

**A POLITICAL HISTORY OF
THE EXTRAORDINARY
EVENTS WHICH LED TO
THE BURMESE WAR**

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A Political History of the Extraordinary Events Which Led to the Burmese War by W. White

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TO

HIS MOST EXCELLENT AND GRACIOUS MAJESTY
GEORGE THE FOURTH.

SIRE,

THE blessings which your paternal government has procured to the nation are so many, that future historians alone will be able to appreciate them all. Indeed the facts of your having extended the power and reputation of your empire without neglecting the comforts of your subjects—the establishment of so many schools by which the light of knowledge is no longer withheld from the humble and the poor—the enlarged views that have been taken of commerce, &c. &c. would alone stamp the reign of your Majesty as the most fortunate epoch in the annals of Great Britain. But your Majesty has done more—you have extended to other nations the benefits which the subjects of

DEDICATION.

these realms derive from that state of independence and liberty—that freedom of thought and action—that protection and justice, which, possibly, is not enjoyed by the subjects of any other Monarch on the face of the earth.—Without your interference Europe and the world would still groan under the despotic sway of France—without your interference the Sovereigns of Europe would still have crouched before the despotism of *the French Ruler*.

Animated by these considerations, I have ventured to dedicate to your Majesty the following Work—in which I have endeavoured to expose the origin of the evils which do, and will press over a large portion of your subjects in India, unless your Majesty deigns to stretch your benevolent hand to redress their wrongs and better their condition. The greatest part of the events I have stated, have been witnessed by me—the others I have derived from incontrovertable authorities—and to ascertain the truth of the whole is a deed worthy of your powerful and benevolent hand. Would to God that in India they might share with your subjects at home the same blessings, the same comforts, the same security—would to

DEDICATION.

God that instead of being ruled by a set of men whose ideas of commerce renders them unfit to nourish or even to grasp at the enlarged and elevated views of a statesman, they should be governed by ministers chosen and appointed by your Majesty—accountable to your Majesty alone for their conduct, and receiving from your Majesty's Cabinet their necessary instructions to ensure the happiness and prosperity of the *hundred millions* of your subjects, who now feel no other advantage than the mere name of belonging to your Empire. You would find them, Sire, as brave and as loyal as any other portion of your subjects—and the gratitude they would feel for the happiness which you alone can procure to them—would become another source of satisfaction to your Majesty and of happiness to your people.

Such, Sire, are the aspirations of one of your Majesty's

Most devoted,

Most attached,

And most loyal Subjects,

London,

Jan. 1, 1827.

W. WHITE.

PREFACE.

THE happy termination of the late disastrous contest with the Burmese Power, although a subject for general congratulation, by no means should be permitted to draw the attention of the public and British legislature from the question of the causes which led to, and the propriety of the commencement of the War. The conclusion by no means supercedes the necessity of a rigid enquiry into the circumstances which led to the sacrifice of so much human life, the desolation of province after province, with all the attendant evils, and the expenditure of twelve millions of pounds sterling. It must be admitted that it is a subject that demands very grave and serious consideration. No success which the British arms may have acquired can render it a less important duty which the British nation owe to themselves, as well as mankind at large, to show that the war in its origin was just, and in its commencement proper. Much doubt has existed on these points: it is high time it was removed.

The impression which has endeavoured to be fixed on the minds of the public has been, that the Burmese were

PREFACE.

the *sole* aggressors—that the Government of India having long born insult and aggression without retaliation, and with great forbearance, were at length compelled to resort to arms in support or vindication of the honour of the British character—to repel invasion, to seek redress for past injuries, to obtain security for the future, and to establish a peace on a solid and permanent basis.

Such are the motives which have been stated by authority. But in the statements, both of a public and private nature, which have gone before the world, much has been said that ought to have been avoided; and much has been omitted which, for candour and justice sake, ought to have been told.

In the absence of a faithful narrative of the events which led to the war, the Author has been induced to venture upon the publication of the following Work; the facts being chiefly collected from the records of the Indian Government as presented to Parliament.

The Author from his early pursuits in the military profession, has had but little opportunity for literary pursuits—or the improvement of an education he was taken from while very young. This may be received by some as an excuse, and induce them to make allowances for the many inaccuracies and deficiencies which no doubt will be discovered.

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