were far from calm. By the close of 1917 London itself was finding time for acute anxiety about India—though the main fear, that the politicians would get at the Army, had no foundation. Jackson wrote out demanding regular bulletins on the situation; asked by his City friends what his people in India told him, he had to confess that, like James Forsyte, nobody ever told him anything. Parry's in Madras should have had stable information for, as Cox's agents, they acted as Bankers for Mr. Montagu and his party during their visit. In Madras the era will be remembered as the reign of Annie Besant and what Srinivasachari calls her "raging and tearing propaganda of a nebulous scheme known as Home Rule for India", terminated at long last by the Madras Government's order of internment; the almost immediate cancellation of this order by the Government of India (moved, it was supposed, by Mr. Montagu) caused, according to Armstrong, "considerable consternation amongst the Europeans and the non-Brahmin inhabitants, the latter I think being just as emphatic as the former in their condemnation of the Indian and the local Government". Armstrong—and many others with him—thought Lord Pentland and his Council should resign; they did not resign, however, and Mrs. Besant was presently consumed by the firebrands of her own igniting. The pace of Swaraj was becoming

too fast altogether for the watery Nationalism of the Adyar Theosophists.

The period immediately following the war was perhaps the blackest hour in Anglo-Indian relations. It was certainly so in Northern India where the "massacre" at the Jalianwallabagh roused partisan feelings on both sides dormant since the Mutiny. The agitators were concentrating now upon Indian labour and Parry's were anxious in regard to some of their factories. The atrocities at Amritsar (following on the first arrest of Gandhi) and the brutal murder of the Bank staff there threw a lurid light on the pitch to which things had come; "what with scarcity and famine", wrote Armstrong, "it seems probable serious unrest may prevail unless the Government make a determined effort to maintain public order". The Government in the saddle made an effort determined enough; but by this time the horse had bolted.

* * *

While these strong currents were agitating the wider ocean, the seas at Parry's Corner were disturbed by a question of internal politics or at any rate of internal policy. Thomas Parry's business, apart from his banking, had been a balanced affair of exports and imports; but with the deliberate murder of the Indian piece-goods trade and the scientific slaughter of indigo, it had grown with the years into a business of imports only. Or if that is saying too much, a business in which imports very heavily predominated and which depended on imports and local manufactures for its livelihood. To this extent the firm's position was unstable, and there were those who viewed this instability with a certain amount of apprehension. In the event, for instance, of a sudden and violent fluctuation in the rupee exchange, Parry's might be caught with all their money going one way. It was urged *per contra* that this was an unthinkable

contingency, and indeed the rupee had varied only by minute fractions on either side of one shilling and fourpence for more years than most of Parry's staff could remember. Yet, like so many improbables, this very thing was to happen—and that at no distant date and with consequences little short of appalling. The decision therefore to fortify the position by an increase in exported produce was not without its justifications.

The medium chosen for the export trade was groundnuts. Parry's had already been in and out of the groundnut industry whose best days were long past; it had become speculative in the extreme; new competitors in the home market were adding their quota to the familiar iniquities of the "shed-men" and the South Arcot ryots, and in an ever narrowing world prices at Cuddalore were swayed by the plenitude or otherwise of palm oil in Africa, olives in Italy, soya beans in Manchuria. To succeed in groundnuts now one must be in close contact with the markets of the world. Jackson, who was anti-export in general, thought groundnuts "a losing game" not commensurate with the risk; "it is curious that we all seem to have to buy our experience in turn!"—and certainly it was true that more than one Madras firm had burnt their fingers in this particular fire. Nevertheless and not without misgivings, a fresh agreement was entered into with Produce Brokers Ltd. (with whom there had already been dealings in 1910) to participate in the groundnut kernel business. It was a failure. The London market proved unresponsive; the price bid for groundnuts at the London auctions was consistently less than the price paid by Parry's in South Arcot. There was nothing to do but draw stumps and for the second time in their history Parry's reluctantly abandoned groundnuts and quitted the field.

In the debate of exports versus imports each side will continue to have its exponents. Some of the *pro*-export arguments have already been mentioned;

one of the arguments *con* which carried some weight with Parry's was that a European firm entering the export trade must necessarily compete with Indian traders. Experience has shown that the home buyer will expect and demand from the European a higher standard of product but, whether he gets it or whether he does not, he will decline to pay any more for it. Whether the European product is or is not better than the Indian, it will almost certainly have cost more to produce; therefore.....Q.E.D.

This may sound conclusive. Yet the fact remains that Ralli Brothers—who ran both an export and an import business—stood relatively unshaken through the economic blizzard of 1921 while others were collapsing around them and while the edifice of Parry's, as we shall see, rocked and cracked and came within an ace of downfall.

* * *

The legacy from World War One which produced the most remarkable developments in Parry's affairs —not, to be sure, with a very satisfactory outcome— sprang from a source from which little might have been expected—their relatively unimportant agency for the German firm of Orenstein and Köppel. Orenstein and Köppel were a substantial concern with a capital translating into two and a half million sterling; from their Calcutta branch they distributed at highly competitive prices almost every description of light railway material from rolling stock to fish-plates. With the outbreak of war—despite the firm's ad hoc protestations that it was "British"—this large enterprise passed to the Custodian of Enemy Property with all its accumulated stocks. Something had to be done with this *embarras de richesse* and to whom should the Custodian turn more naturally than to Orenstein and Köppel's agents in Madras. (Among Orenstein's outstandings was a consignment of waggons for Parry's for the use of the Kulasekarapatnam Light

Railway which were coming out on the German *Lichtenfels*; there was anxiety about them for a time but eventually they safely arrived.) Apart from patriotic grounds, the invitation was attractive and Parry's readily fell in with it, appointing for the purpose an ex-engineer of Orenstein's named Bowie. Parry's had been operating in Calcutta since the turn of the century—first in connection with Dods, Ker and Co. and later on their own—but the Orenstein and Köppel affairs were to be independently managed.

Orenstein and Köppel's surviving stocks vanished like hot cakes and it was evident that the all-India demand for light railway material would remain considerable. Parry's, never lacking in courage, grasped the opportunity and their Railway Engineering Department came into being. Undeterred by warnings of the difficulty in obtaining supplies from a Britain endeavouring to cope with world orders on a wartime labour establishment, they put in a first indent for upwards of a lakh—tipping waggons, locomotives, sleepers, concrete mixers, rails, bolts, wheels, axles. In addition to this, such secondhand material as was available in Calcutta was bought up, and negotiations were opened with the Tata Iron and Steel Co. for light rails. By the middle of 1915 the new Railway Engineering Department was able to issue a seductive catalogue—"intimate knowledge of the business" ..... "prompt delivery of all Standards" ..... favourable prices—if you allow for war increases ..... we use the product ourselves. The new venture was well away on its career.

There were, however, obvious difficulties. An expenditure of half a lakh might amplify the existing Calcutta office but could not turn it into a factory; use had therefore to be made of the premises of others, so that Parry's products in embryo were spread all over Calcutta—a foundry here, rivetters there, wheels shrunk in Dhurrumtollah, plates bent at Kidderpore. There was only one possible solution—our own work-

shops—and Parry's took this hurdle in their stride. Finance was satisfactorily arranged with the Bank of Madras; the supply of material, under difficulties, was vigorously tackled. The erection of the new workshops at Howrah under war conditions was necessarily slow; in February of 1917 the R.E.D. was still confined to other men's yards; first orders were on the small side but were expected to improve when Bowie began to travel and canvas. On the whole Buchanan could write, "good profits are being made and the staff are now happy and working well together. Our experience to date shows conclusively that there is money to be made in the R.E.D." At the same time, he emphasised, the Department must establish itself much more solidly if it was to live up to Orenstein and Köppel's record and face post-war imitators—who might well be many. To these prospects there was but the one reaction—the thing was big and must be tackled accordingly; it could best be done by the formation of a subsidiary company. The Armistice was not long signed before Parry's Engineering Limited came into being. Its fate—less successful than its deserts—we shall follow later; meanwhile we may cite it as yet another example, in Parry's long history, of One Thing Leading to Another.

* * *

The establishment of the R.E.D. and Parry's Engineering Ltd., was perhaps the firm's outstanding war and post-war interest, but the new Confectionery Works at Nellikuppam ran it close. From steel to sweetmeats may seem a sensational leap, but it is one of the features of the Managing Agency system and one of its strengths that the same firm can successfully undertake a variety of operations even more diverse than these.

For confectionery there was opportunity indeed; in 1913 the Presidency of Madras alone was importing nearly 15,000 cwt. of sweets per annum—an import

the new factory was in time to absorb wholly and turn into a distribution of more than double. Before this could be achieved it had its inevitable teething troubles. There was a good deal of argument as to the use or non-use of what was known to the trade as "amorphous sugar"; it was abandoned on the sound advice of William Neilson who prophesied that it would be a failure—as, in other hands, it proved to be. Nellikuppam's first boiled sweets came out, not as sweets but as a mass—"amorphous" indeed—of sticky conglomerate; this was remedied by the use of a vacuum pan, but Dick, whose illness had delayed the start and who does not seem to have been very happy at Nellikuppam, became so despondent that, like a second Norfor, he believed the whole plant should be closed down. He had doubts as to the suitability of palmyra jaggery and—rather needlessly, as Ormerod told him—mistrusted the abilities of the local packers. Dick departed and the plant remained—and went forward progressively. So far as the manufacture of confectionery was concerned, the war was a positive advantage inasmuch as it put a stop to all exports of sweets from Britain and left Nellikuppam with a clear field. By January 1915 the factory was finding itself quite unable to cope with the demand for its products and was calling for additional plant and stores—with the usual wartime response; confectionery was not engineering, and machinery for lollipops was difficult to justify. Lord Pentland, however, was conducted round the establishment in February and found himself "much pleased and interested in all he saw". Jackson in London was equally gratified by the first-profits figures but thought the prices of the wares might well go up. They did, but this had the effect of curtailing orders; Calcutta (which was taking 2,000 cases) suggested that when orders were overtaken they should go down again.

The first samples of Nellikuppam's new product to reach London seemed to Jackson to "look very

nice" (apparently he had not risked tasting them). The label on the bottle bore the words "Parry and Co." in large and glowing letters; Buchanan feared that this might lead to complications with some of the E.I.D. Board—whose product of course the confectionery was. "Will Jackson please explain to Ormerod", he wrote roundly, "that the natives of this country never have and never will take kindly to anything new and that having known Parry's for generations have refused to adopt E.I.D. and it will remain 'Parry's Sugar', 'Parry's Arrack' and 'Parry's Sweets' however much E.I.D. may be advertised. In our opinion the use of Parry's name is one of the most valuable assets the Company possesses". One cannot but applaud—and the Board must have felt the same, for "Parry's" remained conspicuously on the labels ever after.

By the end of 1917 there was, not unnaturally, an acute shortage of tins which were being sought as far afield as Japan. Simultaneously, however, "Parry's Sweets" were invading Bombay. Nothing, in fact, impeded or ever has impeded the triumphant progress of Nellikuppam's baby.

During the years 1916-1917 there was considerable argument and correspondence as to the advisability or otherwise of embarking on the manufacture of biscuits. Madras was eager but Jackson was cannily against it. He and Ormerod inspected new and secondhand plants in Britain but came to the same conclusion as the latter had once reached in respect of sugar-cane—that they were both "in their infancy". It would cost £6,000 to install a biscuit plant on a commercial scale; if we have £6,000 to spend, why not put it into that established winner, sweets? Why embark on an industry whose raw material, good wheat flour, must needs be imported? What point in the "large profits" Madras envisaged in the face of an 80% Excess Profits Tax? Madras, lured by the glittering 30% just declared by the Delhi

Biscuit Co. Ltd., still pressed their case, but the E.I.D. Board remained obdurate. Could anybody prove that biscuits could be satisfactorily manufactured in a climate as hot as Nellikuppam? Would the Government provide a trial plant and an expert to work it? Nobody could; the Government wouldn't; the proposal dropped.

* * *

During the war years—and the decade that followed them—the old staple stand-bys continued their careers without sensational change. E.I.D., as a regular gain-maker and payer of dividends, had ceased to be exciting; in the first year of the war it more than doubled its profits and paid on its Ordinaries for the first time in ten years. In the following year it increased profits by 50% and doubled the Ordinary dividend; war conditions suited it—and especially its confectionery. In the earlier war years it was shaken by a couple of scares; in 1915 a certain Mr. Hughes (who may have been of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co.) proposed to set up a rival factory at Tindivanam, well within Nellikuppam's "sphere of interest", but this bogey fizzled out; the opinion of one knowledgeable adviser—that "Mr. Hughes didn't mean business"—was apparently correct. A more serious menace was the rise in 1917 of the Ceylon Refineries who had been disappointed in the jaggery supplies available in their island and were poaching on Parry's preserves in South India to the tune of five thousand tons, and were correspondingly putting up the price. The Ceylon Refineries however came to a speedy end, leaving E.I.D., hardly shaken, to pursue its now serene course towards higher and higher profits.

The Deccan Sugar and Abkhari Co., while less solidly prosperous, did well also. Certain interests were vigorously pushing the idea of an amalgamation with E.I.D., but Parry's were against it. Why should

not the D. S. and A. rather develop its own side-shows in the best E.I.D. tradition; why should it not make its own carbonic acid gas and its own confectionery? In time, which accomplishes all things, it did.

In 1918 one of those officious bodies which wars inevitably beget—in this case the British Empire Producers' Organisation—circularised those interested with an "After the War" programme for sugar. (It did the same thing, on the same lines, for indigo.) Its suggestions were not very novel—50% off the tariffs for British products, steps to countervail bounties open or concealed, all Germans to be virtually banned from the industry for ever. Parry's disposal of this lucubration was probably "Filed"; they had their own views by this time as to the possibility of forecasting or determining the future of sugar.

The Malabar Timberyards also benefited from the war. At its onset they were swinging between small profits and small losses; by its close profits were steady. In 1918 a topic was mooted of which more was to be heard in World War Two—that of wood distillation. In March of 1919 Brace Brookes was sent to Mesopotamia to investigate the possibilities of a market there for Madras timber, but his report did not justify further developments; the trade went back to the Arab and Indian merchants in whose ancient traffic the war had been but a temporary interlude.

At Ranipet the Presidency Manure Works continued to do its useful work; its main difficulty throughout the war was the securing of rail priorities for its products. The companion works at Feroke in Malabar, opened shortly before the war, had so far less than justified their existence; but as Buchanan pointed out, they were put there to deal with fish and since their erection there had been no fish. "In a good fish year we cannot fail to do well at Feroke". But the West Coast sardines consistently refused to

shoal within economic range of the presses awaiting them, and the works, never particularly successful, were finally closed in 1952. On the other side of the Ranipet factory compound, chemicals were booming; that useful product (in various ways) Epsom Salts was coming into its own, since the war had discounted the old argument—cheapness—in favour of its imported rival. (Parry's salts were unavoidably made from high-grade materials and were in fact too good for the crude requirements of tanning; with the low price of foreign salts, inferior in quality but still good enough for their purpose, they could not then compete. Nowadays import restrictions have left them in command of the field.) The restriction on shipments of sulphuric acid from Britain put up the demand for—and the price of—Ranipet's variety, though at the war's outset Jackson had been patriotically opposed to "excessive prices, even if you could command them". The labours of the chemical staff were rewarded in 1917 by a bonus of a month's pay. A suggestion, mooted in 1917, to move from Ranipet to somewhere nearer a port was discouraged, though there was something to be said for it on the ground of freight difficulties in North Arcot.

Lastly, an item which did *not* thrive so well under war conditions—the Kulasekarapatnam Light Railway. The *Lichtenfels* waggons duly (or unduly) reached Bombay, but in 1915 "none of the makers would touch" the further sixteen waggons required, and thereafter the difficulty of supplies became acute. None the less, a sixteen-mile stretch of the line, from Kulasekarapatnam to Tissianvillai, was opened on 18-7-1915, anticipating any other stretch by seven years. It ran at a loss but was never, of course, intended primarily as a profit-making commercial concern.

Besides such stalwarts as E.I.D. and P.M.W. there were a number of minor activities, some of which

were new and others old; among the latter was the import of Allsopp's beer—which Parry and Dare had been importing a century before. The most notable of the newer developments centred round the Brunner Mond agency. Brunner Mond in Colombo had been in the hands of a German firm, Freudenberg and Co., to whose activities the war naturally put an end; as naturally, Parry's took their place and became so enamoured of Ceylon that they thought of opening an agency there of their own. Perhaps the ghost of Thomas Parry, sitting in what had been Governor Maitland's house in 1810, smiled reminiscently. The other novelty connected with Brunner Mond was the agency for the impressively named Gossage's Empress Pale Bar Soap, a popular seller on the West Coast; this, after a period of eclipse when Lever Brothers first took over from Brunner Mond, revived again and ran merrily till quite recent times. The West Coast area was particularly fruitful during the War, perhaps because it had been a stamping-ground of the Germans; from it came, more or less directly, the managing agency of the Commonwealth Trust. This body, "partly a business and partly a philanthropic arrangement", paid 5% to its shareholders and handed all surplus profits to the Trustees for the benefit of missionary endeavour; it had taken over, *inter multa alia*, the nominally neutral but factually German Basle Mission industries in Malabar. Jackson deemed it "unquestionably respectable" and accepted a seat on its Board and Parry's became its Managing Agents. Although a little puzzled by its combination of profits and piety, they held the full Agency till 1933 and held it much longer for the solitary District of Chingleput and Madras City. In the immediate aftermath of the war, too, Parry's acquired their first agency for potash; they successfully resisted a pressing invitation to interest themselves in mica, of which they had had enough twenty years ago in Travancore.

One other matter arose out of the war which was to develop remarkably in later years—civil aviation. Hardly were hostilities over when the Government of India, with commendable alertness, put forward a proposal for a monopoly air-mail service throughout India and Burma; would firms interested in the development of Civil Aviation please communicate with Simla? The Madras Chamber of Commerce, asked for its opinion, took a rather disappointing line; it felt that civil flying was but a precocious infant too full of potential mischief to be left to private enterprise; "for some years to come at least, the Air Company should be owned and worked by Government" on the lines of a State Railway. This must have been something of a damper to Jackson in London who was in touch with Sopwith's and was prepared to muster all resources in order to aid their representative in making a ground survey of India—with, of course, an agency in ultimate prospect. Until the inception of the Flying Club much later and the tardy establishment of air connection with Bombay, civil aviation made little headway in Madras; but when it did, Parry's, as we shall see, were well in the forefront of this tremendous adventure.

* * *

World War One devised some curious novelties and led to some curious revivals; one of the latter was that indigo on which Baron Schrottky had so lavishly expended his energies in the last days of the Old Era. A speculator less far-sighted than the Baron might well have foretold that the stoppage of (mainly) German synthetic dyes would lead to a boom or at least a boomlet in the natural product; Jackson was writing out about it ere the war was a fortnight old. A year later he was enquiring if there had been any revival in North or South Arcot—on the old territory of Colonel Cullen and Sugar Campbell. There certainly had been—and with good reason, for as soon

as the stocks of indigotin on hand at the outbreak of the war became exhausted, the price of indigo soared from 2/9d. a pound to 11/6d. Obviously the game was to grow indigo; but the weather unfortunately refused to play. Parry's, whose London agents had once been Britain's largest indigo importers, were mildly interested; calling for figures, they were informed that the export from Madras had risen from 1,787 cwts. in 1913-14 to 26,171 cwts. in 1915-16—a rise which was likely to be doubled in the current year. In 1918 Parry's sent home a sample of their own manufacture but were disappointingly told that while "your powder is evidently the most suitable form in which Indian indigo has ever been put before the trade", there were no buyers in bulk because all were contracted indefinitely for the synthetic type. If most of the synthetic indigo was German, this last would seem to require a little explanation. As a pendant to all this, it is interesting to note that in April of 1940, World War Two being now in possession of the stage, the South Arcot ryots, with their customary nose for good business, were cultivating indigo again.

There was another spectre from the past that seemed for a moment about to rise from its dishonoured interment. On the 7th of December 1916 Madras wrote home that Camp, an employee of D. S. & A., while boring for water near their Anakapalle factory in Vizag, had struck gold assaying at 2·8 dwt. per 2,000-lb. ton; how and on what terms were Parry's to secure the mining rights? But this time there was in London a Pharaoh who knew not Camp but may have remembered Cass; "quite interesting", wrote Jackson, "but I sincerely hope that P. and Co. will not put any money into it or even have an interest again in a mining venture". Madras came back, whereupon Jackson delivered himself in full. "Mining is not our business"—and he explained why; "I won't say that it is impossible to

hit on a good thing, but the odds (and especially in India) are admittedly against it". Get up a private syndicate among your friends (shades of Murray!) and be sure you get expert advice before forming a company. This, Jackson is careful to explain, is not to advocate that Parry's should do it but merely to indicate how it might be done. How, he might have added, it once *was* done.

Vade retro, Satanus! Even the milder flutter of chrome mining in Mysore was—after a little yearning—shunned.

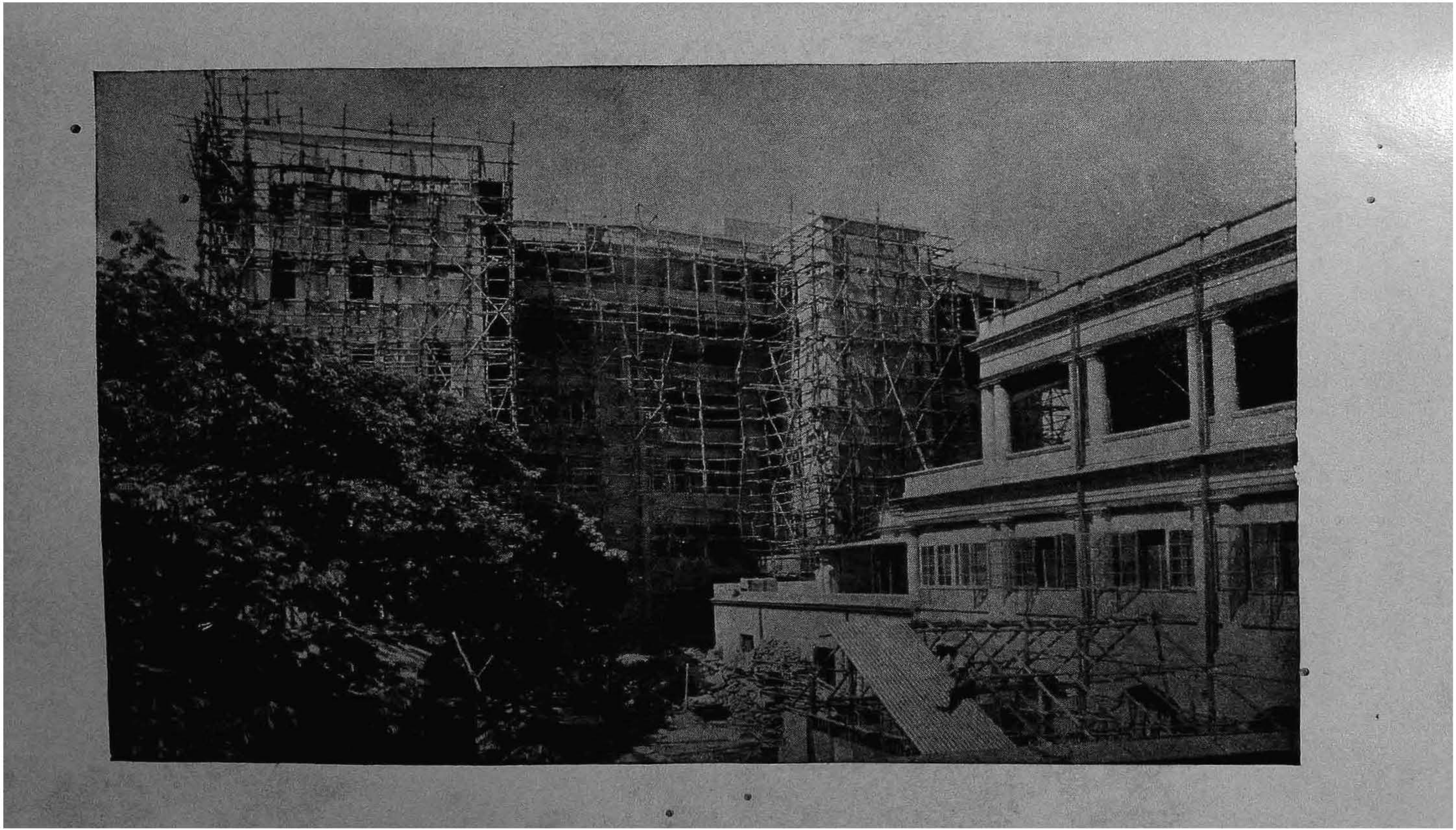
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We have already seen how Parry's Corner, during the war years, was ravaged by the claims of patriotism and the military activities of the staff. There was another consideration which came and went recurringly—the office buildings themselves; on these hallowed objects war, or the side-issues and by-products of war, laid their horrid hands. Even before the war started, the Madras Corporation had begun an agitation for rounding off the Corner; an outrage, of course, but as the Corporation could compulsorily acquire if necessary, better, said Jackson, " be politic and come to terms ". If any terms were come to, they apparently involved the dropping of the proposal; the Corner *was* rounded off in due course but it was done by Parry's themselves when they built Dare House and a stone marked 'P' in the pavement shows where the Corner stood..... In the first year of the war there was another assault, this time by the Government who were seeking a site for their currency office and were threatening anything and everything on First Line Beach. " Government ", wrote Jackson crushingly from London, " is supposed to exist in the interests of commerce and not to handicap it..... It would never be tolerated here ". Fortunately it did not have to be tolerated in Madras either; it never happened.

PARRY'S CORNER : OLD AND NEW

The old buildings in the foreground. Dare House rising behind.

"Perhaps because of these covetous attacks, Parry's looked more closely at their existing buildings and were displeased with them."



Perhaps because of these covetous attacks, Parry's looked more closely at their existing buildings and were displeased with them; from 1915 onwards the question of a new office is of frequent occurrence. The trouble, of course, was finance; to a suggestion of borrowing on a large scale Jackson characteristically replied that the present buildings were a valuable asset on which money might be raised (and had been, he might have added) at a pinch, " but a new building, however magnificent, the interest on which would only be covered by the rent, would not be much of an asset ". Madras replied that " with more important looking premises " we should do more business; and certainly some of the more recent erections along First Line Beach had made the Corner seem a trifle shabby. Apart altogether from aesthetics, the office was becoming too small for the spreading activities of the firm; as a consequence of this, in 1919, the Lawyers found themselves, much to their annoyance, turned out of their Block which they had occupied so long on so moderate a rent. But this did not suffice; a school had arisen which was ashamed of the old Corner and demanded something better and in 1920 Wright, its spokesman, told London that the time had come to tackle the question definitely. He had a concrete scheme to put forward; a section of the north façade at the Corner, the whole northern end of it, should be sold to Tata's as a site for their projected new Bank; price $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, cost of new building $5\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs; during construction Parry's would occupy the upper floor of the Bank of Madras building in Mount Road. This might or might not have been put into execution—though Tata's seemed rather to blow hot and cold—but within a fortnight of Wright's letter Madras was plunged into the exchange collapse and Parry's were in no plight for facing new expenditures. Nor were they for a decade to come; it is not till the late 1930's that the question of rebuilding the Corner reappears.

At the outset of the war the total wages bill for staff in Madras, Ranipet, Cuddalore, Calicut and Cochin, Tinnevelly, Trichinopoly and Calcutta was Rs. 17,335 a month. For senior Europeans with ten years service, pay including commission and bonus ranged from Rs. 650 to Rs. 900 a month—salaries going by position, not by grade; up-country men had a free house. In the lower grades a clerk drew Rs. 24 and a shorthand writer 40; an Indian science graduate at Ranipet had Rs. 250 and a free house. There were also opportunities; one clerk who started as a traveller on a small salary had averaged a thousand rupees a month in commissions—about the sum paid by Government to an Under-Secretary. There were openings at all grades, for by the end of the war Parry's were employing some fifty Assistants at salaries from Rs. 250 a month upwards. Yet there was discontent among the higher staff and it was left to Wood to lay his finger on its cause. In August of 1918, writing from the Ministry of Munitions—where he had got rather into the habit of recording minutes—he said, "Jackson has already written about decentralisation and I am all out for it. We are more out of date in this respect than any office I know and I know the Assistants resent it. With proper systematic control departments can be left almost to run themselves and they become *much* more efficient if the control is general rather than petty". It was true; Parry's had grown out of the stage when every item could be signed by a partner. This acknowledgment of the fact was perhaps an effect of the war, perhaps merely a sign of the times; it was at any rate a step forward.

But let not the impression be given that the minds and spirits of Parry's staff were limited by office routine and their desks at Parry's Corner. Sport has always played a large part in their lives and they have always been good at it. Shaw, when recruiting J. C. Armstrong in 1899, debarred him from the steeple-

chasing he had been enjoying in Rangoon—"we object to our men racing..... we prohibit our men from riding in Steeple Chases"; and twenty years later Wright firmly vetoed the even more dangerous pastime of racing by motor-cycle. But with these exceptions almost everything else has been encouraged and practised—from mountaineering to cricket, from rugby football to sailing the Kallai-built yacht *Norma*. In all these fields—to say nothing of shikar, great and small—Parry's men have distinguished themselves, but nowhere more than on the Adyar River. On the table in the tiffin-room at this moment there stands, by right of victory in the current year, a very beautiful silver model of an outrigger, the coveted trophy in the Merchants and Bankers Challenge Fours. Parry's won it in the first year of the race—1900, and they have won it on nine out of the nine-and-thirty subsequent occasions on which the race has been held. Seven of these victories took place in one glorious sequence between 1928 and 1937 when the four was stroked by T. G. Armstromg, nephew of the frustrated steeplechaser (who had himself rowed in the 1900 boat). It is pleasant to record that by 1948 Armstrong (T.G.) had rowed himself into the Vice-Chairmanship of the firm. If, after all these evidences, anyone were still foolish enough to suppose Parry's staff a company of "clerics and officers", the tan on the faces round the tiffin-table would promptly disabuse him; service with Parry's is not and never has been a white-collar job.

* * *

It was during the war that Parry's took up again the old pastime—Getting Out of the Wynaad. We have already seen that some progress was made towards this objective under Shaw's tea-company scheme in 1907; but there remained a residue not then accounted for—principally the Velleramulla and Kalpetta blocks of about 3,000 acres between them.

No one now surviving—with the possible exception of A. J. Yorke—had any very clear idea as to what the Wynaad Lands were, since few of these rather vague abstractions had ever been properly surveyed, while the title-deeds to many of them were full of unanswered but vital questions—for example, did Parry's own the *jenmi* rights or did they not? These combined deficiencies were apt to deter the prospective buyer—the more so as, in many cases, what appeared on paper to be a substantial acreage of plantation land turned out on closer inspection to be virgin jungle or solid rock. At the beginning of 1914 or a little earlier a possible buyer had appeared and Parry's were putting pressure on Bernard Malcolm (who, like his father before him, had long been nominally but somewhat possessively in charge of their Wynaad estates) to produce maps, schedules and valuations. These tarried, but were eventually received in 1915.

The buyer of 1914 had already departed and Parry's began to toy again with the old Shaw idea of turning the lands into a tea company. Nothing, however, had been done to implement this when, three years later in the spring of 1919, it seemed as if the long-standing problem was really to be solved at last. Messrs. Barber and Pascoe, the planters' agents, came forward with a firm offer from an unspecified buyer of Rs. 30,000 for the Kalpetta block—which was considerably in excess of Parry's book value. Parry's stood out for selling both blocks together, but by July of 1919 Madras was able to wire agreement to London's price for the pair. A hitch, however, now seems to have developed; putting two and two together, and in view of what has just been said, one can only assume that Parry's were unable to produce the title-deeds or at any rate to produce them in any acceptable order. In June of 1921 Messrs. Barber and Pascoe, apparently despairing, offered to take over the lands and pay for them, leaving the question of title to be settled later; this sporting offer

did not appeal to their principals who almost at once authorised them to enquire whether Parry's would drop the sale as the deal was taking such an interminable time to conclude. Parry's had by this time suspected the identity of the prospective buyers and their own interest in the transaction had correspondingly cooled; so that when Barber and Pascoe informed them categorically in November that their principals had backed out, they allowed the negotiations to terminate and resigned themselves to the possession of the Velleramulla and Kalpetta blocks in perpetuity. As an example of protracted correspondence with negative result this may well vie with the celebrated exchanges between Fort St. George and Whitehall on the question of Thomas Parry's banishment.

To avoid further suspense and round off the Wynaad lands once for all, let it be said that Parry's did *not* possess Velleramulla and Kalpetta in perpetuity. They sold Velleramulla in July of 1942 and Kalpetta in September at just double what theywould have got for them in 1919. It is possible that Parry's may have since regretted these sales but at least the firm had achieved the object over which so much thought and care had been expended. They had Got Out of the Wynaad.

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The bells and guns and sirens of Armistice morning rang in the Millenium—for those who believed in it. We, who know so much worse, are puzzled by the innocent naiveté that made so certain that " après la guerre, there'll be a good time everywhere ". Yet the faith was sincere and widespread—and perhaps natural. It was held, however, by two contrasting types; the first, of course, was the sufferer from the war who had kept himself going through blood and toil, sweat and tears, in the trust that, if there were a just God, his agonies must earn him bliss. But there was also the second type, the gainer from the war,

the man who had done well out of it; these were not few and many of them were men of business. To these the Millenium meant the indefinite continuation of the seller's market of the last four years, of easy money made without great effort; the only difference would be that the irksome restrictions and shortages and rationings which alone had marred that halcyon era would now disappear..... It was not to be quite like that.

Had Parry's in Madras been foolish enough to subscribe to the prevailing delusion, they must have been sobered by the rapidly darkening situation in India. The immediate post-war years were a steady slide from bad to worse. The elections of 1920 passed off quietly enough, some 40% of the Madras electorate voting despite the veto of the Congress high command; as Buchanan pointed out, non-co-operation with its accent on personal sacrifice was unattractive to those with anything to lose. A rumour that Mr. Montagu intended to become Viceroy terrified Jackson into asking what Madras meant to do about it; but it proved to be a rumour and no more. So far so good; but by August of 1920 Gandhi's non-cooperation campaign and his boycott of British goods was in full blast and he was holding meetings in Madras; Buchanan's view that "the movement promises to be a failure here" was optimistic, though the Madras piece-goods merchants had no love for the new doctrine and their Association even went the length of saying so. The movement gathered momentum as Gandhi's stature increased; the counter-activities of Ministers and others could do little to stem the tide. In September of 1921 the Government arrested the Ali brothers and five months later nerved themselves to the extreme step of rearresting Gandhi himself; the news was published side by side with that of the simultaneous resignation of Mr. Montagu as Secretary of State so that diehard readers in Madras must have felt like that fabulous

character of World War Two who dreamt of a newspaper placard "Hitler assassinated at Mussolini's funeral". These cataclysmic events brought no real improvement; the arrested persons became martyrs, the country continued to seethe. In August of 1921 trouble broke out in a new, if connected form—the sanguinary Moplah Rebellion (where Parry's contributed one of their local Assistants to the relieving force). The disturbed period reached a climax in the ill-timed visit of the Prince of Wales; the Bombay rioting and casualties on the day of His Royal Highness's arrival scared even Gandhi. The Royal visit to Madras was more successful or less unsuccessful than in some other places; there were several deaths from mob violence but it was locally rated "a great success on the whole" and the Prince himself was said to have enjoyed it. He probably enjoyed it at least more than did Wilkinson of Parry's who was stoned and battered while motor-cycling along Mount Road. Parry's had loyally decorated their Corner; when the emblems of devotion on the Lawyers' Block were attacked by a mob, two young Assistants rushed to the rescue, firing their revolvers in the air; it was sufficient to guarantee immunity for the rest of the Royal visit. But throughout His Royal Highness's tour there was an unending series of *hartals*—a new and useful device thought up by the Congress under which all Indian shops and places of business were solemnly closed as a sign of "mourning"; so that the most notable—perhaps the only tangible—effect of the Prince's visit was the stopper it imposed on trade at a time when such discouragements were, to say the least of it, *de trop*.

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In 1920 and 1921 Parry's in Madras had other things to think of than politics and Princes. For these were the years of the sudden and catastrophic collapse in the rupee exchange.

Pundits in economics have written books to explain this phenomenon, which was due in the main to the fact—now so well recognised but at the time still to be learned from painful experience—that a wartime boom is tolerably certain to be followed by a post-war slump. The intense all-out war effort of 1914-1918 had led to borrowing, inflation, rises in commodity prices; none of these could go on. Shortages turned suddenly into gluts; men who, to be on the safe side, had commissioned four hundred tons of rationed or controlled material when they required only one hundred, found themselves to their horror landed with the entire order which they could neither pay for nor get rid of. A vast trade depression began to stalk at large all over the world; in India the balance of trade became increasingly adverse; her customers were financially *in extremis* and could not make their usual purchases; the political troubles, the non-cooperation movement and Gandhi's anti-British boycott turned peril into ruin. Everyone was owed; no one could collect.

Looked at in another way, the catastrophe may be quite simply expressed in terms of the price of silver. In 1914 silver stood at an average of 25-5/16 pence per standard ounce; in common with other commodities it began a steady rise. The rupee being a silver coinage, its value naturally rose with that of the metal, which by 1920 had reached the average figure of 61-7/16. With the onset of the world-wide slump silver then fell rapidly; in 1921 its average was no better than 37 pence. The Government, struggling with these ungovernable forces, were first obliged to raise the rate of rupee exchange and re-raise it; the corresponding decline they could not arrest. During the upward movement a point was soon reached where the value of the silver content of the rupee exceeded its face value as a coin and when melting down for sale as bullion became profitable; it was to forestall this that the Babington-Smith Committee in

1920 fixed the official rate of exchange at two shillings and confidently announced that this was likely to hold. Unfortunately the Committee had taken temporary conditions as permanent; hardly had their proposal become effective when the sudden and violent fall in silver began, so that in a short space of time finance and trade were thrown into helpless confusion by a rupee standing at a level much below the official rate. Sudden and violent the fall certainly was; in February of 1920 the exchange quotation was (at its zenith) just under two-and-elevenpence; on the 17th of June in the same year Wood was writing home " the bottom is absolutely falling out of the market and T.T. selling rate is put down to 1/8d. and may go lower ". It did; in the early months of 1921 the rupee was actually quoted below 1/3d. The magnitude of the fall was less terrifying than its rapidity, but the real shock was one of surprise. As Buchanan wrote, " To have foreseen the drop in the exchange would have been to disagree with every financial authority in the country including the Commission of Experts specially appointed to report on the rate at which the rupee was to be stabilised ".

The plight of those who, like Parry's, had contracted for goods in sterling at a price which the exchange fluctuation had practically doubled and who were obliged, before they could remit at all, to sell to customers who had become unable to buy, requires no emphasis. A single example will suffice to show the murderous effect of the rupee collapse. London had an overdraft on its Bank of Scotland account which had unsuspectingly been kept open; in April of 1920 that overdraft could have been met, by remittances from Madras, at a certain figure; by October of the same year that figure was increased by 80,000 rupees. That is to say, a further 80,000 rupees had to be found in Madras; or, in other words, 80,000 rupees were simply lost.

But the branch of their business in which Parry's were seriously—indeed almost mortally—hit was their piece-goods. We have seen how, in the remote past, the crippling duties imposed in the Lancashire interests had turned this from an export to an import trade. We have seen also how, at one time, Parry's had practically abandoned it and how in turn it had revived. The revival was wholly deliberate; Parry's had been founder-members of the Madras Piece-goods and General Merchants Association formed in 1895 and both Jackson and Armstrong, on whom Jackson's mantle in Madras descended, were originally recruited as piece-goods men. Competition in the Madras piece-goods business was intense but Parry's grey jaconets, printed saris and black twist yarn had been heavily established lines since the beginning of the century and before.

Put briefly, the story of the 1920-21 disaster is simply that Parry's had a loan for their piece-goods trade from the Bank of Madras amounting to as much as fifty-two lakhs; that they had contracted for very large shipments of piece-goods from Britain in sterling which they had passed on at sterling prices to the dealers, who insisted on taking the supposedly negligible risk of exchange; that the sudden and entirely unforeseen collapse in exchange practically doubled Parry's liabilities to their Home suppliers; and that the political situation, the economic depression in India, the boycott, the Moplah Rebellion and the fall in the rupee—which hit them as hard as it hit Parry's—reduced the Madras dealers to a state wherein many of them could not, and many of them would not hold by their contracts. Some of them merely stalled; others, emulating the astute Baron Schrottky, sought sanctuary in Pondicherry. Many repudiated their contracts in the genuine belief that the Government had guaranteed a two-shilling rupee, while the Indian Nationalists of course made hay by alleging a deliberate manipulation of exchange in the

interest of British exports. In return for their commission on orders booked from dealers Parry's stood as the Bank's "in case of need" resort; when the dealers repudiated, the Bank came down on Parry's. The dealers stood to lose something like thirteen or fourteen lakhs—much the same sum as Parry's themselves; even the offer of a two-lakh write-off subject to completion of delivery within a specified date could not bring more than a few of them in. Even where deliveries were made, Parry's must pay the Bank of Madras the full cost prices of the stocks in order to release the goods; it was clear that the time must come when the necessary cash would not be available. Though the Imperial Bank was charging 7% against Parry's securities, no cheaper money could be raised in London—in fact no money at all. The situation was literally desperate. To realise how desperate, it is only necessary to glance at the Profit and Loss Accounts for the years 1921 to 1924 and the nose-dive of the Profit-and-Loss graph in these years; a profit of over four lakhs in 1920 was turned into a nine-lakh loss for 1921 and this was but the beginning of a series.

The critic may urge that these difficulties were avoidable and culpable; that the Bank of Madras loan was gigantic; that the piece-goods branch had overtraded; that the dealers should not have been allowed to buy so heavily in sterling; above all, that the exchange risk should have been covered, regardless of cost, by forward contracts with the Banks. To these charges Parry's in Madras could—and did—reply that the Bank loan was covered by security to the satisfaction of the creditor; that other piece-goods merchants were selling to the dealers in sterling and that Parry's must follow suit or go out of the business; and that, so far as exchange risks went, there *was* no risk—in the opinion of everyone from the highest advisers of the Government of India down to the humblest dealer in the Madras bazaars. This is no

place or time for post-mortems on these counter-arguments; it will suffice to say that the years 1921 to 1924 were Parry's nadir and came within an ace of being Parry's extinction. In the course of a few weeks firm and partners alike were reduced from high hopes and current prosperity to the contemplation of a long uphill battle for recovery which involved, for practical purposes, starting from scratch and whose end seemed—and was—remotely distant.

In extenuation of their trading disasters Parry's might have pleaded not only the major and universal difficulties of the time but the extraordinary bad luck which dogged their own piece-goods department. Their expert piece-goods Assistant broke down in health and after him his successor; and in May of 1921, at the worst of the crisis, their experienced and trusted piece-goods *dubash* B. Ramaswami Naidu died, and none could be found to take his place. The *dubash* system, almost universally employed, had its drawbacks; the *dubash*, under his agreement, deposited perhaps a lakh and drew commission on orders which might bring him in two thousand rupees a month; in return, he guaranteed and stood security for the dealers. The firm must keep watch on the incidence of orders to the *dubash's* security; the *dubash* must keep watch on the dealers. This was all very well in normal times and where relatively small sums and only an occasional defaulter were involved; but in landslides like the present, unless the *dubash* were an absolute millionaire, his presence was a danger rather than otherwise because of the false sense of security he provided. Be this as it may, the death at so untimely a juncture of this faithful and knowledgeable servant was a complication that could well have been spared.

It seemed indeed as if Providence were hinting rather broadly to Parry's that they were better out of piece-goods; they took the hint, for from 1924 onwards this branch of the business was gradually dropped. At

the end of 1924 Wright was still working it on a sort of safety-first basis by putting a definite limit on dealers' commitments and insisting on deliveries after three months; to those who pointed out a decline in trade he retorted that they could not have it both ways. By the late '20's the business was becoming increasingly speculative owing to the employment by several firms—not Parry's—of Marwari *dubashes* who indulged freely their national pastime of gambling on margins; in February of 1930 Wood was describing it as "fearfully risky". Wright had once written, "we shall never be one of the biggest piece-goods firms in Madras and I don't think any of us want to be", and by 1930 Wood, shaken by the news of Multani and Marwari failures, was "heartily thankful we are out of P/Goods at present. I doubt if we shall ever touch it again". Succeeding partners and directors have heeded the experience of these two badly-burnt children and have consistently dreaded the fire.

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The piece-goods were not the only component in the gruesome balance-sheets of the early '20's. We must now record the sad fate of Parry's Engineering Ltd. in Calcutta, strangled almost at birth.

"Strangled," is perhaps the appropriate word. In the first place, it might reasonably have been hoped, in view of the war and the prevailing sentiments in regard to Germans, that the last had been heard of Orenstein and Köppel; by 1920 it was becoming evident that these hopes were but insecurely founded and that Orensteins were very likely to reappear ready and eager to make up lost ground and still selling German rails at prices far below the British—in which case Parry's had better try to make the best of it by re-securing their agency. O. and K. did in fact come back and by 1933 the old arrangement with Parry's was re-established. Orenstein's Calcutta represen-

tative was a highly capable Jew named Hochstein who, originally German, had been in India since 1906 and became eventually a naturalised British subject; he was a man of demoniac energies while his gifts as a salesman were almost legendary and his "powers of persuasion" would have rivalled those of Cass. But with the advent of Hitler and the Third Reich his Jewish extraction which gave him his abilities began to prove a handicap and finally led Orensteins, under pressure from Berlin, to dispense with his services. He then, by the most natural of transitions, joined Parry's and eventually became the Manager of their Calcutta office in which post in 1940 he died—five years too soon to see the downfall of the enemies of his race.

But the shadow of renewed Orenstein competition was the lesser of P.E.L.'s enemies; a far more serious blow was dealt it on its own hearth. Scarcely was the war ended and Parry's new factory built at Howrah when the Government of India—having shown Parry's every encouragement in their ambitious venture—decided to encourage equally the indigenous steel industry of Messrs. Tata; this they did by clapping down a stiffly increased duty on imported steel, leaving the Tata product duty-free. No similar duty was imposed on imported light railway material from continental and other sources, such material being regarded as of national importance. However sound these arrangements may have been economically, Parry's Engineering Limited was doomed from the moment of their announcement. Parry's position was of course all too clear; whether they bought their steel from Tatas or imported it, they were left with a highly-costed raw material from which to manufacture their railway and other equipment; and to do this in competition with the imported finished article, more cheaply produced in the first instance and paying little or nothing for the privilege of entering India. It was indeed hard to bear. Strikes could be settled,

depreciation at the rate of six thousand rupees a month could be endured, high overheads could be countered by increased business, cheap Continental stuff littering Calcutta could be knocked out of the market by a better product and better salesmanship; but the financial saddle-cloth imposed by the Government's two-edged policy in tariffs was fatal.

The sensible course might have been to liquidate forthwith; but that was not the sort of course that had ever appealed to Parry's. Instead, they switched over to structural engineering, competing against formidable and already well-established firms with makeshift converted machinery in a factory totally unsuited for the purpose. Meanwhile the price of steel fell and fell and the drop in the exchange meant another heavy write-down in stock values. The structural engineering had its triumphs—as the magnificent roof of Cawnpore Station testifies to this day, to say nothing of a score of tea-factories erected all over the countryside during the tea boom years of 1924-26. But the established competition was too strong—it was able to expand and so reduce its prices, which Parry's could not—and by 1929 a second and still more disastrous slump was beginning to raise its ugly head; there was nothing for it but to close down. As Wood wrote at the time, "our initial mistake was ignorance of what constitutes an economic unit and we have been fighting against this ever since". Orders had never been big enough to carry overheads; this, Wood thought, could still be reversed by enlarging the works but the site was not suitable and it would mean doubling the number of machines. In slump conditions, with the Government cutting down wholesale on railway construction for years to come, the additional risk was not to be faced; close down, said Wood, at the earliest and sell the Works at best. With great reluctance, it was done.

Had the views of the Board in Madras prevailed, P.E.L. would almost certainly have died along with

its Howrah Workshops. But there stood on the scene in Calcutta one who would have subscribed heartily to Murray's old motto —"I don't like throwing up the sponge". In 1923 there had arrived at the office of P.E.L. a young Assistant recruited from the locomotive shops in Kilmarnock where he had been an apprentice; with P.E.L. he had laboured strongly ever since. His name was G. B. Gourlay and he was yet to fill the chair of Parry's. Faced now with the early termination of his services and the ruin of all his work, he showed that dogged determination, that almost pathological aversion to defeat, which has carried the Lowland Scot so far and so bravely. "Let me stay on here", said Gourlay in effect, "on a commission basis and see what I can do". The Board—fortunately as it proved—reconsidered their view and raised their axe; Gourlay, presently brigaded with Hochstein, struggled on. P.E.L. continued in existence with a five lakh deficit on its shoulders. For a time, as Light Railway Agents, the Company carried on quite a lucrative business in secondhand railway materials—acquired sometimes from odd places. From Railway and Structural Engineers to "Bikriwallahs", to dealers in scrap—it was a sad come-down; but hard times had done away with the prejudice against secondhand materials, provided they were good, and the business was not unprofitable. Apart from these dealings, P.E.L. continued to subsist on Orenstein and Köppel's agency and a jobbing workshop they set up at Kidderpore. But the combination of Gourlay and Hochstein proved formidable indeed. As a single example of what they could do between them, Gourlay was the first civilian to enter Quetta after the appalling earthquake of 1935; small locomotives were needed there and Gourlay provided a score of them by diverting an O. & K. contingent on its way to Russia. Incredible as it may seem, these twenty locomotives reached Quetta before rivals in stock in Eastern India could be manoeuvred across country. An incarnation

of Dare, W. H. Crake and A. J. Yorke could have done no more.

By the eve of World War Two P.E.L. had washed out that deficit of five lakhs and was showing a profit; it is a sad comment on our times that it was the profit that killed it as a Company. In 1938 Parry's, faced with double super-tax on their earnings, decided to turn their three Companies—P.E.L., P.M.W., and N.M.T.Y. & S.—into Departments of the firm. P.E.L. thus survives. but as Parry's Engineering Department in Calcutta. To some extent also it survives in Parry's Engineering Department in Madras; this had originally been part of the old Imports department, but when a flood of products arrived from Howrah for handling in the south, the new Department took birth. This it would doutless have done in any case, but it was P. E. L. that hastened the day.

The battle of P.E.L. deserves a salute from the historian and his readers. For, by and large and despite all the reverses, Parry's left no money in Calcutta as a result of their engineering ventures. On the contrary.

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The years of the exchange débacle were further complicated by a fresh dispute between Parry's and Binny's over the old familiar bone of contention, the Managing Agency of the Deccan Sugar & Abkhari Co. The battle raged intermittently for many months—mostly behind the scenes or obscured by its own smoke—but in the end was compromised on a basis which, so far as the D. S. & A. management was concerned, left Parry's where they had been and where they still remain. Hardly had the fumes of this warfare subsided when the question was canvassed of the Deccan starting a confectionery works of its own. It was some time before this idea was to come to fruition, but in the middle of 1922 Wood was writing several letters on the subject. The continued success

of Nellikuppam in this line made it evident that, sooner or later, a rival factory must appear somewhere; Wood stressed the desirability of demonstrating that a confectionery works, to succeed, should have a sugar factory behind it. Territory should be divided; Parry's name need not be embodied—indeed the product would sell all the better as an ostensible rival. He admitted that it would be hard to find space for a confectionery plant at Samalkot and that the development would not be cheap, but thought these obstacles could be overcome—as eventually they were.

Meanwhile the existing Nellikuppam confectionery prospered, as has been said, throughout the whole inter-war period; indeed, Buchanan thought the E.I.D. Chairman needlessly congratulatory at the general meeting; others would make a dash for the good thing so artlessly dangled before them. Early in 1920 Neilson had urged the establishment of a plant for the manufacture of chocolate cover (to the trade "couverture") and cocoa; the war, he represented, had distributed money among the unthrifty classes of all nations, including India, and a number of small chocolate manufacturers were springing up to cash in on the sweet tooth of the said unthrifty; it was these who required large quantities of the chocolate cover. Neilson, who had a reputation for understating his case rather than otherwise, thought a one-ton-a-day plant might be tried as a hopeful beginning. The E. I. D. Board, however, were scared off by the failure of the Peradeniya Chocolate Company in Ceylon and would not pursue the idea. Perhaps to compensate him for his disappointment, Parry's offered Neilson a partnership—which he did not accept.

Kulasekarapatnam was a less satisfactory story. In the same letter in which he discussed the Samalkot difficulties Wood wrote, in opposition to a London proposal to reduce output, "Either shut down or work fully". He thought that with cheaper fuel and

CANE TRANSPORT : OLD AND NEW

(1) The old-style bandies

(2) Rail waggon-tipper at Nellikuppam

"The tireless mills of Nellikuppam crushing their fourteen thousand tons of cane a week."





through rail connection to Tinnevelly profits might become possible during the next few years; if not, the only thing to do would be to close the factory and sell the tram-lines. This gloomy alternative was to be staved off for several years, but in time it too materialised.

The most interesting development under the head of sugar in the years between the wars took place late and in a new area altogether. This was the inception of Travancore Sugars and Chemicals Ltd. Under an agreement dated 18-6-1937 Parry's took over from the Government of Travancore a mixed bag consisting of the Travancore Sugars Ltd., the Government Distillery at Nagercoil and the Government Pharmaceutical Works at Trivandrum. Travancore Sugars Ltd. was in fact no more than a single factory at Thuckalay which had been started by an Indian financier in 1927 with the Travancore Government's backing; neither he nor they (who ran it for a time) made anything much out of it, and it had been closed for some months. The Nagercoil distillery was the property of the Government and its working had been let out on contract—again with mediocre success. The Pharmaceutical Works were less notable than their name and confined themselves to supplying tinctures to the Government Medical Stores. It was obviously uneconomical to work three discrete factories separated by considerable distances, and Parry's were eventually obliged to telescope them into one; that story however belongs to a later stage in our narrative.

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In May of 1920 Wood—who took a pleasure in getting things down in writing, a legacy perhaps of his days with the Ministry of Munitions—recorded an instructive note which he called "Resumé of Present Position of Timber Schemes". He found himself obliged to consider these under three heads —Russellkonda, Baliapatam and Kallai. With the

last we are familiar as the headquarters of the New Maiabar Timber Yards; the other two are new to us.

Russellkonda was a proposition into which Parry's were lured by the Government of Madras to whom they temporarily lent the services of Brace Brookes—on terms which Jackson considered much too favourable. It involved a saw mill at Russellkonda in Ganjam, to be built, equipped and run by Parry's for a term of five years in the first instance; timber to be supplied by the Forest Department and sold by Parry's locally or in Calcutta. The concern got off to a very slow start and was further impeded by the refusal of the Madras Legislative Council in March 1921 to pass the Budget allotment; the Governor, however, Lord Willingdon, put his foot down firmly on this piece of non-co-operation and exercised his special powers to restore the grant. Parry's did their part, not so the Forest Department; in 1922 Wood was complaining that only a quarter of the timber they supplied was marketable; poor quality and unsuitable lengths. As it seemed beyond the resources of the Department to remedy this state of affairs (since they had in the first instance grossly exaggerated the available supplies of timber) Parry's gave it up, closed down the mill and handed it over to Government. Wood's response to official compliments on Parry's management provides its epitaph; he remarked that Parry's had dropped 20,000 rupees in initial expenses, which the Government had refused to reimburse; " on this account I hope Government will place it on record that we have done them proud ". In his " Resumé " Wood observes that the intention of this and other timber schemes was to " establish working relationships with the Government of Madras ". If the word " working " be omitted, the project would seem to have been, in this respect at least, a success.

Baliapatam was again a joint venture, this time with the Government of the small separate Province of Coorg, within reach of whose rich forests the saw-

mill was sited; it had the further advantages of good river transport and proximity to the coast. Coorg was to send all its timber to Baliapatam to be broken up on a fixed-charge basis and sold by Parry's on commission. The original period of agreement was five years; estimated timber supply six thousand tons a year at the start and much more later; cost of buildings two lakhs; pickings in the way of box-making from soft woods and creosoting railway sleepers by an obscure process known as "Powellising"; as Parry's had secured the only possible site for a saw-mill in the neighbourhood, timber from other sources than Coorg should arrive in bulk. Despite all this, however, the project, which seemed to have so much in its favour, came to nothing of note.

With Kallai we may bring to a close the story of the New Malabar Timber Yards which were beginning to outlive their usefulness; their boiler and engine required replacement and so did their supply forests which had been hacked to pieces during World War One. Wood in his "Resumé" regarded Kallai as a write-off for some years to come. There were rivals in the field; the Madras Government were embarking on their big scheme in the adjoining Silent Valley and a Bombay company had been formed to work the Koliyat Forest near by; the latter, however, were unlikely to compete very seriously, for Parry's explorations had shown this forest to be unsuitable for working and very short of timber. The 1931 slump did Kallai no good and by 1933 the undertaking was well in the red. World War Two, however, naturally came to the rescue, sending profits up by a lakh in its first year and, to wind up the long and generally successful story, "poor old Kallai", as Hodgson then called it, was sold at a handsome profit in 1946.

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Once again, in the between-war years, there is a miscellany of minor items which the historian can do

little more than list. We have already noted the triumphant return to business of Orenstein and Köppel, bloody but unbowed under Hochstein; the termination of the useful Brunner Mond agency in 1927 has also been recorded. Some good new agencies were picked up during this period most of which remain with Parry's to this day—Alfred Herbert (machine tools), United Glass Bottles, Peak Frean, W. J. Bush and Co. (essences), Corn Products, Michelin tyres, Horlicks and Atlantis (East) who were the overseas selling organisation for the Reckits-Colman group. Salem ores again beckoned and there was much talk of a company to explore the local magnesite deposits; this was slaughtered by the 1930 slump. The energetic Hochstein—a good friend to Parry's—was anxious to induce them to make and market a cheap bazaar cigarette; Parry's, having had an unsatisfactory experience with cigarettes of another brand, declined.

One novel enterprise belongs to this period, though its story is not one of distinguished success—the Mysore Gold Thread Co. In one of the blackest hours of the second war winter, in November of 1915, the normally cautious Jackson found time to write an immensely long and detailed letter describing his conversations (very hush-hush) with a certain Mr. G. E. Browne, a prospective partner in the French gold-thread firm of Henri Merieux of Lyons, "in every way first class". Jackson recalled that twenty years earlier, "when I was trying to do some business in this article", it was the excellence of MM. Merieux' products that had driven Parry's out of the market. Mr. Browne thought MM. Merieux and their Indian representatives wanted shaking up; he was also tired of carrying on business direct with Indian dealers and was looking for the "greater safety, certain continuity and, he hopes, considerable extension" accruing from connection with a European firm. The "European firm", of course, to be Parry's, on whose behalf

Jackson hoped for "the establishing of mutually satisfactory and permanent relations".

Madras at first jumped at the suggestion, and not unnaturally since the business (in other hands) had at one time run into very large figures, especially up-country. Correspondence and negotiations then became protracted, perhaps because the period from 1921 onwards was not one in which Madras was anxious for any fresh commitments whatever—especially those in any remote way connected with the piece-goods industry. But at last, in 1933, the Mysore Gold Thread Co. Ltd. (so called because its headquarters were in Bangalore in a rented building) was formed, the shares being held by Parry's and by MM. Merieux and MM. Dutel, and Parry's being the Managing Agents. There seems no valid reason why this enterprise, in which the shrewd and experienced Jackson so implicitly believed, should not have brought to Parry's the profits it had brought, a generation earlier, to others. The fact remains that it did not. Perhaps the Lyons thread sent out was—like so many post-war products—less excellent than it had been; perhaps the four French "experts" who laboured for sixteen months at Bangalore were unable to hit the contemporary Indian taste; perhaps indigenous competition had stiffened in the interval. Whatever the reason, the Company obtained very little business and such as it did obtain dwindled rather than grew. Once more the horrid and inevitable word "liquidation" presented itself; and in 1938, after some vigorous exchanges and hard bargaining, the Mysore Gold Thread Co. was wound up. Parry's invested capital—not, fortunately, a very large sum—was lost.

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The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were theoretically inviolate for a decade but long before the expiry of that period it became evident that they would never stay the course. Late in 1927 Lord (then

Sir John) Simon was appointed to lead a Statutory Commission, which included among its rather inadequately distinguished members no single Indian. (It did, however, include a mild unassuming observant little man called Major Attlee who was to be—though few would have guessed it—Prime Minister of Britain.) Once more the British Government had moved, and their Commission had sailed, too late; "Instatucom" became merely the target for another boycott and was yelled down with shouts of "Go back! Go back!" like the cackling of grouse upon a hillside. To its everlasting credit it went through its unpleasant ordeal with even temper and resolute impartiality and produced, in its Report, the finest summary of Indian affairs ever written. This—outrun by events before it was published, and unread by ninety per cent of India's politicians—was promptly hurled into the waste-paper baskets of Charles Street; Lord Irwin, grasping at far bigger conceptions, called in the now "Mahatma" Gandhi; a Round Table Conference was summoned to begin the process of farewell.

Parry's Directors (as they were by this time designated) were of course keenly alive to what was going on round them. In 1928, in the interval between the first and second visits of the Simon Commission, Wright, forsaking his normal optimism, drew for the benefit of London a dismal picture of the scene. "Without in any way wishing to appear as an alarmist"—an unnecessary disclaimer to anyone who knew him—he was "prepared to see serious trouble in India during the next few months with resulting damage to the prosperity of the commerce and industry of the country". He instanced the mill strike in Bombay which had dragged on indefinitely at a cost to the community of five crores and which incidentally was said to be financed from "Communist sources"; the Bardoli anti-tax campaign; labour troubles at Calcutta; strikes on the G.I.P. Railway.

Presently Gandhi, at his most obstinate and most publicity-conscious, started his "march" and his rather Gilbertian campaign to manufacture contraband salt from sea water; as Wood said, "the snag is that the fuel costs more than the duty". The Round Table was announced and Wood commented, "There will now be great efforts to stop participation and, failing these, great efforts to get a seat!" Presently he was able to announce that he had got a seat himself. He deserved it; apart from his war work at the Ministry of Munitions and his triple Chairmanship of the Chamber, he had held the high office of Sheriff of Madras, had served on the Madras Legislative Council for a term of years and had consistently shown a devotion to public service and a grasp of political opportunities outstanding among Madras men of business. True to himself, he had put it all neatly and clearly on paper; "in my opinion the Commercial Representatives (on the Legislative Council) should follow closely all political questions and be prepared to vote upon them on every occasion and vote *against* Government if necessary..... Practically everything in my opinion depends on the man himself and the wrong type of man, however able he might be, would do so *much* more harm than good". And in 1925 he wrote to Buchanan, "The merchants will have to spend a lot of money on political work if they are to hold their own and the sooner the Indian merchant realises this and is ready to cooperate with us the better". It is obvious that he had by this time modified his 1919 view that the Legislature was the preserve of the retired.

In his gloomy survey of a tormented India Wright had drawn most of his examples from outside the Madras Presidency and it is a fact that, in the inter-war period, labour troubles were slower to develop there than elsewhere. That agreeable importation the "strike"—so attractive to the Indian labourer and so well in tone with *satyagraha* inasmuch as all it

involved was doing nothing—had been less freely employed in the south, and even at that Parry's had been more fortunate than some of their friends. The R. E. D. in Calcutta staged one of the earliest demonstrations of this recurring nuisance, but in Madras, while Binny's mills and the S. I. R. suffered very severely, Parry's remained relatively immune. Ranipet went out for a while in 1921 but was pacified by an increase in wages—awarded also to Nellikuppam and Samalkot who had not yet learned the magic word "sympathetic"; it was not till the eve of World War Two that there was a strike at either. Yet temper and conditions were changing; for the first time Parry's had to deal with organised labour in the form of Unions, one of which appeared at Nellikuppam as early as 1922. Though Buchanan then complacently described it as "practically moribund", it was less moribund by 1928 when it succeeded in winning by agreement a series of concessions ranging from increased pay to sick leave, holidays and amenities in the workshops. Ranipet promptly followed suit. In a word, labour as a force to be conciliated had made its effect; how far were its demands likely to go? and how far could the kindest hearts and best intentions keep pace with them? It had always been Parry's practice to anticipate the needs of their workpeople and to this they resolutely adhered; for example, in 1938 when E.I.D. had a surplus over and above its 10% on the Ordinaries, Hodgson suggested that a part of these profits should be set aside for "improvement of the living conditions of our labour". The ghost of A. J. Yorke must have read this proposal with interest for in April of 1903, thirty-five years earlier, he had himself written (referring to the Wynaad) "The crux of the industry now no doubt is labour and I advocate such liberal expenditure on cooly lines as will make the coolies healthy and really comfortable and then I have little fear for the future".

The Round Table led in due course to the Government of India Act of 1935 with its Provincial Autonomy—accepted by Swaraj as a *pis aller* to be run as an instalment and wrecked as soon as possible. Its main effects in Madras were two; the Congress Party, making up its mind at last that the Legislatures were worth going for, threw its whole weight into the electoral battle and immediately and for ever routed the Justice Party which had held the Ministries, with one interval, ever since 1919. Secondly, there was a radical change in the representation of the European community. In the new Lower House, the Madras Legislative Assembly, the Europeans had three seats as such; but there were also three seats for a European Commercial constituency—the Chamber and the Trades Association—and one for the United Planters. This was not in itself remarkable; the revolutionary aspect lay in the fact that these were now the *only* Europeans in the Legislature, the official *bloc* having been swept back in a body to their desks and their offices. The enormously increased responsibility which thus fell on the non-officials needs no underlining. The planters met it by appointing as their full-time Representative Mr. F. E. James, an able and ambitious man who presently became the General European Political Secretary for the Presidency of Madras. With the 1930 slump—particularly vicious in their industry—the planters found themsleves unable to maintain a special officer any longer; all resources were therefore pooled in the South Indian Planting and Commercial Representation Fund whose committee consisted of the Chairman of the Chamber, the Trades Association, the European Association and Upasi. In 1931 this was turned into a fund to establish a political secretariat for the European community in South India; three years later it merged into the Central Representation Fund. Wood's prophecy—that the merchants would have to spend a lot of money on political work—was vindicated.

So the development which had begun with Jackson's election to the Legislative Council of 1912 had run its course. And the Madras merchants, presented with their nettle, had grasped it.

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It seemed a pity that men should make their world so uncomfortable while Science, assiduous still as in the Victorian age, kept on wooing them with benefits and facilities ever fresh and delightful. On the 14th of November 1933 Wright in Madras enjoyed seven minutes telephone conversation with Buchanan in London "just as clear as if he had been talking in another part of Madras city". The experience was costly—Rs. 186-12-0—but must have been worth it irrespective of the no doubt weighty matters discussed. A stenographer attended at either end, taking down that side of the conversation; the two halves were subsequently collated. Nor was this all; three weeks after his voice had gone soaring across the seas Wright posted a letter which bore the novel and magic words "Air Mail". Time had accelerated yet again, the distances had been cut still further.

For by the early '30's civil aviation had overcome its tentative and discouraged beginnings and was now a reality in Madras; at last there was a service —of sorts—to link up with Imperial Airways at the remote junction of Karachi. There had even been a short-lived Madras Air Taxi Service—short-lived because the costs of aviation were still, to anything but a subsidised corporation, prohibitive. This was the consideration that tempered Parry's ardour for the new form of transport when proposals were made in 1935 to float a Madras Aviation Company; they saw the future quite clearly but distrusted the present. The thing must come and Madras must be ready for it but premature adventuring ending in failure might prove a disastrous set-back. As Hodgson put it, "Though a commercial Aviation Company could

not, in our opinion, make ends meet now, flying goes ahead so fast that we feel the time has come to begin preparations so that there would be no unnecessary delay if and when we decide the time is ripe".

It must not be supposed, however, that Parry's attitude towards the new enterprise was merely one of caution; far from it. From the moment of its inception they had taken a close and personal interest in the Madras Flying Club which, without them, might easily have perished in its infancy. The Madras Government, with an admirable if somewhat unusual foresight, had put up most of the Club's capital and they also allowed it an annual subsidy; dissatisfied with their protégé's position, they sought a financial adviser for its committee and at Wood's suggestion Hodgson was appointed; he presently co-opted Herbert Wonfor—of whom we shall hear more. Wonfor, in his element with accounts and finances, spent as much time at the Flying Club as he did at Parry's Corner; when Parry's were inclined to protest, the Club begged that he might be left with them "in view of the interest you have taken in the Flying Club and the possibility of the firm being interested in commercial flying". The firm's interest was far more than a "possibility"; till the outbreak of World War Two put an end to developments, these two—Hodgson and Wonfor—*were*, with some backing from Binny's and Beardsell's, civil aviation in Madras.

To his advisory activities Hodgson added the force of personal example. While his compeers were still crawling on earth in cars or railway trains, Hodgson was careering over their heads—not infrequently in conditions demanding a certain amount of faith in his pilot. He was a pioneer of inspection work by air, the first of those figures—so embarrassing to the delinquent—who came dropping out of the clouds before a warning telegram could forestall them. Waltair, Bangalore and Trivandrum became used to the unheralded roar of his engines. Sometimes there was a

landing ground and sometimes not. Hodgson had his air to himself and an invitation to his compeers to join him in the purchase of a taxi aeroplane was coldly received; no other among the tuans of First Line Beach saw any pleasure or profit in being flown round and round the Cuddalore Maidan endeavouring to land and "being foiled by telephone wires and goats"; or in swooping into a dry tank-bed at Ranipet whence—supposing one got down at all—one might never get up again. Hodgson did these things, of course, because he enjoyed them, but there was a larger purpose also in view. But for the outbreak of World War Two there is little doubt that either the Madras Aviation Company would have come into being or that some of the big Lines would have made Madras a port of call, and that in either case Parry's would have had the Agency.

Nothing in this world being wholly bad, World War Two forced a vast advance in civil aviation upon India; it reduced that sprawling sub-continent to an England, a Scotland or a Wales. The once far-flung outposts of Calicut, Tuticorin or Vizagapatam became but suburbs of Georgetown; it was possible—and desirable—to establish footholds now in places once impossibly remote; in Bombay, in Karachi, in Delhi. And Parry's, quick as ever to follow the changing times, stepped out into the distances and took, as of habit, to the air.

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Meanwhile, life in the firm went on. In London personalities long familiar departed from the scene—Jackson retiring, Ormerod dying after nearly thirty years on the Board of E. I. D. and twenty-two years as its Chairman. Madras saw Armstrong leaving for home; Wood, Wright, Hodgson, Elphinston, Gourlay rising in succession to the Chairmanship; new figures—Wonfor, Davis, Allerton, Edwards—coming forward. Wood's prowess we know; Wright—Sir William

from 1934 onwards—was welcomed on the Board of the Imperial Bank and—inevitably—to the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce. In 1933 he went to Simla as the Chamber's representative in order to cement a trade agreement with those Japanese with whom relations of a totally different sort were so closely impending; Japanese competition affected Parry's—though not very seriously—in their Chemicals, in the P.M.W. and in the recently-acquired Kirloskar (engineering) agency. Work naturally did not decrease; Wright greeted Elphinston's elevation to the Board by writing to him, "Sammy (Stephens) and I have decided that you should immediately appreciate the fact that Directors in our firm never have a holiday". This was in 1935; in the immediate future holidays were to be fewer still.

With the increase in work and in up-country branches and offices, staff naturally increased pari passu. In 1938, on the eve of the war, the number of covenanted Assistants employed by what was beginning to be called the "Parry Group" was one hundred and five; of these forty-three were Europeans. The up-country stations were well manned; as early as 1922 Buchanan reported fifteen Europeans at the opening of the Nellikuppam tennis courts "including wives and children"; and five more were on leave. This was a marked advance on 1914 when a prospective Manager was told that there were no ladies at the factory and accommodation for a wife was "very doubtful".

But the main excitement at Parry's Corner remained the question of the new office buildings. The plan to finance these by selling a portion of the frontage to Tata's fell through but Wright was not discouraged; "our present very limited use", he had written, "of what is admittedly the finest business site in Madras is an uneconomical waste apparent even to the casual visitor and together with our dingy approach and entrance cannot fail to give the impression

that the Firm is out-of-date". Believing this, Wright was not the man to give way before impediments, and he must have chafed bitterly to find his hands tied by the long years of belt-tightening after the horrors of 1920. By 1929, however, hard work and unremitting economies had driven the wolf from the door and back into his jungles, and it was possible to discuss the new buildings seriously once more. They were to be a four-storey block with a floor area of 30,000 square feet per storey; already there was competition from such firms as Burmah Shell and Imperial Tobacco for rented space. At a cost of some twelve lakhs it seemed that the dream might come true. The difficulty still was—where were the twelve lakhs to come from; and it was a difficulty that time did not readily solve. In 1937 the Hercules Insurance Company—one of Parry's agencies—was enlisted as an ally and the indomitable Wright forced out of the E. I. D. Board a two-lakh guarantee. But the years were passing, coming events were casting their grim shadow; before the entire sum required was covered, a decision had to be made; either the order to go ahead must be given or building must be indefinitely postponed. The Preference shareholders agreed to an issue of Debentures, the money was raised; on 15-9-1938 orders went forth to begin the work. The staff squeezed somehow into the old building and on the 12th of April 1939 Madras wrote proudly to London "Parry's New Building; pile driving is just commencing". The war, whose dark wings had been fluttering overhead for a twelve-month, was less than a hundred and fifty days distant; a near thing indeed.

One other domestic event of the greatest importance distinguishes the era; the proposal to turn Parry's into a limited liability company was again broached, discussed and this time carried into effect. There was a little argument about the title, on which Wood wrote—with his Victorian delight in italics—

"We think it *very* advisable that the name of the Company should not be altered by the addition of the word 'Madras' and hope you will agree. We *cannot* afford to play tricks with such a sound asset as our name". He carried the day; when, on the 1st of January 1928, the new Company took life, it was under the old straightforward style of Parry and Company Limited. The capital was thirty-five lakhs, all in Preference shares except for sixty Ordinaries. Almost two years later, on 13-12-1929, Parry Murray and Co. followed suit and added "Ltd." to their style; they had a share capital of £6,000 and were incorporated "to carry on business as Bankers and Agents....brokers and general merchants of every nature and kind and any other trade and business whatsoever"—a charter wide enough to satisfy the most ambitious. Murray himself was alive to see the day.

In December of 1938 Parry's celebrated the 150th Anniversary of their foundation. Eighty-six members of the staff dined in harmony and triumph at the Connemara Hotel—where, in the days of their founder, had stood the residence of "Deaf" Binny, Thomas Parry's colleague in the service of Umdat-ul-Umara. At Cuddalore a service was held in Christ Church by Thomas Parry's grave to the memory of one whom the officiating clergyman called "a deeply religious man..... a practical and generous Christian". "I thank God", he declared, "for the encouragement I have received from the example of the life of Thomas Parry"; and he quoted aptly, "There be of them, that have left a name behind them, that their praises might be recorded". The Founder had left a name behind him indeed; and how great was the monument now visible all over the land to record his praises!

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A lady visitor, being shown round Dare House and surveying there the Rogues' Gallery, is said to

have exclaimed, "What a determined-looking set of men!"; and there is perhaps a certain general grimness. Yet there were times when Parry's partners needed all the determination at their command. From what has just been written it may have been made to appear that the years between the wars were for Parry's a bright period of vigorous expansion; the truth is, of course, that most of them were a long steady heart-breaking grind to recover from the piece-goods disasters with which they opened, to climb out of that fathomless and smooth-sided pit. The architect in this recovery, who was at the same time its contractor and foreman and bricklayer, was Wright. To say this is not to belittle or overlook the resolute backing, the balanced commonsense of Wood or the whole-hearted work of the other Directors; but it was the dominating personality of Wright with his dauntless resource, his imagination, his adaptability, his unique gift for selling himself and his projects and his beliefs, that finally achieved what might well have been thought the impossible. To such hard-headed or doubting customers as the Imperial Bank of India, the E. I. D. Board, the London office, Wright's hopes became facts, his forecasts certainties; when he cried, "Fear not! We shall rise again!", it was seen quite clearly to be so. It was a time when the bold bluffer must go hand in hand with the persuasive mendicant; Wright could be either or both. Only Parry's themselves knew the full magnitude of his achievement.

His method—other than that of simply being Wright—was to avoid any but manifestly safe commitments and to cut out ruthlessly the unremunerative items of the business—such items, for instance, as the Howrah Works of Parry's Engineering in Calcutta. The entire energies of the firm were concentrated on its tried and stable features—the established Managing Agencies, such guaranteed sellers as fertilisers and the engineering products imported into

SIR WILLIAM WRIGHT, O.B.E.

"The architect in the recovery who was at the same time as contractor and foreman and bricklayer."

Madras by the Engineering Department. Small margins with safe business; these—together with rigid economies—pulled Parry's through.

There was one economy, however, at which Wright and Wood, to their honour, would not look. In April of 1926 London wrote out with the reasonable suggestion that one obvious way of cutting expenditure would be to suspend the Provident Fund—which was, after all, a recent and post-war innovation. Wood's magnificent reply is worth quoting in full; as an example of the snub dignified it constitutes a classic. "I am not quite sure from your letter", he wrote, "whether your anxiety is for the future of the present partners in India or for the firm. I can assure you Wright and I fully appreciate that it will take us a long time to balance our capital accounts upon a satisfactory basis; also that we could easily hasten matters by such methods as cutting out the Provident Fund (at the expense of the firm's credit) dismissing several Europeans (at the risk of frauds occurring and with the certainty that the sugar Companies and all Departments would in a short while lose very seriously by it), in short by bleeding the Company for our own selfish needs. It would probably take two years to disclose the real damage but surely there is no real desire that we should pursue a short-sighted policy of this nature? If your anxiety is for the stability of the firm, I consider it entirely unnecessary. I doubt if the firm has ever been in better repute than at present or would have liquidated at any time more profitably..... If you could realise (and I feel sure you do not) the hard times which others are having even to keep afloat, you would not belittle the fact that our concern is sound enough to enable us to come out on the right side during the last two years" ..... After this *coup de grace* it is hardly surprising that there was no more talk for the moment of suspending the Provident Fund—though in the still worse

times that were to come even this distasteful expedient had to be adopted.

In the first years of the recovery things seemed to get worse rather than better for the simple reason that it was not till some time after the disaster that its magnitude could be assessed. Once seen, however, in all its monstrous dimensions, it could be tackled—and was. It was tackled indeed with remarkable celerity. The catastrophe occurred in 1920-21; 1924 had been reached before the first upward steps in the long and slippery ascent could even be cut; yet by 1928-29 Parry's had abandoned the defensive. In those years they opened a vigorous campaign of recruiting; one European Assistant after another joined the staff—among them incidentally some very good men. Profits crept back; it seemed that the corner was turned.

And then, as if to test courage beyond the very breaking-point, there came the second slump, that of 1930-31. This time, however, the rupee exchange held fairly steady—not that Parry's would have been caught in that trap again—and this time Parry's position was solidly sound; no speculative argosies were afloat on these troubled waters. Business dwindled, no doubt, and sales declined but not to a greater degree than everywhere else in the contemporary commercial world. The staff loyally repaid the good turn of 1926, agreeing unanimously to a cut in salary and to the suspension of the Company's contribution to the Provident Fund which became at last inevitable. But slump or no slump, Wright was still unbeaten. Not one of the newly-joined Assistants was sent home again; no horns were drawn in. On the contrary; gambling (unless he had inside information) on the probability that the Government of India must sooner rather than later do something to succour the sugar industry, Wright launched into the complete rebuilding and re-equipment of the Nellikuppam factory on a scale hitherto unimagined which should

raise its crushing capacity to a thousand tons a day. It was indeed a bold stroke at such a moment; even those who had been his supporters whispered to one another that Wright had lost his senses at last. But they were wrong; when, in 1932, the Government's measures in the form of a protective tariff at Rs. 7-4-0 a cwt. were duly announced, Nellikuppam was ready to make the most of them and to establish itself before the characteristic *volte face* of an excise impost two years later.

By 1939 Parry's were again secure in their position as the premier Managing Agents in South India. And at this juncture, to test stout hearts still further, there arrived World War Two.

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World War Two, as we all know, was very different from World War One in many respects, and in no respect more than in its beginnings. The Phoney War against the Retreat from Mons; a job instead of a crusade; control instead of haphazard; cynicism for heroics. In 1939 a beautiful lady appearing in public and singing, "We don't want to lose you but we think you ought to Go; Your King and your Country both need you so-o" would have been laughed off the stage. The older members of the community felt, "We have been here before"; the younger, "This is a bind; let's get it over".

In Madras too circumstances were greatly changed. The Presidency was, or was to become, much nearer to the actual serious fighting; her industries—for example, Parry's chemicals at Ranipet—were much better equipped and organised to play their part in the conflict. An even more bewildering medley of troops and armaments descended upon her; the countryside all round was blotched with their unsightly camps—which were subsequently allowed to decay into ruins more unsightly still. And yet, in point of actual war experience, Two was largely a

repetition of One; there was the same brief moment of excitement and panic in the midst of aeons of routine. In 1914 there had been the *Emden*; in 1942 there was the incident now known disrespectfully as The Flap. Out of this last the dominant Congress Party emerged with little credit and the Government of Madras with no credit at all.

Inasmuch as this incident disagreeably affected Parry's, it is necessary to give some account of it here. On the morning of Easter Sunday 1942 Colombo was attacked and bombed by a force of Japanese aircraft; as the nearest Japanese-occupied aerodrome was a thousand miles away in the Andamans, this presupposed a Japanese naval force, including at least one aircraft carrier, operating in the Bay. Colombo gave a fine account of herself; twenty-five enemy planes were shot down by R.A.F. fighters and two more by Ack-Ack; there was slight damage and about fifty civilian casulties; Colombo was reported to be "unperturbed". In a parallel headline of the contemporary *Mail* it was said to have been a "poor day for backers at Poona"; it had certainly been a poor day for the Japanese at Colombo.

On the following Tuesday, the 7th of April, five or six enemy aircraft made a low-level bombing attack on Vizagapatam and Cocanada; five persons were killed and forty wounded at the former, one killed and five wounded at the latter; Madras had an alert from five to six in the morning but nothing happened. The enemy put in no further appearance anywhere. Yet five days later, on the 12th of April, the Madras Government issued the following communiqué; "The Government have reason to believe that the danger threatening Madras is now more serious and would advise all whose presence in the City is not essential to leave within the next few days". Refugee camps and transport were shortly, it was said, to be provided, but large numbers of the "unessential" anticipated these facilities, seven

special trains leaving from Egmore alone. It was the *Emden* over again.

Precisely on what information the Government's warning was based was not divulged—and never has been; but obviously the communiqué said either too much or too little. *What* was the danger? And who was "essential" and who was not? The Government at any rate clearly regarded themselves as among the latter class; for on the 14th they proceeded to implement orders already issued to their own staffs even before the public communiqué and—with many symptoms of haste and panic—to evacuate; they dispersed their Departments to a dozen points in the Presidency ranging from Ootacamund to Bellary, thus ensuring that in the event of a Japanese landing all organised administration would collapse at the earliest possible moment. When the *Mail* in a series of trenchant leaders cried, "This will not do" and "Stop the rot!" it was well justified. Five days later again there was another scare in the hill station of Kodaikanal where many had sought refuge; the leading Government officials there were apparently convinced that the new danger warranted the evacuation of their families and households but—like the Government—they did not think fit to take the public into their confidence. Again the *Mail* clamoured for more information—and again with every reason..... No Japanese planes ever again appeared over the Madras Presidency, save for the hurried visit of a single fighter-bomber to Madras City in October of 1943; the damage it did was quite negligible.

Such was The Flap—and perhaps the less said about it the better, for it was a discreditable affair. We may confine ourselves here to its effect on Parry's. In March of 1942 Hodgson (now Chairman) had written that he "felt it advisable to start plans for moving first the Accounts Department should necessity arise"; a part might go to Coimbatore and the rest to Palghat but he was careful to stress that all this was

purely precautionary. When The Flap burst upon him, these plans were put into effect; Wonfor—doubtless much against his will—led the Accounts Department to their appointed destination, but the other Departments travelled no further than the bungalows of their respective Managers—Confidential, Sugar and Spirits to Hodgson's, P.M.W. and Chemicals to Davis's, Sales to Wilkinson's; Engineering sought the compound of Mr. E. K. Srinivasan of the Hercules Insurance. The plight of the clerks and subordinate staff was hard; as most of the bazaar restaurant-keepers had regarded themselves as "unessential"—not having been instructed otherwise—Parry's staff were obliged to open and run their own messes. Almost all their families had been evacuated to the fifty-mile radius; the unfortunate clerks spent their nights travelling to and fro to assure themselves of their dependants' safety, and came back heavy-headed to the next day's toil. Fortunately this exodus lasted only for a matter of weeks, Confectionery leading the return to Dare House on the 16th of June; before the end of the year Wonfor had brought back his far-flung contingent and "we are once again all together in Dare House". (The Rogues' Gallery, however, remained in hiding at Ranipet till things in Burma should look brighter.) The comments of Parry's Corner on The Flap—doubtless pungent at all levels—have not survived. It was an occasion to which Murray, now ten years in his grave, could have done justice.

Madras City as a whole—after the manner of cities—rapidly recovered her composure which, but for her Government, would never have been seriously shaken; her newspapers had never ceased publication and her services had functioned. The news of the Coral Sea battle provided a tonic, and by the 15th of May the "hum drum Madrassers" were sufficiently recovered to indulge in healthy grumbling because a "test" air raid warning kept them huddled

in their shelters half an hour longer than the advertised time. On the 17th the Viceroy, paying them a visit, found them all "in excellent heart". On the 23rd Ooty races were run as usual.

During The Flap Gandhi and the Congress Party, whose line was now rigid non-co-operation, cannot be said to have distinguished themselves. The Congress policy, based on a variety of motives, most of them selfish, was to the effect that India should be declared an undefended area and that the Japanese, if they arrived, should be met with mutual *politesse* and in the best traditions of Satyagraha. From this naive conception few of the rank and file, whatever they may have thought in their private counsels, dared to deviate. One man, however, stood out—the veteran Congress leader C. Rajagopalachariar, who had been Chief Minister of Madras till his Party's non-co-operation programme dragged him from office. On the 5th of May, while The Flap was still in action, he exclaimed publicly, in the great words of the *Mail*, "This will not do!" "Let us face the Japanese", he cried, "like brave men and not let the whole world laugh at us. We must fight". In all the circumstances it was a gallant gesture—at an hour when gallantry in high places was somewhat to seek.

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Domestically Parry's War Two ran on much the same lines as War One—except that, as has already been said, their factories, especially Ranipet, were in much better shape for participation. Military service called staff away—upwards of forty of them, both European and Indian; Noel-Tod, Edwards, Inglis, Dr. Raghavachari. Yet staff as a whole greatly increased; in 1938 3,906 permanent employees were drawing an annual wage-bill of eighteen lakhs; in 1947 over 5,800 were drawing sixty. From the first, as at home, there was a much less happy-go-lucky attitude towards "going"; man-power was controlled

and useful men put to their practised uses—a process in which Hodgson, as Chairman of the Selection Board, handled the thankless and unpopular task of classification. As elsewhere throughout the world, Parry's men—and their wives—contended with the steady grind of double work plus A.R.P., the Auxiliary Force, Fire Service, Ambulance and Censorship; these labours were diversified by occasional bright moments such as the National War Fund Anniversary Parade when, in celebration of the victory in Africa, representative detachments of all services marched past the Governor. Twenty of the Ranipet staff were chosen to take part in this fiesta.

Ranipet was otherwise well to the fore; the Japanese occupation of Burma meant that South India must supply not only all her own rice but a large measure of Ceylon's as well; fertilisers for intensive cultivation were in acute demand and the P.M.W. supplied them. There was talk—though not much more—of the large-scale production of ossein, an extract from bones used in the manufacture of gelatine. It was at Ranipet too that the first experiments were made in dehydrated foods—a line which attained considerable dimensions; fifteen million pounds of potatoes, thirteen and a half of onions and a by no means inconsiderable quantity of pumpkins, pears, carrots, cabbage and cauliflower. The Army authorities were " very interested " because of the difficulty in obtaining fresh vegetables for the troops in Burma. The troops themselves might have been even more interested than they actually were had Parry's been allowed to enclose in each tin directions, within the comprehension of an Army cook, for reconstituting and cooking the contents; but Army H. Q. was terrified that this would give opportunity for the substitution of subversive literature, and the cooks were left to do their worst. However, the dried vegetable industry grew so rapidly that a second factory had to be opened at Mettupalayam. Dehydrated mutton (or goat) was

also mooted but never came into being—largely on account of the characteristic vacillations of the authorities who treated the scheme at one moment as top priority and at the next as matter for leisurely discussion; the Army's fine factory specially built at Ranipet for Parry's to operate (now the Government Serum Institute) was ready to go to work just as the demand ceased. (For a year or two Parry's, disbelieving in waste, used it as a place wherein to repack imported powdered milk.) Parry's put their backs into the whole of this dehydration work, but their "Dripresta" proved to be no more than a wartime expedient which perished with the cessation of hostilities. True, the firm assisted the Madras Government for a twelvemonth after the war by dehydrating yams in areas where yams were plenty and transporting them to famine areas where there were neither yams nor anything else, and when this came to an end they made vigorous efforts to persuade the Burmese and Singalese that dehydrated vegetables were the ideal diet. But these conservative races refused to be enlightened.

As an example of improvisation the Dripresta deserve a special niche in Parry's annals. When the idea was first brought forward nobody at Ranipet had any technical knowledge of the kind of machinery required for this highly specialised work; it was left to Gourlay, ably assisted by Davis, to sit down and work out the problem on first principles. Between them these two evolved, erected and ran a couple of plants which worked most successfully; not only that, but in their final standardised form these were discovered to have been designed and built precisely on the lines independently recommended by the Low Temperature Research Station of Cambridge University. To those of us with mechanical minds this will seem a very considerable feat; to the unmechanical it will border on miracle.

Wood-distillation—tentatively mentioned in World War One—was another activity; the objective was

acetic acid, required, wrote Hodgson in February of 1942, "for important Army work which I cannot specify". (It can now be revealed that it was for anti-mustard-gas ointment.) There were long discussions with the Chemical Warfare Liaison Commission as to the installation of a plant in the South Canara forests; meanwhile it was Ranipet that did the work. Forty-five tons a month of sulphuric acid being required and all existing plants being fully employed, a second Chamber Plant was to be installed at Ranipet; Government to pay and Parry's to work on a cost *plus* basis. This, with benzanilide, also to be produced at Ranipet, would supply two of the components of the Chemical Commission's hush-hush mixture. Parry's suggested that acetic acid could be produced more cheaply by fermentation in the sugar works at Nellikuppam, but the Commission were wedded to their wood-distillation and would have none of it. They were encouraging, however, towards a proposal to try coconut shells in Travancore since these offered as a by-product very high quality charcoal, at the moment wildly in demand not only for the absorption chambers of gas-masks but also for "producer" gas to run the local lorries and buses. Once again the delays of preparation outran the psychological moment.

Meanwhile Nellikuppam was not idle. Early in the War, Wright in London found himself taking part in some high-level discussions in regard to a substitute for the essential protein in such short supply; being Wright, his immediate reaction was to exclaim "We'll make it". To Norman Parkes, then Factory Superintendent at Nellikuppam and saddled with the hard facts of production, the task did not seem so inviting. It was one thing to manufacture a substitute protein in a well-equipped laboratory in the temperate zone, another to do it in the climate of South Arcot and with none of the highly specialised apparatus required—or hope of getting any. But in the end

Parkes too triumphed, adopted a new procedure of his own and evolved a yeast extract on the most approved modern lines. The original culture was flown out from Teddington under strict secrecy in the Viceroy's private plane; the finished product, brimming with Vitamin B and specific against beri-beri and jungle sores, was parachuted into the Burma jungles for the relief of Wingate's Chindits. "Yeast" being at the moment the catchword of the food experts all over the world, Parry's at Nellikuppam also produced an extract for normal consumption; they were again defeated by the conservatism of their Indian customers. The Hindu dislike of anything with a meaty flavour, coupled with the peptic effects arising from a sudden intake of protein into untrained digestive organs, put paid to Parry's hopes.

In a less spectacular field of war activities Parry's did an enormous service from November of 1943 onwards in clearing and shipping for the Supply and Food Departments of the Government of India at the ports of Madras, Cochin, Vizag, Cuddalore, Calicut and Tuticorin. In the first year the tonnage handled for the Ministry of Food alone was 243,743 and the grand total for that Ministry at 1947 was 1,174,500. In the years 1940-48 Parry's Engineering Department manoeuvred no less than a million tons of coal for the Coal Controller and for the two Navies, the Royal and the Royal Indian, for whom they held the bunkering contracts throughout.

As in the previous war, Parry's were generous with their money. To the Madras Governor's War Fund, in which Wright was a leading figure, they subscribed generously; by 1941 the Fund had reached the total of £1,000,000. When Steel Brothers—old friends—were obliged to evacuate their staff from Burma, Parry's found posts for several of them. In 1941 too they were instrumental in bringing to Madras for public exhibition an ME 109 shot down in the Battle of Britain whose battered carcase must have brought the

war home to many citizens who had yet to experience The Flap.

In one way World War Two differed markedly from World War One—in its effects upon Parry's staff. With very few exceptions those who survived World War One returned to Madras and to long and honourable careers with the firm; World War Two's survivors on the other hand either found employment elsewhere and never returned at all or returned only to become dissatisfied with prevailing conditions in India and to depart after but a brief trial of them. World War Two, though it fortunately provided even fewer casualties, made a far cleaner sweep at Parry's Corner than World War One; there is not today a single European Manager in Madras who was with the firm in 1939. This may not have been without its advantages for the times have changed rapidly since V. E. Day and new types are perhaps required to meet these changes; on the other hand, the loss of so many potential seniors was a very severe strain on the firm and it says much for Parry's solidarity that they were able to stand up to it so well.

But it is not for their Dripresets or their acetic acid or their coal bunkers or even their wonder-working yeast that Parry's war effort will be remembered and gratefully remembered by very many, combatants—and others. It is for a quite different commodity—Parry's Navy Gin. This was yet another product of the genius of Parkes at Nellikuppam and to say that it won the war—at least in the Far Eastern arena—would hardly be to say too much. Consignments of it were flown by American Boeings over the Hump into China; special aircraft came from Singapore to Madras to fetch it; officers with braid, red tabs and decorations could be seen queuing for it at Parry's Corner. For a time it was used as a sort of currency—it would buy almost anything. And yet, so perverse are a section of mankind, this heroic nectar was taken off the market when the war was over and

the blight of Prohibition fell on the District where it was made. For a time it vanished but—trust Parry's!—only for a time; within the last few months, it is again being manufactured, this time at Tiruvalla (where there is no Prohibition) under licence. Astraea Redux indeed.

* * *

Indian politics during the Second World War were, of course, largely conditioned by the *accelerando* scurry from the Provincial Autonomy of 1935 to the Independence of 1947. Despite the curious vacillations of the Home Government—now plunging forward, now digging in their toes—it very soon became evident how the race was going to end, and Parry's saw it as soon as anyone. Hodgson was one of the European Association delegates who met Sir Stafford Cripps in March of 1942; he returned from the meeting pensive and uneasy. For Hodgson the writing on the wall expressed itself in terms of the future prospects of sterling Companies in India, which he thought were dark; more of this will be said in the appropriate place. He was already convinced that "it would be a great mistake to expect anything short of complete self-government to be granted very soon after the cessation of hostilities". He was in this respect a good deal more far-seeing than many of his contemporaries who might have called themselves better informed.

The aspect of the Madras political programme which caused the most practical anxiety to Parry's was, of course, Prohibition, an item in the Congress agenda on which—against whatever contrary considerations—the Chief Minister, Rajagopalachariar, was irrevocably set. Partial Prohibition was actually introduced, at the first possible moment, in 1937—the Sales Tax Bill of 1939 being advanced under the pretext of finding a compensating revenue; but it was not pushed very rapidly and was actually in abeyance

from 1-1-1944 to 2-10-1946. It was then, however, formally re-introduced by the new Prakasam Ministry in eight Districts against the previous four and thereafter it advanced by rapid stages to totality. It was by no means a new idea; as long ago as 1921 a Temperance Bill had been laid before the Madras Legislative Council which Buchanan described at the time as a "rather iniquitous measure"; he thought, however, that the Madras Government could be trusted to whittle it down so as not to endanger their abkhari revenue, and in point of fact it was vetoed by the Governor under his special powers. Now, however, the Congress Ministry was prepared to let the abkhari revenue go and no Governor would gainsay them. The blow given by Prohibition to Parry's distilling interests (E. I. D. and D. S. & A.) was of course immediate and severe; during the war years the Services offset the partial enforcement with a hearty counter-demand, but with the post-war advent of Prohibition *in toto* as from 2-10-1948, the distilleries were obliged to concentrate increasingly on their denatured spirit and industrial alcohol and to find fresh markets for them. Nellikuppam has managed to run at capacity under these conditions, Samalkot not. The new Travancore Sugars and Chemicals were rather better off as there was no Prohibition in Travancore till 1952 and even then only a part of the State was affected. Persons resolutely determined to look on the bright side might point to a set-off in the shape of a slightly increased demand for aerated waters and therefore for Parry's carbonic acid gas; it was hardly of commensurate importance.

Labour during the war years was kept reasonably quiet and contented by high wages, abundance of work and generally easy conditions; but the policy of conciliation, already begun, had to be vigorously continued. From October of 1937 Parry's had a Labour Welfare Department—small at first but it grew into the Personnel Department of later years

which, besides "taking the buffet and cushioning the shock" between employers and employed, wrought extensively in the fields of pay, provident funds, gratuities, recreation and dispensaries. All this was done, but in an era when the political pulse was beating so rapidly labour could not be without its discontents, justified or otherwise. In May of 1939 there were serious strikes, lasting about a fortnight, at Nellikuppam, Ranipet and Samalkot; the Unions there banded themselves into an alleged Federation of Trade Unions with the laudable object of bringing Parry's enterprises to a standstill—in which indeed they might have succeeded but for the vigorous action of Sri Rajagopalachariar, who thought Trade Union Federations contrary to the rules of the game. The extensive strikes in Bombay in the following year had no direct repercussions, though labour throughout the Madras Presidency was described as "restive". In April of 1940 Mr. Papa Rao, a labour contractor at Samalkot, was set upon and beaten to death, but there may have been private grudges behind this crime—as in the case of the long subsequent murder at the same place of Kelso. The protracted 1947 strike of the workers at Binny's mills in Madras and their exorbitant demands drew down sympathetic claims upon Parry's from their Labour Union at Ranipet; these too were characteristically unbalanced—for example, in their insistence that the entire post-war refund of Excess Profits Tax should be expended for the sole benefit of the workers. In the face of all this ferment Parry's tendered a variety of concessions; in 1942, for instance, they began paying a Dearness Allowance to their labour; the Government, in the interests of anti-inflation, were against all such allowances but were not prepared to do anything themselves, trusting rather naively and against all famine experience to the hope that when rice became too dear, the working classes would turn meekly and contentedly to cholam or ragi.

In 1941 a Baby Welfare Clinic was started at Nellikuppam—an idea which would have excited some derision only a decade earlier. Presumably the workers appreciated these efforts on their behalf, though—with the traditional reticence of workers in this respect—they did not say so.

That they were still, however, in the main good-hearted is shown by the resolution of the Ranipet Labour Union, first in 1940 and repeatedly thereafter, to set aside a proportion of the Company's allowance given them for the annual Ayudha Puja—the ritual worship of their tools and machines which meant a very great deal to them—and to hand it back to the Manager as their contribution to the war. "The money we are able to save", they wrote, "after worshipping these tools and arms as well as the very tools and arms we have worshipped will, we pray to the Almighty whole-heartedly, help to defeat the mad Nazi tyrant Hitler". No doubt they did.

* * *

Hodgson has been shown returning depressed from his meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps and full of misgivings as to the future of sterling Companies in India; he immediately proceeded to carry this beyond the realm of theory by proposing the conversion of E.I.D. to a rupee company at the close of the war. This was not a new idea; Yorke had thought of it as long ago as 1907 and Buchanan had revived it in 1921 but as Shaw in the former case and Murray and Ormerod in the latter had been heavily against it, the seed fell upon but stony ground. But "the time seems bound to come", Buchanan had written, "when India will make impossible the position of Coys working in the country but controlled at home and it seems to us preferable to do voluntarily now what we may be forced to do later". Though his attitude towards the "legitimate grievance" of Indians in the matter was more sympathetic, Hodgson's arguments after a

twenty-years interval ran on similar lines; he pointed to attempts made in the past to fix a percentage of Indian Directors on the boards of Companies and a percentage of capital in Indian hands, and he envisaged a post-Independence Companies Act which might well make these claims compulsory. Even a rupee Company would have to conform to such an Act but would be in a better position than a sterling Company—supposing sterling Companies were allowed to trade at all. Time has shown that these fears were exaggerated but in 1942 they were very real.

E.I.D. did not in fact become a rupee Company and the idea was never put before the shareholders. In January of 1948, however, they were asked to agree—and did agree—to a series of resolutions transferring the "seat of management and control of the Company" to India where it would henceforward function under a new Board consisting wholly of residents in that country—where all its business was, and always had been, carried on. This involved the resignation of the existing Board in London and the formation of a new Board in Madras, of which first Gourlay and then Wonfor became Chairman; two Indian gentlemen, Messrs. C. R. Srinivasan and M. Ct. M. Chidambaram Chettiar, joined forces with them. The untimely death of the last-named in an air accident in March of 1954 was a great loss to E.I.D. and to South Indian business in general. Parry's remained and remain the Managing Agents.

Despite the hampering effects of World War Two, Parry's sugar interests made considerable progress during its course; between 1938 and 1948 production in tons was almost trebled (67,000 against 23,000). Nellikuppam's new—or newest—machinery, planned in 1939, materialised in 1942 and doubled the factory's crushing capacity to a potential of over two thousand tons of cane a day. (Its record day stands at two thousand four hundred.) The 1942 machinery included a set of high speed centrifugals which were so

much the *dernier cri* that they were actually the first of their kind ever made. They wrought furiously but by a slight miscalculation in design they at first sprayed high-velocity sugar in all directions so that Parkes, who alone would face these terrifying new inventions, went home at the end of his first day in the guise of a crystallized fruit and was obliged to melt himself in a very hot and very protracted bath.

At Samalkot D. S. & A. made a radical change; from 1943 onwards, with the installation of new machinery, it took to crushing cane instead of depending, as it had done hitherto, on local palm jaggery—a raw material which was now being abandoned everywhere as uneconomical. It was the same story at Thuckalay in Travancore; after some initial difficulties a fine new cane crushing factory was erected at Tiruvalla on the Pamba River and commenced operations in 1948. The site had the great advantage of simplifying transport problems, as the country boats could bring water-borne cane almost to the carrier of the crushing mill. To this factory the Nagercoil Distillery was moved in 1951 and the Trivandrum Pharmaceutical Works followed it a year later. The latter's three hundred separate medical and toilet preparations combined with the ultra-modern drugs from the new Lederle agency to build up Parry's Pharmaceutical Department. As a writer in *Parry's Bulletin* pointed out, it was a case of lineal descent in the long line of which sugar was the ancestor; from sugar molasses, from molasses spirit, from spirit the indispensable solvent for the manufacture of pharmaceuticals in assimilable form.

Meantime, attempts were made to expand in sugar in various other directions—there was even talk of going as far as Southern Rhodesia in a joint venture with Peirce Leslie; this came to nothing, as did the purchase or alternatively the Managing Agency of a factory at Hospet. The Vuyyur factory in Kistna District, on which Parry's looked longingly, firmly

refused to sell at Parry's terms; this in a sense served Parry's right for on a previous occasion, by a classic miscalculation, they had asserted that there was no need for this factory at all; now, when wiser counsels prevailed, it was too late. The only real advance was scored by D. S. & A. which in 1944 added to its stature by buying from the South India Sugar Co. Ltd. for the sum of eighteen lakhs the rather dilapidated cane-sugar factory at Pugalur in Trichinopoly. The old Nellikuppam 1000-ton crushing plant moved on to Pugalur from Samalkot, which had been unable fully to use it; by just exchange Samalkot received the smaller mill from Pugalur.

Confectionery not only consolidated its position but improved on it. True, the war knocked out—in some cases for good—such possible export markets as East Africa, the Persian Gulf, Malaya, Siam, Mauritius; as subsequent events were to destroy the much more valuable prospects in Burma. On the other hand the Army canteens throughout India devoured "Parry's Sweets" by the ton; in the last six months of 1942 nearly 3,000 cases were supplied to the Red Cross—over and above the ton a month which E. I. D. presented gratis throughout the war—and the sweets from South Arcot followed the flag through North Italy and the Western Desert. Wartime controls were of course endlessly tiresome; at one stage, in 1943, Authority A urged the continuance of manufacture while on the same day Authority B directed its instant cessation; Parry's "adopted the principle that when you get two conflicting orders from Government, you act on the one you like best". From 1945 onwards the question of modernising the Nellikuppam confectionery plant on the grand scale was taken up; the lay-out was planned by H. S. Donovan who had long service at Nellikuppam but by sad ill-fortune lived only a short while to see the fruits of these labours. On the 16th of February 1950 the new factory was formally opened by the first Indian

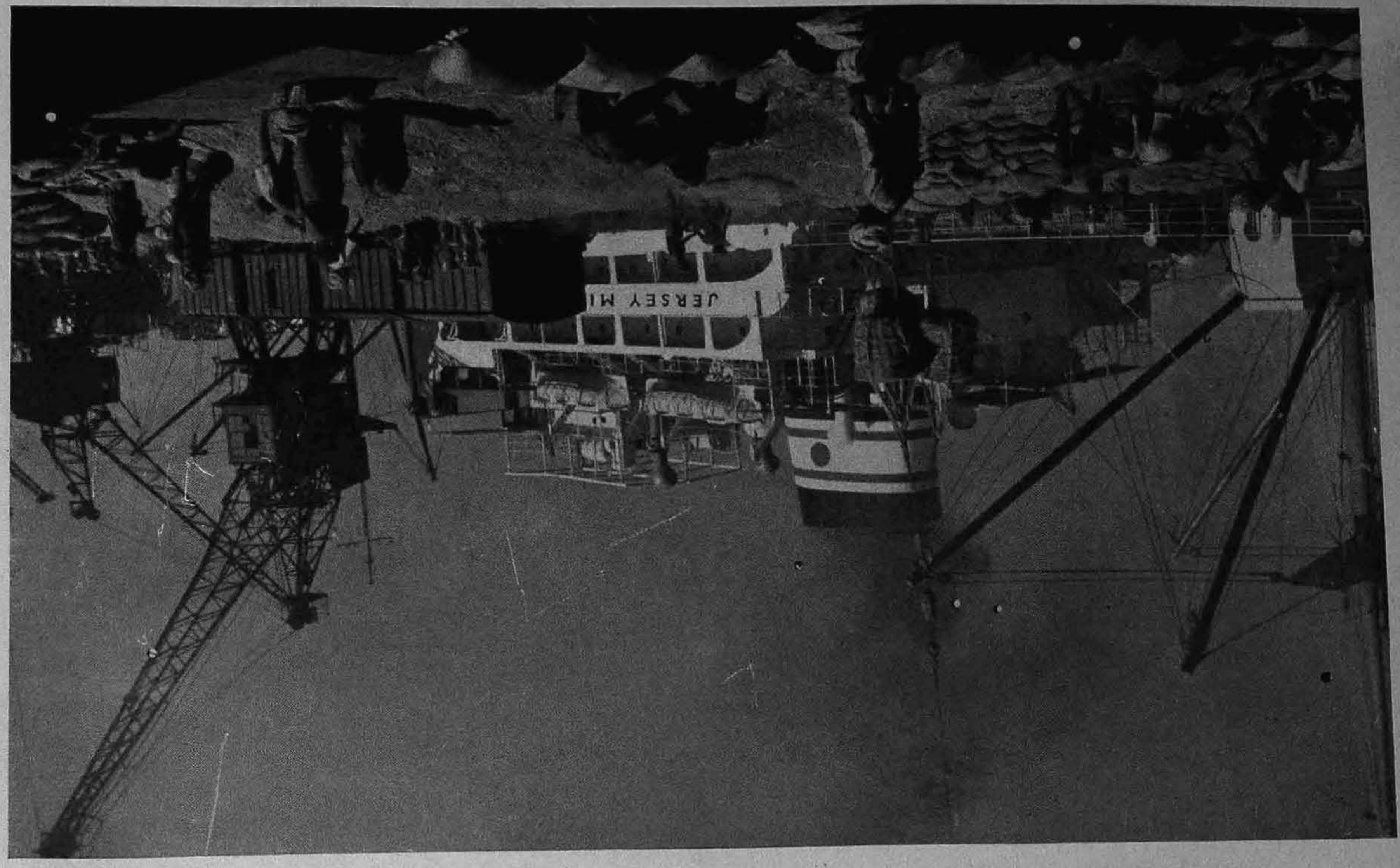
Governor of Madras, the Maharaja of Bhavanagar; under the guidance of Wonfor and Donovan, His Excellency must have surveyed with wonder and delight the " almost human " mechanisms producing in a matter of seconds from an amorphous slab of what seemed like glue a handful of sweets neatly packeted in paper and foil.

* * *

As to Ranipet, we have already seen how its fortunes were linked to those of World War Two and how it rose to every occasion and to every demand made upon its resources. With the removal of the wartime embargo upon imports Parry's became one of the largest Indian importers of bulk phosphates, sulphur and potash; the P. M. W.—which had withstood a threat of Government competition on the one hand and of amalgamation with E. I. D. on the other, and had become from 1938 a Department of Parry's—was ready to meet the almost famine conditions imposed by the long droughts of the post-war years in Madras. (Its current output of superphosphates is an annual 40,000 tons or so.) In fact, Parry's established policy—unique in itself and pursued with exemplary patience—of making the Madras ryot fertiliser-conscious was beginning to show results; during and after World War Two it had been pushed and strengthened with exceptional vigour by Davis whose pioneer work was recognised by his nomination in 1952 to the Development Council for Heavy Chemicals and Fertilisers. Ranipet's output of sulphuric acid had risen from a modest 44 tons in 1906 to 7,000 tons in 1951; that figure has since been doubled, after the old plant, which perished of senile decay in 1951, was replaced by another on the most modern lines. In its infancy the pottery department tarried for lack of a skilled Superintendent but, once this was remedied, it never looked back; the new Thrift Kiln brought into use in 1951 has made for

THE JERSEY MIST UNLOADING PHOSPHATES
AT MADRAS : APRIL 1954

"Parry's became in the post-war years one of the largest Indian importers of bulk phosphates, sulphur and potash."


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both economy and efficiency; an annual output running into one and a half million pieces of ceramic ware and a hundred thousand acid jars speaks for itself. Yet pottery remains an industry where ancient and modern meet; as in distilling, there are stages where only personal experience and expertise can judge the exact moment for action, and the village potter may still be seen at Ranipet spinning his wheel with the incredible deftness that rivals the most complicated machine at his side. He does not, like his confrêre in the Midlands of England, use a stool; "if my grandfather sat on his hunkers, why shouldn't I?"

It must not be thought that the manufacture of such prosaic commodities as manure or teapots is devoid of excitement. In April of 1948 a fire broke out in a godown containing six hundred tons of ammonium nitrate; ammonium nitrate is liable to explode under great heat and—as everyone at Ranipet had just been reading in the newspapers—such an explosion had recently wiped out most of a city in Texas. Fortunately the Ranipet Fire Brigade were able to cope with the outbreak before the Glover Towers and the Dressler Ovens could go soaring into the Palar River.

* * *

In the war years and those just after them Parry's picked up so many agencies great and small that a list would cover pages; the curious must be referred to the Appendix. A number of these fell to the Pharmaceutical Department but the prizes were perhaps won by Engineering who netted the all-India agencies for Brush Electrical Engineering and British Oil Engines Export (later known as Aboex)—Mirrlees, Petter and Maclaren; this led incidentally to the re-establishment of the Bombay office which had already enjoyed a brief career in the '20's, Noel-Tod being now its new Manager. Equally interesting was the agency for the newly-born Indian Kirloskar

Companies—Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd. and Kirloskar Electric; Parry's had already been dealing with Kirloskar over pumps and agricultural implements and it was the labours of Gourlay and Wonfor as honest brokers which yoked the new Companies in double harness with Aboex and Brush, so that Kirloskars manufactured under licence from the other two and Parry's marketed the products of all four. Parry's association with Kirloskar, which survived its teething troubles and has gone from strength to strength, is an early and interesting example of the firm's readiness to develop not only their own manufactured goods but those of their Indian fellow-industrialists as well.

An attempt was made after World War Two to add the Henderson line to the list of shipping agencies but Parry's proverbial ill-luck in this direction still pursued them and they failed, as they had failed with the Bibby Line after World War One. They were more fortunate with the B. O. A. C. but their agency here was shared with other firms. This and the similar agencies for some other air-lines remain the sole fruit of Parry's once great expectations in the field of civil aviation.

The war with its reminder of the transitory nature of human life and the vulnerability of human property created a wide interest in insurance and Parry's business under this head expanded enormously. In the decade between 1937 and 1947 premia on general insurance rose from Rs. 80,000 to Rs. 580,000 and life business completed from Rs. 170,000 to Rs. 600,000. Still greater opportunities were thus opened to the lower staff to emulate that enterprising gentleman already mentioned with his thousand-a-month in commissions.

* * *

Dare House, completed remarkably quickly considering its magnitude, was occupied in and from

October of 1940; among its many amenities were the first—or some of the first—air-conditioned offices ever known in Madras. To begin with, the Directors held the new palace in solitary state but presently they were joined by Secretarial, Sugar and Spirits, Confectionery and Accounts. Engineering, Sales, P.M.W. and Chemicals followed at an interval. Parry's first tenants in this auspicious hour were the European Association and the Chamber of Commerce, the Sun Life of Canada, Fraser and Ross, the Indian Leaf Tobacco, Ralli Brothers and the American Consulate. Those were the days when Dare House had room to spare for tenants; it has none now; with the exception of a half-floor for the Chamber, Parry's themselves fill every corner of it.

In the New Year's Honours of 1943 Hodgson received his Knighthood; this should have made three "Sirs" in the firm, active or retired—Wood, Wright and Hodgson; but to the general grief, Wood had died in 1941. From 1933 onwards the succession to the Chair of Parry's ran—Wright, Hodgson, Elphinston, Gourlay, Wonfor; of these Wright held the office for eight years and Wonfor for six. In 1954 Wonfor in turn gave place to Davis. One notices, over these years, an increasing tendency to delegate particular responsibilities to individual heads; thus Hodgson was sugar, Gourlay engineering, Wonfor the engineering agencies and Davis chemicals and fertilisers. They played of course many other parts, but these were their especial children.

In accordance with the spirit of the times, Parry's had been encouraging the recruitment of Indians to their higher grade posts and the numbers had been steadily increasing; Hodgson, glancing round the Dare House tiffin table one day in February of 1942, counted eleven Indians to eight Europeans. Even allowing for the fact that several Europeans were absent on war service, the proportions show the progress that had been made. The policy of Indianisation

originated with Wright as far back as 1925 when the idea was more of a novelty in business circles than it afterwards became; apart from its equity, it paid good dividends, bringing to the highest Managerial posts in the firm such men as S. Krishnamurthi, K. P. Ramsami and John K. John.

Parry's however, were still able to resist progress, as currently understood, in some of its forms; when the energetic Indo-Burma Association wrote out in 1943 suggesting that it would be an excellent thing if each newly-joining griffin were to take a course of Oriental languages at the London School, Parry's answer was a categorical "No". They had never—unlike so many of their fellows—been great believers in "courses"; *experientia*, they thought, *docet*. It had done so at any rate in the cases of Parry, Dare, Goolden, Nelson, Crake, Shaw, Yorke, Jackson and many, many others; the old instructress, therefore, might still serve.

In 1948 Parry and Co., Ltd., put the coping-stone on their career; they became a public Company. Indians might now participate as shareholders and over a thousand of them have availed themselves of the opportunity.

* * *

On the 15th of August 1947 Independence Day dawned at last, an occasion so prodigious that many of those who participated in it felt a little dazed and unable quite clearly to comprehend what was going on. As we have seen, Parry's were not caught napping by the crescendo gallop of what their Assistants irreverently called The Scuttle. They had long seen it coming and were ready to adapt themselves to the new conditions, be these what they might.

Celebrations were held with the greatest goodwill all over the wide ramifications of the Parry Group; the white-green-and-saffron tricolour was hoisted

everywhere amid acclamations in which the Europeans were the first to give the lead. Sometimes this was done at midnight after a long vigil of prayers and national songs; sometimes it waited till the morning. Nellikuppam could rise to factory sirens and floodlights; under Mainprice's presidentship the Sholavalli ground was made into a stadium where "visitors refreshed by sweet aerated drinks" (mixed in an outsize glucose barrel by Donovan and charged with CO_2 by the chemist) "settled down to enjoy the programme". Samalkot indulged in a "real chow-chow" (whatever this may have been) "in true Indian style". The smaller stations were not to be outdone; at Mettupalayam passengers arriving by the Blue Mountain Express were greeted by the sight of the National Flag awave; Gourlay, who was one of them, was presented with a small replica. Pugalur had sports; Tuticorin had a "mammoth procession" —Gandhi's statue borne along god-like in a palanquin; Vizag distributed sweets (Parry's own?) to the office. And at Dare House itself four hundred of the staff assembled and under the presidency of John K. John sang *Vande Mataram* lustily? To the older European members who attended, the change in the times must have been underlined by the facts that they gazed at a long row of garlanded portraits of Indian political leaders and that the proceedings opened—at some length—with prayer. This last had not been previous custom; it had not been so at the 150th Anniversary; or on Armistice Day 1918; or on V. E. Day—or very possibly on that great Day when the news arrived that Seringapatam was down.

Incidentally, E. I. D. gave an even more practical form to their sentiments by presenting an Independence Day Bonus to their labour at Ranipet and Nellikuppam which cost them just over a lakh.

So the wheel had spun round full circle and Gourlay and Wonfor and their Company stood, for practical purposes, where Thomas Parry had stood a

hundred and sixty years ago; that is to say, they were foreigners trading in a strange land by sufferance of its Government. And once again they were traders only and without voice in the country's affairs, since with the inauguration of the Indian Republic *all* European representation in the Legislatures ceased. The Free Merchants of 1788 had, as vis-à-vis, the Honourable East India Company, which if not consistently hostile, was always a potential menace; the Free Merchants of 1947 onwards had its counterpart in the new National Government. Indeed, the fanciful might carry the analogy still further; might find, in the Madras of Independence, the current counterfeits of all the old figures—of Umdat-ul-Umara, of Avadhanam Paupiah, of Sir Henry Gwillim, of honest George Garrow, of Sugar Campbell and all that motley company. To trace and identify these would be a delightful diversion, but it is one in which every man must be his own selector, must draw his own parallels.

So Independence Day came and went as other Days had done before it. And Independent India was not six months old when the country was shaken by an event of quite the opposite character. On the 30th of January 1948 Gandhi was assassinated by a young Hindu from Poona while conducting his usual public prayers in the grounds of Birla House at Delhi. At one time or another, in one way or another, Gandhi had given Parry's and others like them a good deal of trouble—certainly all the trouble he could; yet they, in common with all persons of sensibility, were horrified at this brutal termination of what had been, at the lowest, a singular personal triumph. On the 2nd of February Hodgson wrote from London, "All members of the staff here were deeply shocked to hear the news..... and they have asked me to express to you all and especially to the Indian members of your staff, everywhere, their deep sympathy. Indians will be proud to know that the whole world mourns

the passing of their great compatriot". These were not mere conventional words; they were the expression of a feeling that ran through every room in Dare House and all along First Line Beach—the loss, the blank, the disappearance of one whose mind, not always practical, not always reasonable, but always and inflexibly dedicated to its end, had so long set the tone to so much of India's life.

* * *

World War Two of course, begot no daydreams of a millenium and nobody on First Line Beach looked for anything better than a post-war slump. More widespread destruction crying out for repairs might postpone the collapse longer than in the case of World War One; on the other hand, this might well be counterbalanced by the greatly increased capacity for production. A slump, however, sooner or later there would be. The likelihood of at least a recession must have been manifest even to the most obtuse optimist on Parry's staff; leaving alone the lessons of the 1920's, it was undeniable that a great deal of Parry's current and most profitable activities were the direct result of the war. For example, the vast business in coal bunkering must vanish with the outbreak of peace, and possibly many of the other supply arrangements as well. (This did in fact happen; with their food grains contract terminated, Parry's were left to find other outlets for the large and efficient shipping organisation they had built up at Cochin, Tuticorin and other ports.) Parry's also foresaw the "inevitable demands of labour for improved conditions" and "at the most awkward possible time when business is getting more difficult and our managing staff are over-stale or away on leave". A repetition of the exchange disasters of 1920-21 was improbable, as the rupee was now a managed currency; but even so there might still be fluctuations, while the vagaries of import duties were quite unpredictable. All in all,

post-war would be no time for anything but a watchful eye, a distrustful mind and a tight hand on the purse.

Braced for the "inevitable" slump, business and financial communities all over the world were surprised when it mysteriously tarried. In some places it never came at all, but Madras justified anticipations; the slump duly arrived—in 1952, by which time it might have been hoped that the danger was over. The severe recession of that year was an almost purely Indian affair; it was touched off by a break in the Bombay bullion market but was soon easily recognisable for what it was—the belated end of the wartime boom. Although more or less confined to India, it was none the less serious; in Madras conditions became for a time very difficult indeed. Parry's, like others, were obliged to retrench; sales must be made on finer margins and overheads cut. They were obliged moreover to sacrifice a number of their European personnel—though not always with unmitigated regret, for some of the new post-war importations had shown little signs of settling down under the altered conditions now prevailing in India. (The record was held by a gentleman who took up his appointment on a Monday and abandoned it on the Wednesday.) Despite retrenchments, the total numbers of the staff increased enormously; at the moment of writing Parry and Co. Ltd., employ 2,082 persons of whom 149 are Covenanted; the five major factories at Nellikuppam, Ranipet, Samalkot, Pugalur and Tiruvalla account for a labour force of 7,051.

The War and Independence between them made a further radical change in the conditions of business in India—if only because men could now spring into aeroplanes and be transported from one central mart to another in the course of a few hours. The new Union Government was at first—indeed still is—very chary of delegating its responsibilities to the States; in all matters of first-class importance, and in many

of second-class or third or lower, control was centralised at Delhi; Fort St. George could by no means always give the answers. Thus while Dare House remained the firm's Holy-of-Holies, Madras was no longer the "Governor in Council", in whom the last word and the final prestige were vested. Delhi would not come to Madras; Madras must go to Delhi, and it soon became evident that in Delhi Parry's must have an office. Inevitably the firm was drawn into the wider range of All-India; from 1948 onwards the Directors found it necessary to make frequent visits to the fountain-head to consult with the Ministers of the Union, on the well-established principle that when in doubt it is always better to assail the highest. The policy paid, but the sovereignty of Madras was shaken.

The axe that fell on European representation in the legislatures cut the mercantile community back very much to the position in which Dare, Arbuthnot and Pugh had stood when they founded the Madras Chamber of Commerce in 1836. There was, however, a difference. Dare and his friends may have known of the existence of other Chambers in Bombay and Calcutta but had little contact or means of contact with them; anything like consultation on a concerted policy was out of the question. It was not so in the 1950's, by which time Chambers of Commerce also had acquired an all-India colour. By now it was the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India which controlled and directed affairs, and among these the Chambers of Bombay, Delhi and Bengal stood linked in an offensive-defensive line across the Union. There was more than a possibility that Madras, tucked away in her southern corner, might be relegated to her long-forgotten status of the 1860's or of the Company's days before them—that of a backwater of little importance not worth serious attention. That this did not happen was largely due to Wonfor of Parry's. Wonfor first became Chairman of the Madras

Chamber in 1948; he held the office again in 1950 and in 1952 and 1953, thus equalling the record set up by Yorke for Parry's and only once beaten by a Chairman from any other firm. With characteristic vigour he made it his business over a period of years to push the Madras interests in the counsels of the Associated Chambers and where these interests clashed with those of any of the others, to see that they won; or if they could not win, that they lost only as much as was absolutely necessary. It must have been a great satisfaction to him to preside, just before he finally left Madras in April of 1954, over the meeting of the Chamber which welcomed as guest-speaker Sri T. T. Krishnamachari, the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, and to hear—as did all present—from the visitor's lips that however Madras was now regarded in the North, it was not as any sort of backwater.

So now what next? Thomas Parry had founded a business of which the staples were to be piece-goods and banking; both these may now be regarded as museum pieces, interesting archaeological relics but little more. Sugar, chemical fertilisers and engineering; these, the observer would say, would be the lines on which Parry's activities are now most likely to expand. Engineering continues in the form of the works at Kidderpore (that relic of P.E.L.) and the Engineering Departments at Calcutta and Madras, as well as the group of important agencies already detailed. As to the fertilisers, the increase in the Indian population which Jackson adduced in evidence in 1913 is now swelling to astronomical proportions with correspondingly astronomical requirements in the way of food; there seems little doubt that the demand for fertilisers must increase pari passu and the most cautious of prophets might safely predict new branches and factories arising "somewhere in South India". The vaster and vaster population seems also to be developing a sweeter and sweeter

tooth and it is certainly a fact that Indian production of sugar is falling far short of the demand. Parry's policy in these circumstances is to co-operate increasingly with Indian industrialists in the establishment of new sugar factories—on similar principles to those followed in the case of Kirloskar. It is one more step forward in that close partnership of British and Indian firms which seems to be Indian industry's best guarantee for a successful future. That essential figure in the chain, the cane-growing ryot—villain or hero of the piece—is not being overlooked; within the last few months the Union Government have declared their intention of making statutory something on the lines of what is known as the "SISMA" formula—a calculation adopted by the South Indian Sugar Mills Association according to which the ryot may participate in any additional selling price above an agreed figure and may further receive a better price for better quality cane. The particular interest in this for Parry's lies in the fact that it was their Philip Hadfield who was one of the SISMA formula's most forceful protagonists. His nomination to the Sugar Development Council in 1954 was a due acknowledgment of the experience, abilities and drive which have done so much for the firm.

We have so far been regarding confectionery as an offspring or at least a younger relative of sugar. But confectionery was ever a pushing child and is now leaving the parental roof. The industry has done extremely well in the last few years and has made for itself a reputation on a country-wide basis. Logically and equitably it should now stand on its own feet under its own name—Parrys Confectionery Limited. Early in 1954 the wheels were set in motion towards this end, at which stage of apotheosis we may bid it farewell.

And there may yet be something in minerals. Parry's adventures in the subterranean have been in the past but a sorry tale of failure. But an entirely

new development has appeared which may well swing the pendulum in the opposite sense. This is the lignite finds at Neiveli in South Arcot, no great distance from the ancient frontiers of Sugar Campbell's Chidambaram farm; in these Parry's are closely interested. Provided the Neiveli lignite field proves to be as extensive and workable as seems to be the case, its possibilities need no emphasis. In a State entirely lacking in coal, whose demand for firewood, running in the region of a million tons a year, is already alarmingly and dangerously denuding its forests, the new discovery might well revolutionise the entire field of South Indian industry. No attentive reader of this history will feel inclined to bank on probabilities, but there *are* such things and in time, winners and losers, they cancel out. Thomas Parry himself inveighed against the buffets of the jade Fortune, adding conversationally, "What a bitch she is!" True; but, given a long enough run, she is an impartial bitch, and it would be neither inequitable nor surprising if lignite came forward to make up to Parry's for the long-past disappointments of the Alpha Gold Mining and the Indian Minerals Exploration.

* * *

We have come to the end of our story. It has carried us through one hundred and sixty-six years—an insignificant flicker in the cosmic record but a sizeable muster in that of Madras. It has touched on almost every aspect, during these years, of British business in South India. It was worth telling.

Thomas Parry himself, in his reply to the Respectable Hindu Inhabitants, foreshadowed some of the principles which were to govern the conduct of his firm. Another aspect of these was enunciated by James Uttley Ellis, who wrote it all down—almost as Wood might have written it all down—on the 14th of July 1847, at which time he assumed the responsibilities of Senior Partner. "Let me recommend", he said,

DARE HOUSE

"Thomas Parry could hardly foresee...a glittering edifice, gaudy in colour, six storeys in height, and bearing the name of a man he was to know intimately but had never yet heard of."

"the most careful and unvarying attention to the maintenance of the Character of the House for justice and integrity in its dealings with all men whether high or low. Keep it pure and unsullied. It is trite to say that the Character of the House is made up of the personal character of each member of it; nevertheless it deserves to be held in remembrance, that no one may be allowed to overlook the important fact that in or out of the House his conduct affects its Welfare". These are high ideals; not always—in Parry's as elsewhere—has it been within everyone's power to comply with them. But Ellis, re-reading his homily after the lapse of a century and surveying the "Character of the House for justice and integrity", would have no cause to be cast down.

Doubtless there are young men in Parry's today who cry out upon the hardness of the times, lamenting that they should have inherited a future darker and less predictable than anything since the eve of the Flood. Let them read this history. Let them remember Thomas Parry crushed and broken by the loss of the *Wellesleys*, and how Thomas Parry took heart and lived on and died in the end a warm man. How time and again the sugar industry seemed to have received a mortal blow, but—look at Nellikuppam today! How in 1906 the words "Parry's have failed" were actually in the gossip-mongers' mouths; but Parry's did not fail. How in the Exchange Crisis Parry's, felled to the floor, struggled to their feet again and fought on to triumph. Having done this, let these young men ask themselves—can there be anything in the foreseeable future worse than what has been? If the times seem exceptionally difficult and the future exceptionally uncertain, let them dismiss the notion that the times and the future were ever anything else. There were *always* wars, there were always slumps, there were always crises; bottoms have been falling out of markets since markets began. History, had it no other uses, would be valuable for this lesson alone

—that man can cope with anything and that, from time to time, he will have to. Why should there be any difference, either in the buffets of the jade Fortune or in man's power to overcome them, just because the year happens to be 1954?

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

THE PARRY GROUP

In October 1954

Head Office : Dare House, Madras

London Office : Parry Murray & Co., Ltd.

Board of Directors :

Chairman : S. G. H. Davis, B.SC.
Vice-Chairman : G. N. Noel-Tod, B.A., O.B.E.
Managing Directors : D. Allerton
P. Hadfield
Directors : D. S. Gorer, A.C.A., O.B.E.
M. J. Edwards
N. A. Parkes

Departments :

Accounts
Chemicals
Confectionery
Engineering
Fertilisers/Chemical
Imports
General Sales
Insurance
Personnel
Pharmaceuticals
Pottery
Shipping & Transport
Sugar & Spirit

Departmental Managers:

D. T. Phillips, A.C.A.
S. Krishnamurthy, M.SC.
S. Gore
G. W. C. Garrould, A.M.I. MECH.E.
J. K. John, B.SC.
C. F. M. Baldwin
K. P. Ramsami, PH.D.
J. C. Holcombe
C. G. Ramanathan, B.SC.
C. P. Featherstone
S. Mahadevan
J. S. Prabhu, B.SC.

Main Branches :

Calcutta
Bombay
Delhi
Bangalore
Cochin
Cuddalore
Kurnool
Ootacamund
Secunderabad

Branch Managers :

T. G. Martin, A.I.E.E.
R. C. Ackerman
S. N. Pandya
P. Kuppuswamy
P. J. Lawrence
K. Kanakasabapathi Iyer
N. K. Murthi
G. Krishnamurthy, B.SC.
T. S. Chintamani, B.A.

APPENDIX I

Sub Branches :

Bezwada
Calicut
Chidambaram
Cocanada
Coimbatore
Kumbakonam
Madura
Mangalore
Nidadavol
Palghat
Pondicherry
Rajamundry
Salem
Tanjore
Tellicherry
Tinnevelly
Trichinopoly
Trivandrum
Tuticorin
Vizagapatam
Vizianagram

Factories :	**Products :**	**General Managers :**
Nellikuppam	Sugar, CO_2 and Confectionery	M. J. Edwards (Director)
Pamba River (Tiruvalla)	Sugar & Pharmaceuticals	A. W. Banks
Pugalur	Sugar	T. J. F. Killick
Ranipet	Chemicals, Chemical Fertilisers & Pottery	N. G. Bowen
Samalkot	Sugar & CO_2	R. C. Aitken

Distilleries:

Nellikuppam
Pamba River (Tiruvalla)
Samalkot

Fertiliser Works :

Ranipet
Cochin
Cuddalore
Guntur
Mettupalayam

Managing Agents for :—

The East India Distilleries & Sugar Factories Ltd.
The Deccan Sugar & Abkhari Co., Ltd.
The Mofussil Warehouse & Trading Co., Ltd.
Parrys Confectionery Ltd.
Associated British Oil Engines (Export) Ltd.

In association with V. Ramakrishna & Sons Ltd.:—

The Cauvery Sugars & Chemicals Ltd.

Secretaries/Secretaries & Treasurers for :—

Brush Export Ltd.
The Travancore Sugars & Chemicals Ltd.

Engineering Agencies : *All India:—*

Andrew Barclay Sons & Co., Kilmarnock
Associated British Oil Engines (Export) Ltd., London

APPENDIX I

The Buda Co., Illinois
Chain Belt Company, Milwaukee
Gowrihouse Metal Works, Rajapalayam
Hoares (Ceylon) Ltd., Colombo
Kirloskar Electric Co., Ltd., Bangalore
Railway Mine & Plantation Equipment Ltd., London
L. Sterne & Co., Ltd., Glasgow
Templeton Kenly & Co., Ltd., New York
Jonas Woodhead & Sons Ltd., Leeds

All India excluding South India:—

Ransome and Rapier, Ltd., Ipswich

South India:—

Alfred Herbert (India) Ltd., Calcutta
Apac Industries Ltd., S. Australia
Balmer Lawrie & Co., Ltd., Calcutta
Bengal Coal Co., Ltd., Calcutta
Bitulac Ltd., Newcastle-on-Tyne
British Belting & Asbestos Ltd., Cleckheaton
Brush Export Ltd., Loughbrough
J. I. Case Co., Wisconsin
James Hendry Ltd., Glasgow
Hurley & Dewhurst Pty. Ltd., Sydney
Jessop & Co., Ltd., Calcutta
Kilburn & Co., Calcutta
Kirloskar Bros. Ltd., Kirloskarvadi
Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd., Poona (with limited North India franchise)
L. T. Lewis, London
The London Varnish & Enamel Co., Ltd., London
McLeod & Co., Ltd., Calcutta
Minimax Ltd., Calcutta
Reliance Firebrick & Pottery Co., Ltd., Calcutta
The Ruberoid Co., Ltd., London
Simmonds Aerocessories Ltd., Glamorgan
Henry Simon Ltd., Stockport
Steel Bros. & Co., Ltd., Calcutta & Rangoon
Tide Water Oil Co. (India), Ltd., Calcutta
Tylors of London Ltd., London

General Sales Agencies : *All India:—*

The Parker Pen Co. Ltd., London
The Parker Pen Co., Janesville, Wisconsin
The Parker Pen Co., Toronto
The Parker Pen Co. (India), Ltd., Madras
The Parker Pen Co. (France), S.A., Paris

APPENDIX I

India, excluding Eastern India:—
W. J. Bush & Co., Ltd., London
W. J. Bush Products Ltd., Madras
Corn Products Co. (India) Ltd., Bombay
Horlicks Ltd., Slough

South India:—
Alembic Glass Industries Ltd., Baroda
Atlantis (East) Ltd., Hull & Calcutta
Amstel Brewery, Amsterdam
Ballantyne Export Co., Pty., Ltd., Melbourne, Australia
Burmah-Shell Oil Storage & Distributing Co. of India Ltd.
(for Teepol and Wax)
Central Dairy Farm, Aligarh
Chiswick Polish Co., Ltd., London
Dyer Meakin Breweries Ltd., Simla
Etablissement du Cognac Godet, Paris
S. & W. Fine Foods Inc., San Francisco
Gippsland & Northern Co-op. Co., Ltd., Melbourne
Hayward Tyler & Co., Ltd., London
India Paper Pulp Co., Ltd., Calcutta
Indo-Burmah Petroleum Co., Ltd., Calcutta
Indian Vegetable Products Ltd., Bombay
John Perks & Sons (Eastern) Ltd., Wolverhampton
N. V. Kasshandel Betz & Jay, Rotterdam
Kraft Foods Ltd., Melbourne
Macropolo & Co., Ltd., Bombay
Malayan Breweries Ltd., Singapore
Metal Box Co. of India Ltd., Madras
Ollard Westcombe & Co., Ltd., Birmingham
Peek Frean & Co., Ltd., London
Properts Ltd., London
Roger & Gallet, Paris
Scotia Distillers Ltd., Dumbarton, Scotland
Standard Chemical & Pharmaceutical Co., Bombay
D. & C. Stern & Co., Ltd., London
United Glass Bottle Manufacturers Ltd., London
William Grant & Sons Ltd., Glasgow

Pharmaceutical Agencies : *All India:—*
P. Beiersdorf & Co., A-G., Hamburg
Consolidated Midland Corporation, New York
Government Oil Factory, Calicut
Nepera Chemical Co., Inc., New York
Chas Page & Co., Ltd., London
Pharmakon Ltd., Zurich
Ramaraju Surgical Cotton Mills Ltd., Rajapalayam
Whitley & Co., Ltd., Manchester

APPENDIX I

South & Eastern India:—
Indian Penicillin Committee, Bombay
Lederle Laboratories (India) Ltd., Bombay
South India:—
J. Chandler & Co. (Buckfast) Ltd., London

Fertiliser and Chemical Import Agencies: *All India:—*

Anglo-French Phosphate Co., Ltd., London
Egyptian Phosphate Co., Ltd., London
Freeport Sulphur Co., New York
Jordan Phosphate Mines Co., S. A. Amman
Ruhr-Stickstoff A. G. Bochum, Germany
South India:—
Potash Ltd., London
Ras Mallap Gypsum Mines Ltd., Cairo
Verkaufsgemeinschaft Deutscher Kaliwerke GMBH Hanover

Chemical Agencies : *South India:—*

Bararee Coke Co., Ltd.

Airline Agencies :—

Air France
Air India International
British Overseas Airways Corporation
Indian Airlines Corporation
K. L. M. Royal Dutch Airlines
Scandinavian Air Line System
Transworld Airlines

Emigration Agency :—

Emigration Agents for the Government of Natal

Insurance :—

Hercules Insurance Co., Ltd.
Northern British & Mercantile Insurance Co., Ltd.
Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation
Sun Insurance Office Ltd.
United India Life Assurance Co., Ltd.

APPENDIX I

Steamer Agencies :—

Aviation & Shipping Co., Ltd., London
Furness Withy & Co., Ltd. (Steamer Agencies), London
Hansa Lines, Bremen, Germany (*for Vizagapatam, Cocanada, Masulipatam, Cuddalore & Negapatam*)
India Natal Line (Steamer Agencies)
Moller (Hong Kong) Ltd., (Steamer Agencies)
Morel Ltd., London
Purvis Shipping Co., Ltd., London
Stevenson Lines (Steamer Agencies)
Asiatic Navigation Co., Ltd. } *for Cuddalore and Porto Novo*
British India Steam Navigation Co., Ltd. }

Travel Agency :—

Messrs. Cox & Kings (Agents) Ltd.

APPENDIX II

THE PARTNERS AND DIRECTORS, 1788—1954

Thomas Parry
Thomas Chase
Henry Sewell
Hugh Jones (?)
George Garrow
John King Lane
Alexander Theodore Gibbons
John Neill
David Pugh
Christopher Breithaupt
x John William Dare
Joseph Pugh
John Hart Jollie
James Martin Jollie
David Pugh (Jnr.)
Cosmo Richard Howard
x John Uttley Ellis
x Joseph Goolden
x Henry Nelson
x William Hamilton Crake
John Pugh
x Alexander Forrester Brown
†*x* John Charles Loch
x John Jones
x James Charles Shaw
John Fortune
William Parry Crake
William Sissmore Shaw
x Algernon Joseph Yorke
Alexander Stuart Silver Paul
‡*x* Austin Downes Jackson
Alec Macdonald
Charles William Prest
Algernon George Batley
Joseph Cecil Armstrong
Alec Fleming Buchanan

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x Chairman of the Madras Chamber of Commerce.
† Sheriff of Madras.
‡ Member of Madras Legislature.

APPENDIX II

†‡x Sir Charles Edgar Wood
‡x Sir William Owen Wright
‡x Sir Gerald Hassal Hodgson
Henry Douglas Stephens
x Colin Elphinston
Geoffrey Balfour Gourlay
x Herbert Ison Wonfor
Christopher Mainprice
Thomas Geoffrey Armstrong
Sydney George Hoult Davis
James Halkett Hendrie
* Geoffrey Noel Noel-Tod
‡ Charles Derek Stuart Allerton
Philip Hadfield
Donald Solomon Gorer
Maurice John Edwards
Norman Arthur Parkes

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x Chairman of the Madras Chamber of Commerce.
† Sheriff of Madras.
‡ Member of Madras Legislature.
* Under Sheriff of Madras.

APPENDIX III

THE MANAGEMENT : 1788 to 1954

Date	*Style of Firm*	*Partners*
1788—1789	Thomas Parry	Thomas Parry
1789—1790	Chase and Parry	Thomas Chase Thomas Parry
1790—1791	Chase Parry & Co.	Thomas Chase Thomas Parry Henry Sewell
1791—1794	Thomas Parry	Thomas Parry
1795—1796	Thomas Parry & Co.	Thomas Parry Hugh Jones (?)
1797—1800	Parry Garrow & Co.	Thomas Parry George Garrow
1801—1805	Parry and Lane	Thomas Parry John King Lane
1806—1808	Parry Neill & Co.	Thomas Parry Alex Theodore Gibbons John Neill David Pugh
1809—1812	Parry and Pugh	Thomas Parry David Pugh
1813—1818	Parry Pugh and Breithaupt	Thomas Parry David Pugh Christopher Breithaupt
1819—1822	Parry and Dare	Thomas Parry John William Dare
1823—1824	Parry Dare & Co.	Thomas Parry John William Dare Joseph Pugh
1825—1829	do	John William Dare Joseph Pugh John Hart Jollie
1830—1834	do	John William Dare James Martin Jollie Joseph Pugh

APPENDIX III

1835	Parry Dare & Co.	John William Dare Joseph Pugh
1836—1838	do	John William Dare Joseph Pugh David Pugh (Jr.) Cosmo Richard Howard
1839—1840	Parry & Co.	Joseph Pugh David Pugh (Jr.) John Uttley Ellis
1841—1844	do	David Pugh (Jr.) John Uttley Ellis Joseph Goolden
1845—1849	do	David Pugh (Jr.) John Uttley Ellis Joseph Goolden Henry Nelson
1850	do	John Uttley Ellis Joseph Goolden Henry Nelson
1851—1860	do	John Uttley Ellis Joseph Goolden Henry Nelson William Hamilton Crake John Pugh
1861	do	Joseph Goolden Henry Nelson William Hamilton Crake John Pugh
1862	do	Joseph Goolden William Hamilton Crake John Pugh Alexander Forrester Brown
1863—1866	do	Joseph Goolden William Hamilton Crake Alexander Forrester Brown John Charles Loch
1867—1868	do	William Hamilton Crake Alexander Forrester Brown John Charles Loch John Jones
1869	do	Alexander Forrester Brown John Charles Loch John Jones

1870—1871	Parry & Co.	Alexander Forrester Brown John Jones
1872—1878	do	Alexander Forrester Brown John Jones James Charles Shaw
1879—1881	do	Alexander Forrester Brown James Charles Shaw John Fortune
1882—1884	do	James Charles Shaw John Fortune William Parry Crake
1885—1886	do	James Charles Shaw John Fortune
1886—1888	do	James Charles Shaw John Fortune William Sissmore Shaw
1889—1890	do	James Charles Shaw John Fortune William Sissmore Shaw Algernon Joseph Yorke
1891	do	John Fortune William Sissmore Shaw Algernon Joseph Yorke
1892	do	James Charles Shaw William Sissmore Shaw Algernon Joseph Yorke
1893—1895	do	James Charles Shaw William Sissmore Shaw Algernon Joseph Yorke Alexander Stuart Silver Paul
1896—1897	do	William Sissmore Shaw Algernon Joseph Yorke Alexander Stuart Silver Paul
1898	do	William Sissmore Shaw Algernon Joseph Yorke Alexander Stuart Silver Paul Austin Downes Jackson

1899	Parry & Co.	William Sissmore Shaw Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson Alec Macdonald
1900—1904	do	Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson Alec Macdonald
1905—1906	do	Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson
1907—1908	do	William Sissmore Shaw Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson Charles William Prest
1909	do	William Sissmore Shaw Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson
1910	do	Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson
1911	do	Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson Algernon George Batley
1912	do	Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson Algernon George Batley Joseph Cecil Armstrong
1913	do	Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson Algernon George Batley Joseph Cecil Armstrong Alec Fleming Buchanan
1914—1915	do	Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson Joseph Cecil Armstrong Alec Fleming Buchanan
1916	do	Algernon Joseph Yorke Austin Downes Jackson Joseph Cecil Armstong Alec Fleming Buchanan Charles Edgar Wood
1917—1918	do	Austin Downes Jackson Joseph Cecil Armstrong Alec Fleming Buchanan Charles Edgar Wood

APPENDIX III

1919—1921	Parry & Co.	Austin Downes Jackson Joseph Cecil Armstrong Alec Fleming Buchanan Charles Edgar Wood William Owen Wright
1922—1926	do	Joseph Cecil Armstrong Alec Fleming Buchanan Charles Edgar Wood William Owen Wright
1927	do	Alec Fleming Buchanan Charles Edgar Wood William Owen Wright
1928—1932	Parry & Co., Ltd.	Sir Edgar Wood William Owen Wright Gerald Hassal Hodgson Henry Douglas Stephens
1933—1934	do	William Owen Wright Gerald Hassal Hodgson Henry Douglas Stephens
1935—1936	do	Sir William Wright Gerald Hassal Hodgson Henry Douglas Stephens Colin Elphinston
1937—1939	do	Sir William Wright Gerald Hassal Hodgson Colin Elphinston Geoffrey Balfour Gourlay
1940	do	Sir William Wright Gerald Hassal Hodgson Colin Elphinston Geoffrey Balfour Gourlay Herbert Ison Wonfor Christopher Mainprice
1941—1943	do	Gerald Hassal Hodgson Colin Elphinston Geoffrey Balfour Gourlay Herbert Ison Wonfor Christopher Mainprice

1944—1945	Parry & Co., Ltd.	Sir Gerald Hodgson Colin Elphinston Geoffrey Balfour Gourlay Herbert Ison Wonfor Christopher Mainprice Thomas Geoffrey Armstrong Sydney George Hoult Davis
1946	do	Colin Elphinston Geoffrey Balfour Gourlay Herbert Ison Wonfor Christopher Mainprice Thomas Geoffrey Armstrong Sydney George Hoult Davis
1947	do	Geoffrey Balfour Gourlay Herbert Ison Wonfor Christopher Mainprice Thomas Geoffrey Armstrong Sydney George Hoult Davis James Halkett Hendrie Geoffrey Noel Noel-Tod Charles Derek Stuart Allerton
1948—1949	do	Herbert Ison Wonfor Christopher Mainprice Thomas Geoffrey Armstrong Sydney George Hoult Davis James Halkett Hendrie Geoffrey Noel Noel-Tod Charles Derek Stuart Allerton
1950—1952	do	Herbert Ison Wonfor Thomas Geoffrey Armstrong Sydney George Hoult Davis James Halkett Hendrie Geoffrey Noel Noel-Tod Charles Derek Stuart Allerton Philip Hadfield
1953	do	Herbert Ison Wonfor Thomas Geoffrey Armstrong Sydney George Hoult Davis James Halkett Hendrie Geoffrey Noel Noel-Tod Charles Derek Stuart Allerton Philip Hadfield Donald Solomon Gorer Maurice John Edwards

1954	Parry & Co., Ltd.	Sydney George Hoult Davis Geoffrey Noel Noel-Tod Charles Derek Stuart Allerton Philip Hadfield Donald Solomon Gorer Maurice John Edwards Norman Arthur Parkes

APPENDIX IV

PARRY'S UPS AND DOWNS

A Graph of Profit and Loss from 1820 to 1953

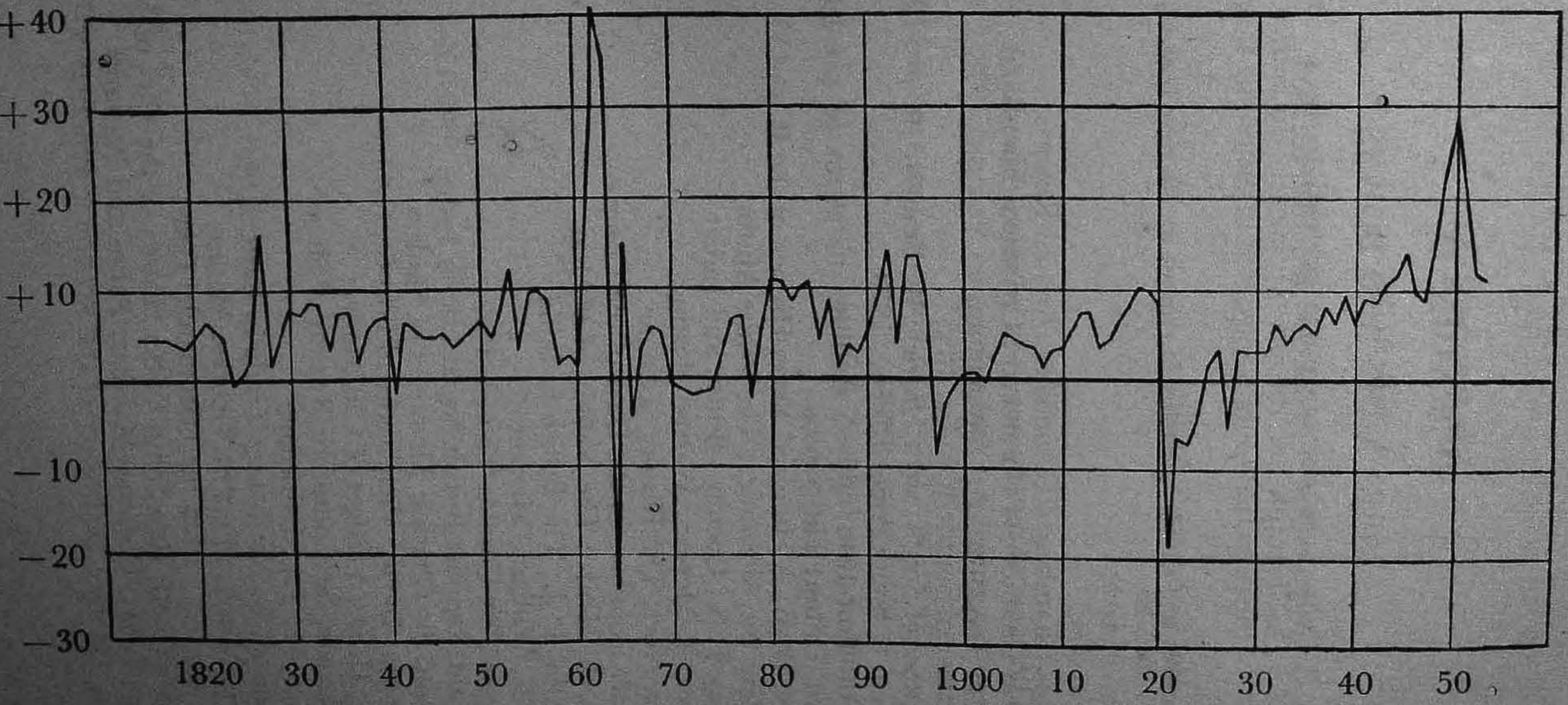
Figures are shown in lakhs of rupees at 10-year intervals.

The value of money has been equated thus:—

Pre-1914: £1 = 20 shillings

1914-1944: £1 = 10 shillings in terms of pre-1914 purchasing power

Post-1944: £1 = 5 shillings in terms of pre-1914 purchasing power


+40
+30
+20
+10
−10
−20
−30
1820
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
1900
10
20
30
40
50

APPENDIX V

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(This does not of course pretend to be a complete bibliography of the period; merely an indication of the principal sources consulted in compiling this book.)

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