

# The Visit of Czarevitch Nicholas Alexandrovitch to Lahore, January 1891

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## Introduction

The nineteenth century was a period of imperialist expansion. Powerful countries in Europe like Great Britain, Germany, and Russia recognized the potential of countries in the near and far East—potential for travel, for tourism, for the advancement of scientific knowledge, for trade, and perhaps most important of all, resources with which to fuel their own domestic economies.

The British came to India as equals and stayed as victors. By the 1840s, after having dominated most of the Indian peninsula, they turned westwards, annexing first Sindh in 1843, then extending into the Punjab following the First Anglo-Sikh war of 1845–46, and then with finality after Punjab's annexation in 1849. As one historian of the British Raj has put it, the subcontinent of India thereafter became 'a manageable entity, brought to order by British method; on the ground, first to last, it was a pungent virile and gigantic muddle, kept in hand by British bluff.'<sup>1</sup>

When the winter of 1845 began, the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh had been dead for less than ten years. The kingdom he had put together with stratagem and guile was left in the inept hands of his successors, each less memorable than the last. The army that he had so assiduously trained with the help of French mercenaries like General Jean Francois Allard and Charles Court, the artillery he had manufactured and assembled at his fort at Govindgarh, the cavalry that rode on horses many of whom he knew by name had all been pitted against the forces of the East India Company in a reckless challenge of misplaced bravado. The irascible Sikh darbar dared to do what the canny maharaja had avoided. It crossed the Sutlej river which served as the border between the Sikh empire and the incipient British one. Had the Sikh darbar read Roman history, they would have understood what the phrase 'crossing the Rubicon' meant. They crossed their own Rubicon, except that it resulted not in victory but

a humiliating defeat. The Sikh army had to return to its side of the river. With more impulsiveness than reason, the Sikh Khalsa fought the troops of the East India Company. Again, they lost. The Sikh kingdom of the Punjab forfeited both sovereignty and independence.

Before this debacle, in the early part of the nineteenth century, numerous British and European visitors had come to the Punjab to marvel at the court of the fabled Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the annexation of his kingdom in 1849, the subjects of their curiosity became Queen Victoria's loyal subjects.

Nothing typifies this more, for example, than an image that appeared in the *Illustrated London News* of the preparations for the visit of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1876. It shows local workmen lifting a crown to form the apex of their decorations. The caption ends with a condescending but telling pun: 'Supporting the Crown'. His and other such tours by British royalty were to become benign affirmations of an irreversible conquest—the clamp of a crested yoke that would not be lifted until 1947.

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Common to each of the narratives included in this volume is that they record participation in military campaigns or visits in pursuit of the picturesque. They fall into two groups. Six have been included under the heading 'Martial Curiosity'. They include the young Charles Hardinge who, in his early twenties, found himself fighting alongside his father the Governor General Henry Hardinge in the first Anglo-Sikh war of 1845–46. With him, riding by his side, was the slightly older Prince Waldemar of Prussia, who came to India to sight-see but instead fought as a combatant on the side of the British forces against the Sikhs (whom he hardly knew) at the three battles of Mudki, Ferozeshah, and Sobraon. The third—the reticent Dr Henry A Oldfield who preferred to speak with his brush and palette—came to the Punjab as part of the British force that occupied it after the unequal treaty of 1846. The fourth is the most prolific of them all—the professional illustrator William Simpson, who travelled to India

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Morris, *Stones of Empire: The Buildings of the Raj* (Oxford University Press 1983).

three times in the 20 years between 1860 and 1879. Alfred Harcourt, a military officer, spent a short time in the Punjab in the 1870s. Few paintings by him of the Punjab have survived. He was more active in the Himalayan state of Kulu where he spent the final years of his career and is now better known for his book on Kulu. The last in this group is the American artist, Edwin Lord Weeks. An orientalist by training, Weeks came to India in the 1890s to sketch and paint. He added a touch of spice to whatever he saw, and where colour existed already in profusion—for example, on the walls and minarets of the Wazir Khan Mosque in Lahore—he felt inordinately inspired. He made as at least six (if not more) views of this mosque and its environs, and also some vignette portraits of the local tradesmen who eked a living in the shadow of the mosque's minarets.

The second group in this volume are four visitors, shaded under the royal umbrella of 'Imperial Curiosity', Three are members of the British royal family: Prince Albert Edward of Wales, who visited in 1876; his eldest son Prince Albert Victor, who toured in 1890–91; and Prince George and Princess Mary of Wales, who spent seven months travelling across India and Burma in 1905–06.<sup>2</sup> The fourth royal visitor was a Russian Romanov—the Czarevitch Nicholas Alexandrovitch. He was related to the British royal family through his mother the Empress Maria Feodorovna, who was the younger sister of Princess Alexandra of Wales. That made him a first cousin to Prince George of Wales. In time, Nicholas would marry another Alexandra, of Hesse-Darmstadt, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria.

These royal visits or tours were more than sight-seeing expeditions. They had a serious political purpose—the affirmation of empire. At a personal level it was educational—to broaden the minds of hot-house reared royals.

To provide a permanent textbook for their successors, royals ensured that an official would be included in the entourage. He would maintain a record of their journeys and the numerous activities the royals were called upon to perform. Prince Albert Edward employed WH Russell; Prince Albert Victor had JD Rees; Czarevitch Nicholas took with him Count Ookhtomsky; and Prince George and Princess Mary relied upon the services of Sir Stanley Reed. Each served as a Herodotus of these royal journeys.

Prince George and Princess Mary preferred to be their own Herodotuses. Habitual diarists, they maintained a personal record of their daily doings. She in particular assembled at least 29 albums containing photographs, mementoes, and ephemera such as timetables of the royal train, banquet menus, etc. Anything that would remind them of a visit they wished never to forget.

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This book is admittedly selective. Its scope is limited. It deals with only nine visits by those who had an imperial or martial curiosity about the areas that constitute modern Pakistan. A feature common to all of them, though, is that they provide a pictorial record of their travels in this part of an undivided subcontinent. There were of course, thousands of others who may have left diaries, letters, sketches or photographs of their sojourn here. To have attempted to retrieve them or even some of them would have required a Leviathan force, akin to a whale scooping up a shoal of krill.

When approaching the assembly of a collage like this, one is reminded of the advice given by a writer to authors who struggle to make their

<sup>2</sup> Burma was still a British colony. After 1937 it became a British Dominion.

books as comprehensive as possible: 'Writing a book is the art of the possible.' During the COVID-19 lockdown, mobility has been necessarily restricted. Such forced incarceration has been compensated, however, by the enormous range of material available on the internet. The age of internet has made the inconceivable possible. At the click of a cursor, out of print books are available online in PDF versions. It is such a pleasure to enjoy, from the comfort of one's own armchair, leafing through Prince Waldemar's sumptuous set of lithographs, or to flip the pages of out-of-print works by WH Russell, JD Rees, Count Ookhtomsky, William Simpson, or Edwin Lord Weeks.

I realise that the very title of this book has imperial connotations which are no longer fashionable. The Raj is out of season. The objective of this book is not to defend imperialism or to provoke anti-imperial resentments. There are many others who have done that already, with sterile passion. The narratives assembled here are primarily to recall the impressions created in the minds of visitors to this part of the world, to our part of the subcontinent. It is at the same time to pay tribute to those who wrote or painted for their time, for posterity, and for us.

One hopes that these words and images recreate an age which can never return, nor be relived for whatever reasons. They do, however, provide a priceless record of a world that once existed—a world of historic sights not yet vandalised by hoardings or electricity poles, of bejewelled rajas and regalia-laden maharajas, of courtiers to whom protocol was a parallel religion, of banquets for hundreds who vied for the privilege to appear in full dress, of liveried staff who had no other vocation than dedicated service, of caparisoned elephants with sumptuous howdahs, of hunts in the wild (no visit was considered complete without at least one big game trophy), and of royal trains that followed the timetable to the minute.

That age for better or for worse has gone. What remains of it is the residue of memory, images of a martial and imperial curiosity that relives through these pages.

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Czarevitch Nicholas Alexandrovitch's visit to Lahore in January 1891 followed the pattern of his British royal relations Prince Albert Edward (later King Edward VII) in 1876 and the short-lived Prince Albert Victor of Wales in 1890.

In 1890, Czarevitch Nicholas (1868–1918),<sup>3</sup> as heir to his father Czar Alexander III,<sup>4</sup> was deputed to tour the East. After Peter the Great's seminal visit to Europe in 1698, travel for educational purposes became a part of the imperial Romanov curriculum. Nicholas left Russia on 4 November 1890 and spent the next six months until May 1891 travelling across Egypt, India, Ceylon, and Japan. He returned to St Petersburg on 16 August 1891, via Vladivostok where he laid the foundation stone of the Trans-Siberian railway line that would connect Vladivostok to Moscow, over 9,000 kilometres away.

For companionship, he took with him his younger brother George<sup>5</sup> and his cousin Prince George of Greece.<sup>6</sup> 'Greek' George would

<sup>3</sup> Later Czar Nicholas II (r 1894–1918).

<sup>4</sup> Czar Alexander Alexandrovitch (b 1845, r 1881–94).

<sup>5</sup> Grand Duke George Alexandrovitch (1871–99). He returned midway during the tour from India to Athens where he was diagnosed with bronchitis. He died at the early age of 28.

<sup>6</sup> Prince George of Greece and Denmark (1869–1957) was the second son of King George I of Greece. He helped save the life of Czarevitch Nicholas during an attack on Nicholas near Kyoto (Japan) in August 1891.



Fig 1. Czarevitch Nicholas at the age of 22 years, at the time of his tour.



Fig 2. Czarevitch Nicholas, his cousin Prince George of Greece (both in white), and their party in India. Prince Esper Ookhtomsky stands second on the right in the back row. RCIN 1142852.



Fig 3. Prince Esper Ookhtomsky, who wrote the account of the Czarevitch's tour.

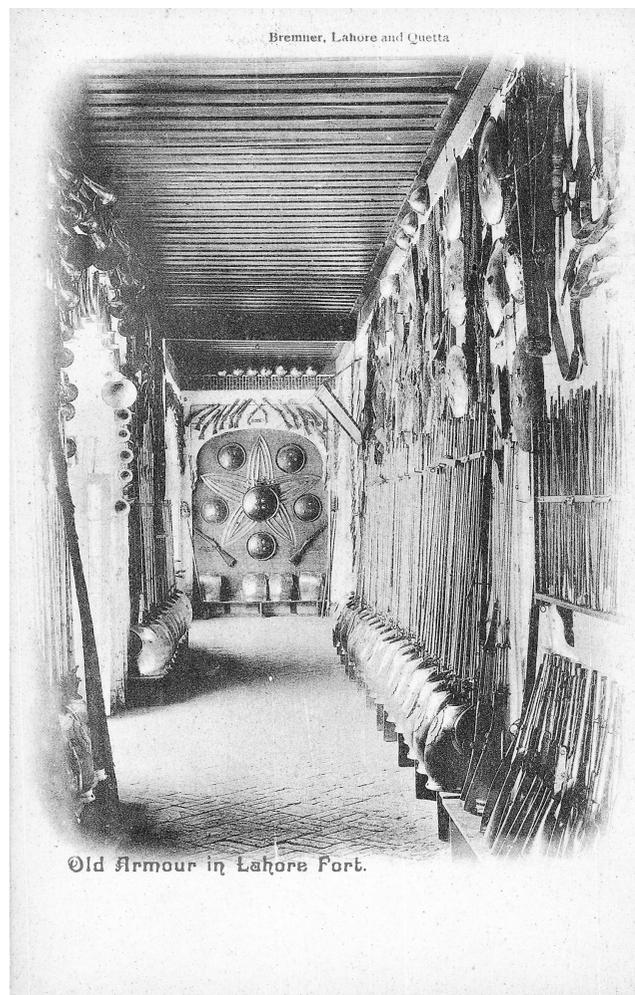


Fig 4. The arms display, Shish Mahal, Lahore Fort. Postcard from a photograph by Fred Bremner.

later save Nicholas's life during an attack on him near Kyoto (Japan) on 11 May 1891. The Imperial party landed at Bombay [Mumbai] on 23 December 1890. From there, they travelled up country via Ahmedabad, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Alwar, Delhi, and then Lahore. After a 48-hour stay at Lahore (1–3 January 1891), they returned eastwards, sightseeing in Amritsar, travelling along the Ganges, down to South India, and then to Ceylon.

The Czarevitch's entourage included Prince Esper Ookhtomsky [Ukhtomsky], the man who would chronicle the entire tour. Nicholas took a liking to him, describing him as 'such a jolly fellow'. After their return to Russia, Ookhtomsky spent six years finalising his book on the tour, published under the title *Travels in the East of Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia, when Cesarewitch, 1890–1891*. It appeared in three volumes between 1893 and 1897.

Although Nicholas became Czar in 1894, he took a keen interest in the book and personally approved each chapter. An opening observation by Ookhtomsky one can regard reasonably as being Nicholas's own sentiments expressed through his scribe's pen:

Nothing gives so much breadth to the intellectual horizon, nothing has so much influence on the character, as immediate and living contact with the life of other lands; and what marvellous and scenes awaited the Imperial traveller! All the past life of humanity is bound up with them. All that ever gave wings to the human spirit is preserved to the present day in their antique monuments, and discourses eloquently on the never-ceasing victory of reason and artistic creation over impersonal and formless matter. One may affirm, without exaggeration, that there is nothing worthy of note in Oriental sociology, religion, and architecture, from which His Imperial Highness, during his journey, did not carry away a clear and deeply instructive impression. The strange and mighty ideas which created and animated Egypt, Asia, and Greece, appeared at every step, in stone and speech, unshaken and unconquered by the chaos of the ages.

Nicholas had received instruction, as had most royalty of his generation, in painting. The rigorous programme of the tour with stops every second day precluded any opportunity of Nicholas finding the time to sketch. A painter whom Ookhtomsky identifies as 'N. N. Gritsenko,<sup>7</sup> water-colour painter, a pupil of Bogoliuboff's<sup>8</sup> was included as a member of the party. Unofficially, Vladimir Mendeleev—<sup>9</sup>a crew member of the Imperial Russian Navy cruiser *Pamiat Azova* (*Memory of Azov*)—took over 2,000 photographs during the tour. This may explain the extraordinary fidelity of the engravings Ookhtomsky used as illustrations in his published work.

It is clear that, however much Ookhtomsky might have gleaned during his stay in different places, the detailed information he included in his book was derived from the extensive reading he must have done after his return to Russia. His description of the various religious practices he sees—the Brahmins, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsees—are in faultless detail, too accurate to have been absorbed from chance notes taken on a trot. Take, for example, this observant account of the exhibition of wares brought

to the Czarevitch by the traders of Delhi. Ookhtomsky notices the miniatures painted on ivory:

Next, the miniatures on ivory deserve mention. The natives who carefully paint on it scenes and men of the age of the Moguls are the descendants of artists, who, at one time, worked at the Imperial court, and have inherited their art from their ancestors of three hundred years ago. There is but little demand now for such articles. Foreign travellers are unwilling to spend their money on trifles, which, for them, have no historical meaning, and, as the art of the master passes on from father to son, often being a trade and family secret, it is quite possible that some of these trades may soon become quite extinct in the absence of encouragement and purchasers.<sup>10</sup>

After a two-day stay in Delhi, the Czarevitch and his party left on 31 December by overnight train to Lahore. Prince E. Ookhtomsky's narrative of their sojourn in Lahore reads:

Tuesday, January, 1/13, 1891.

The Cesarewitch meets the New Year in the train, on his way to Lahore. Before the train left the station of Meerut (where the Mutiny of 1857 broke out, and the birthplace of most of our Mussulman servants—Raimbakas and others), the Russian suite, Sir Mackenzie Wallace,<sup>11</sup> and Hardinge<sup>12</sup> gathered in their Highnesses' saloon compartment, and here, glasses in hand, amidst the rattle of the wheels, offered their congratulations to the guests of H.M. the Queen-Empress. The night train rushes northward across the plains of the Punjab, bearing the Grand Duke to the land of the conquered Sikhs. Can there be any better proof of the mutual confidence of two mighty European nations, and of the peaceful disposition of Russia?<sup>13</sup>

Lahore at midday. The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John [James] Lyall,<sup>14</sup> the commander of the troops, Sir Hugh Gough, several Roman Catholic prelates, a number of officials and ladies, await H.I. Highness on the station platform, decked out with flags and wreaths, where a large guard of honour stands, furnished by the Wiltshire Regiment and the Punjab Volunteers.

Before entering his carriage, the Cesarewitch passes down the ranks of the guard, to the strains of the Russian anthem. The capital of the Punjab greets the arrival of the Grand Duke in the North-West of India with a salute

10 Esper Ukhtomsky, *Travels in the East of Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia, when Cesarewitch, 1890–1891*, vol 1 (George Birdwood ed, A Constable & Co 1896) 337.

11 Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace (1841–1919), a Russophile and author of *Russia* (1877). Seconded by the Viceroy in India as Political Officer to the Czarevitch for the duration of his tour of India. Ookhtomsky introduces Wallace as 'well known to us' and as the author of *Russia*, an able diplomatist, whilom [former] secretary to the former Viceroy of India, Lord Dufferin, and possessing a thorough knowledge of the Russian language.

12 Arthur H Hardinge (1859–1933), grandson of Sir Henry Hardinge. He had served in St Petersburg and spoke fluent Russian.

13 Interesting sentiments, given the ongoing Great Game between Russia and Great Britain.

14 Sir James Broadwood Lyall (1838–1916), then Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab (1887–92).

7 Nikolay Nikolayevich Gritsenko (1856–1900), a landscape artist. He joined the imperial party at Trieste.

8 Alexey Petrovich Bogolyubov (1824–96), skilled as landscape painter.

9 Son of the noted Russian scientist Dimitry Mendeleev (1834–1907), who reputedly introduced the metric system in Russia.

of twenty-one guns. The way to the fortress and thence to Government House is lined by Goorkhas and Sikhs, considered by the English themselves as one of the strongest bulwarks of British power in the land. The former come from Nepal: short, but sturdy and remarkably enduring, insanely daring and devoted to war, these mountaineers of Mongolian stock remind us Russians wonderfully of exactly similar types in the ranks of our army.

That remarkable ruler of the Sikhs, Runjeet Singh, some ninety years ago made use of the Goorkhas as splendid material for soldiers, and it was this same sovereign who (by the advice of French instructors, who had served under Bonaparte) formed his own countrymen into battalions, the former methods of warfare with bodies of light cavalry being justly acknowledged to be obsolete and unpractical, when the steadiness of the Punjab foot-soldier in the ranks came to be known.

The British administrators only took advantage of these ideas, and of other men's experience, when they began to enlist excellent soldiers, in larger and larger numbers, from among the native population.

Lahore, of course, is picturesque enough with its Oriental colouring, but to say anything special about it in our series of descriptions of different Asiatic cities is somewhat difficult, unless we note that the streets are narrow, while the lanes seem to be simply an impassable wilderness. The inhabitants are identical with our Trans-Caspian natives and Sarts [Uighurs], and, as one moves through the Black Town, one might well fancy oneself back in one's native land. And how, indeed, are the townsfolk, among whom one often sees the characteristic figures of Bokhara merchants and Turcomen, not to resemble the people of our Central Asia? Since Lahore (or rather Lohawar, the Sanscrit Lohawarana) was founded, according to tradition, by Loha, the son of Rama, a current of Iranian and Turanian racial influence and culture has been steadily flowing, for ages, through the Punjab into India. Is there anything wonderful, then, in the visible results of this tide of foreign Turanian life, which, it may be remarked, acted at that time with equal force upon Russia?

The 'palace of mirrors' (Shishmahal), founded here under the Moguls, and still retaining its interest in the days of Runjeet Singh, that wise leader of the Sikh communities, dissociated, yet so powerful when united, is now deserted. Some two or three generations ago Southern Afghanistan trembled before this sovereign, Cashmere did homage to him, and the English, in all seriousness, sought for his friendship, hearing about a fantastic expedition, planned by Napoleon I and the Emperor Paul I against India.

In these gloomy halls the destinies of the Punjab hung for a short while in the balance. Far-seeing Brahmins and Mohammedans, the favourite counsellors of a Sikh sovereign, assisted him to carry out his clever foreign policy. Chief among them was the talented fakir, Aziz-

ud-deen,<sup>15</sup> a native of Bokhara, where members of his family are said to dwell to the present day.

Before the former royal palace is a small arsenal, where their Highnesses examine the helmets and the chain-mail, which were in use among the Punjabis at the end of the last century and even later. The eagles still remain on the cuirasses of the regiments which were trained by French generals (Allard, Ventura, and Court).<sup>16</sup> Little camel-guns are exhibited side by side with some relics regarded as sacred by the warlike natives, viz. the rhinoceros-hide shield and the sharp battle-axe of Govind Singh, the tenth and last guru (master, teacher) of the faithful Sikhs, who flourished about the end of the seventeenth century.

Next, the illustrious travellers descend from the upper platform of the citadel to a walled-in court, on the left side of which lies the tomb of Arjun,<sup>17</sup> another teacher of the Sikhs, who preached three hundred years ago, and was tortured to death here in prison, leaving to his countrymen the *Adi Granth*, a religious book of a very peculiar character. It seems to embody an ethical protest—which, from the days of Mahavira and Buddha, was always present in the Indian spirit against the claims of Brahminism, which drew a clearly marked line between the domains of religion and those of knowledge, in consequence of which, the people, burdened with ceremonies, but kept away from the 'springs of living water,' groaned under the yoke of caste prejudice and strict soulless laws, regulating their thoughts, their occupations, and their hopes. Daring reformers constantly sprang up (and still do so) among the sullen malcontents. Groups of followers gathered round them, and temporarily stood apart; but sooner or later the latter were inevitably reabsorbed into the majority, and sank in the flood of comparative indifference and blind devotion to the will of the ancient priesthood.

Kabir, Nanak, and many more passed through mediaeval India, preaching a fiery pantheism, expounded to the people in their native tongue. Arjun gathered into a uniform whole (written in the *Gurmukhi*) both his own mystical sayings and the deeply significant poetical fragments of his predecessors of the same school (among others, the *Adi Granth* contains the verses of two Maratha poets of the Dekkan).

The work of their guru took the Sikhs by storm. They saw in it a revelation from on high, surrounded the book and the precious copies taken of it with regal splendour, and even offered up divine honours to it.

We are taken into the mausoleum of Runjeet Singh, erected on the spot where his body was burnt. Its marble

<sup>15</sup> Fakir Azizuddin (1780–1845), a trusted adviser and diplomatic mouthpiece of the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780–1839).

<sup>16</sup> Jean-Francois Allard (1785–1839), a refugee from Napoleonic France who organised and trained dragoons and lancers for Ranjit Singh; Jean-Baptiste Ventura (1794–1858), an Italian mercenary who served at the Sikh court of Lahore from 1822 until 1843; and Claude Auguste Court (1793–1880), a French artillery officer who served under Napoleon and later at the Sikh court of Lahore from 1827 to 1843.

<sup>17</sup> Guru Arjan (1563–1606) was the fifth of the Sikh Gurus.

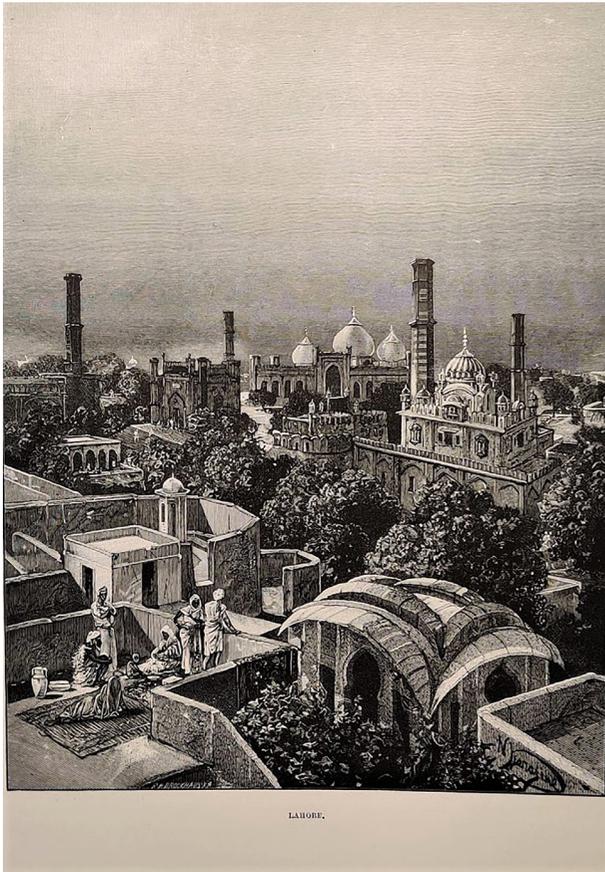


Fig 5. A view from the roof of the Shish Mahal of the Badshahi Mosque, commissioned by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and completed in 1673–74. On the right is the white samadhi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, built over 10 years from 1839 until 1849. Ukhomsky (n 10) 341.

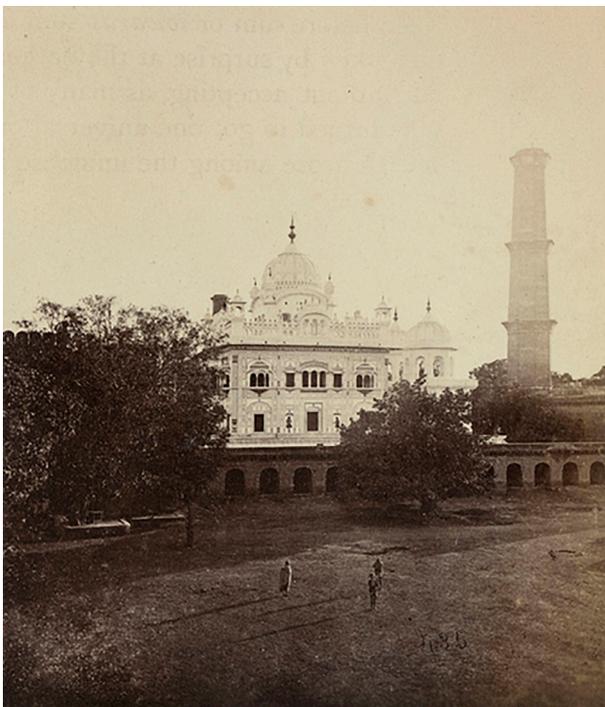


Fig 6. The samadhi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, completed in 1849. Photograph: Bourne & Shepherd, 1876.

arches do not impart a trace of beauty to this sullen building, where, on a raised platform of stone (opposite the entrance) lies a covered slab, on which (as we are told) twelve lotuses are represented, signifying that beneath it lie the ashes of the king himself and of eleven women who mounted the funeral pyre with his body (fig 6).

Here, also, on an unsightly couch, lies the Adi Granth, carefully wrapped up in a cloth. The porter drives the flies off it with a fan. Three Sikh divines, sitting on the floor, chant a gloomy, warlike hymn to the strains of melancholy music. But one's attention is absorbed, not by the surroundings, but by the palpable fact that, on this very spot, some fifty years ago, several human beings in the prime of their life became the victims of a terrible fate. The satis of Runjeet Singh did not die with their lord of their own free will. Soldiers dragged them from the palace to his body, roughly denuded them of their ornaments, tore the rings of gold from their nostrils, and brutally forced the unfortunate creatures into the flames.

There was literally nothing here to recall the courage of the Rajpoot heroines, who voluntarily followed their adored husbands into another world. Those were worthy of admiration, not of pity. Each of them was a personified aspiration to the heaven of Indra and the pagan realms of bliss.

Dying fearlessly as they did, the widows of the great rajahs seemed to bathe in the flames, 'As sinful gods in the sacred lakes of Thibet.'

After a full day of sight-seeing, Nicholas and his party were taken the following day for a shoot at a forest in Changa Manga. Reading between the lines of Oukhtomsky's account of the expedition, it must have been a tame battue after the more dramatic shoots a week earlier when, on 23 December, at Jodhpur Nicholas shot wild boar and at Jaipur bagged his first tiger.

Wednesday, January 2/14.

The day is devoted to a fatiguing excursion to Changa-Manga, some fifty-two miles from Lahore. The party goes another shooting expedition on elephants into a jungle swarming with game, large and small. The wise beasts make their way even more cautiously than usual through the undergrowth and past rough places.

About 10 p.m., after dining at the Lieutenant-Governor's, whose residence is a former Mussulman mausoleum adapted for a dwelling-house,<sup>18</sup> the illustrious travellers proceeded to Montgomery Hall, a large building erected in memory of a well-known administrator of the Punjab,<sup>19</sup> and intended for meetings of an official character. A number of richly attired rajahs and natives stand in groups in the fine, brilliantly illuminated hall. Some of them are presented to H.I. Highness, who is received with the strains of the Russian anthem. The most prominent among the native chiefs is the chief of the

<sup>18</sup> Formerly the tomb of Muhammad Qasim Khan, a contemporary of the Mughal emperor Akbar.

<sup>19</sup> Sir Robert Montgomery (1809–87), Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab (1859–65).



Fig 7. A hunt at Changa Manga forest, near Lahore. Plate in Ukhtomsky (n 10) 344.

Kapurtala district, who, for services rendered to the British authorities, rules over nearly half a million subjects.

We are to witness the wild Afghan 'Khattak' dance. The open air is both damp and cold. A lawn is set apart in the gardens, with a fire burning in the midst: a number of stern, bearded soldiers of the Afridi tribe, armed with sharp swords, form round it in a circle of demoniacal figures, slowly revolving with their glittering weapons. They burst into shouts as the dance grows wilder; the blades shine and whirl with exceeding swiftness in the strange purple gloom. There is much in this unique picture to remind us of our far-off home in the North.

Ookhtomsky's account of the Czarevitch's visit to Lahore concludes:

In the morning [3 January 1891] the illustrious travellers leave Lahore, accompanied by Sir John Lyall and Sir Hugh Gough, a salute being fired at their departure. At 11 p.m. they arrive at the station of Amritsar.

The Czarevitch's tour of the East was cut short after the assassination attempt made on him by a Japanese security guard near Kyoto in August 1891. His parents recalled him. He was reunited with them at Krasnoye Selo (near St Petersburg). After an exhausting journey in which he covered 51,000 kilometres, following a pre-determined schedule, and having slept in innumerable beds of varying comfort, he confided to his diary: 'Strange not to have to



Fig 8. Montgomery Hall, Lahore. Photograph: Bourne & Shepherd, 1876. From the album presented to Alexandra, Princess of Wales, by her husband Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, at Sandringham, Christmas 1876. RCT: RCIN 2114142.



Fig 9. Pathan sword dance before Prince Albert Victor of Wales at the Cavalry Camp, Muridke (woodcut engraving). The Illustrated London News (8 March 1890) 96(2655).

go anywhere or have any more night lodgings with late arrivals and early departures'.<sup>20</sup>

In October 1894, Nicholas succeeded his father as Czar of All the Russias. In the same year, he married Princess Alexandra of Hesse-Darmstadt (a granddaughter of Queen Victoria). During his 23 year-long reign, Nicholas, well-intentioned but weak, proved incapable of managing his vast country. After the Bolshevik revolution deposed him in 1917, he and Alexandra and their five children were murdered on 17 July 1918 at Yekaterinburg. In 2015, their remains were traced and unearthed. They have been reburied in St Petersburg's Peter and Paul Cathedral.

After the revolution, Ookhtomsky's extensive collection of Oriental artefacts were confiscated by the Bolsheviks and dispersed among various museums. It forms the core of the East Asia holdings in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Ookhtomsky died in comparative obscurity in 1921.

<sup>20</sup>Edvard Radzinsky, *The Last Tsar: the life and death of Nicholas II* (Marian Schwartz tr, Hodder & Stoughton 1992) 31.