

THE
POLITICAL PROSPECTS
OF
BRITISH INDIA.



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IN writing upon India, two qualifications are essential to success—an acquaintance with the people of that country, and a familiarity with the tastes, feelings, and prejudices of the reading public in England. The former may ensure accuracy, but by the latter alone can even a patient hearing, much less popularity, be expected. Wonderfully correct as are the remarks of Bishop Heber, considering his opportunities, his Journal owes its extensive circulation mainly to the elegant, yet thoroughly English-minded, tone in which it is written; while the late Colonel Sleeman's published account of his own "Rambles" as an "Indian Official," though replete with much more curious information than the accomplished Bishop could possibly collect, is hardly known even by name, because the writer, from long residence among those whom he describes, was wanting in knowledge of those whom he sought to address. Though India is no longer the stranger-land it was when the works just cited appeared, there is still the same distinction to be observed between the classes who, either by public speaking or writing, undertake to treat of its concerns, and there is still, as formerly, room to regret that the most knowledge generally resides with those who are least gifted with the art of arresting the public attention. No man really acquainted with the people of Upper India can open a newspaper without groaning in spirit to observe the winning fluency of language which is made the vehicle of the most enormous misstatements, and this feeling is often aggravated by a consciousness of his own inability, even with

truth at his back, to cope with error armed with this power of words.

Still it seems almost like shrinking from a duty, for one who has taken an active part in the government of our Indian Empire, to refrain, at such a crisis as the present, from at least attempting to impart some of the results of his experience to those who can have no practical knowledge on many points, the final decision on which is, nevertheless, certain to be influenced by their convictions.

At the present moment, it is fearful to look at the conflict of passions and prejudices through which our rulers will have to fight their way, ere they can arrive at a sound and safe decision on the course to be pursued, after the suppression of a mutiny which has given our power in the East the rudest shock it has ever yet had to sustain. Among ourselves, how many are the darling theories, speculations, and predictions, likely to be either imperilled or discredited by the final resolution, whatever it may be, to which those who have to regulate the future administration of our colossal dependency must eventually come! Among our Eastern subjects, at the same time, what a fierce medley of passions must be agitating the breasts of thousands of guilty, and millions of innocent, men of every grade and class, as they await the decree which is to fix their future fate! With the ever-benevolent, but sometimes self-sufficient, ardour of the British proselytizer, and the no less benevolent, and in no degree more diffident, zeal of the British utilitarian, on the one side; and the chronic, sullen fanaticism of the Moosulman, with the fitful but almost objectless fury of the Hindoo, on the other, there is a prospect of such an angry clashing as may render it difficult for the sober voice of reason to be heard. At such a season, it is to be hoped that, reckless of the past as the present age in general is, it may be permitted, in groping our way to the future, to avail ourselves of the guidance of the views and sentiments of one of those leading men of former days, to whom we owe it that we have such an empire to legislate for. The lately published "Life of Sir John Malcolm" supplies exactly what is wanted.

Malcolm may, indeed, be taken as one of the best specimens

of the good Sepoy officer. He was, it is true, from an early period of his career, continually employed in high political posts, separating him in some measure from the Madras army, to which he belonged; yet we are told by his biographer, "That the habits and feelings of a soldier clung to him throughout his career. Whatever might be his official environments, his heart was continually turning with a tender and sympathising interest to the single-poled tent of the subaltern officer, and the matted hut of the faithful Sepoy." In this readiness to sympathise, not only with "the faithful Sepoy," but with natives of every class, lay the secret of Malcolm's extraordinary success in winning the affections of all over whom he was placed in authority. Such sympathy, though an engine of wondrous potency in dealing with Asiatics, is, it may be feared, regarded by the cunning workmen of the present day as an implement too rude and simple for their handling. Instead of learning from the natives themselves, as Malcolm did, how to make them happy, we now-a-days undertake to teach them what they alone can thoroughly understand.

Our designs are doubtless benevolent, but they are carried out with so little consideration for the feelings of those to be affected by them, that, coming in the shape of inflicted blessings, they more often estrange than conciliate. Take, for example, the law not many years since passed by the Legislative Council in Calcutta, to permit the re-marriage of Hindoo widows. Abstractedly viewed, no enactment could be more just, but it was a direct infringement of that tacit compact, not to meddle with the social relations of the people, in virtue of which we had ruled with ease and profit to ourselves for a whole century. Those who advocated this measure doubtless laid much stress on the precedent of the Suttce, abolished in 1829, without any of the evils predicted having ensued. But the cases were not parallel. The Suttce was an outrage on the feelings of humanity, and even worldly morality called for its suppression. Its abolition was preceded by a long discussion, in which many intelligent Hindoos argued in favour of the proposed prohibitory enactment. Thus we had a party amongst the Hindoos themselves, and the whole of our Mahomedan subjects on our side ;

and thus it was that this great measure was carried through without any strenuous opposition, or even distinctly marked discontent. A great moral triumph was thus achieved; and it had been well, perhaps, if, contented with this success, we had refrained from any similar act of direct legislative interference for a century. The Widows' Re-marriage Bill, to use an English Parliamentary phrase, was directed against a purely private evil, and of the working of which natives alone could judge, for the most experienced amongst ourselves know little or nothing of them in their domestic sphere. We have only to figure to ourselves what our feelings would be, if a conqueror, obtaining sway in Great Britain, were to pass a law removing the restraints at present imposed by our creed and code on the number of wives to be lawfully wedded by each man, and we may form an idea of the shock given to the feelings of our Indian subjects by this indication of a disposition to let our legislation trespass upon points not to be alluded to, even in conversation, without a violation of Eastern ideas of decorum.

In the present state of our information respecting the movement still in progress among those who constituted the flower of our native army, we can only speculate on its source and origin; but it is probable that, when the whole truth shall be disclosed, it will be found that it was to this very re-marriage enactment,* and other analogous measures, that those pointed who wished to work upon the religious feelings of the Sepoy, and stir him up to acts of sudden and murderous mutiny. Who those instigators were, whether a Brahminical conclave in Bengal, or a Mahommedan cabal at Delhi, Lucknow, or Calcutta, matters little, all that is here argued for being, that in this instance our own legislation has probably furnished them with a weapon of offence against ourselves.

Among the various reasons assigned for the recent revolt,

* The following passage in a letter, dated 12th May, and given to us with the sadly consolatory intimation that the lady who wrote it died at Cawnpore before the massacre, is strongly confirmatory of the opinion stated in the text. "They, the natives have an idea that the Government are trying to convert them to Christianity, and what with the mistake of the cartridges being greased with cow's fat, and this new law allowing Hindoo widows to marry, *which I think has a great deal to do with it*, they are frantic about it."

none is more frequently dwelt upon than the scanty and defective officering of native battalions, in consequence of the number of military men who are employed in the political and civil departments. The practice of thus draining the army of its cleverest members has certainly been carried too far, but it was the encouragement afforded by the prospect of such advancement that made Malcolm and others what they were, by stimulating them to qualify themselves for the highest political offices. The evil, too, it must be remembered, is not one inherent in the system, but might at any time have been corrected by each successive Governor-General, if he had perceived the mischief now alleged to have thence resulted.

But, in truth, no Indian ruler, when he wants aid in the management of a newly-acquired territory, can resist the temptation to employ the fittest available person he can find, and this will generally be a military man, because the Civil Service has few hands to spare from the duties of the original settled provinces of our empire. No man in this way did the thing against which he wrote more than the late Sir C. Napier, who not only drew military men from their regiments to act in civil capacities, but drove away six of the ablest civilians who were sent to his assistance in Scinde. The practice, if it be an evil, is only one of the many attendant on the too-rapid growth of our empire, and it would probably be best corrected, not by debarring young military men from all hope of political promotion, and so preventing the development of much latent talent, but by rendering the command of a battalion so lucrative and attractive, as to induce the juniors to remain with their regiments, in the hope of attaining to that post.

But it is not so much on the number, as on the character and capacity, of the English officers present with a Sepoy battalion, that its efficiency depends. In former times, when the attachment between them was at its height, the officers were, we believe, fewer in proportion to their men than they are now; but then they were almost all good colloquial linguists, or in the way of becoming so; and though somewhat wanting in the graces of European society, had obtained an insight into the social system of Asiatic life, such as their more accomplished

successors seem to think it beneath them to acquire. The Sepoy officer of the present day, equal to his predecessor in courage and conduct in the field, and generally his superior in book-knowledge, in manners, and perhaps in morals, falls far short of him in point of real acquaintance with those under his command.

This defect, though in some degree imputable to the system which makes escape from his regiment the great object of every young officer's ambition, is still mainly attributable to the increased facilities of intercourse with England.

Young men who are frequently refreshing their acquaintance with their mother-country cannot settle down to India as their home, in the same way as was done in the bygone days, ere steam was known, and a return to England was looked forward to as a remote and barely-possible contingency.

Tastes acquired in Europe do not readily conform to exclusively Asiatic pursuits; the native nautch is more than insipid when the opera lives in recent recollection; and thus there is no community, even of amusement, to bring the European and the native officers into something like social intercourse with each other. It is impossible here to conceal the fact, that the increased number of our fair countrywomen in the East has probably made the separation between those classes wider than it was before. It is alleged, we know not with what truth, but it is alleged by natives, that their best friends among European functionaries are lost to them from the moment of their marriage; and they generally impute the colder reception they meet with at any but business hours to the influence of the lady of the house.

It would be easy to fill many pages with instances of the friendly feeling that formerly subsisted between English officers and Sepoys of every grade, and also between the latter and the common European soldiery, classes apparently dissociable by nature; but it is enough to draw attention to the following incident in Malcolm's life, in order to show how enduring may be the recollection of kindness in the minds of men of the same class as those whose enormities of ingratitude, as well as cruelty, we are now deploring.

The first great opening stroke of Lord Wellesley's brilliant policy, in 1798, was the dispersion at Hyderabad, in the Deccan, of a force under French officers in the pay of the Nizam. In this hazardous enterprise, Malcolm, as Assistant to the Resident, bore a conspicuous part. After the terms for their surrender had been settled, the lives of the French officers were placed in jeopardy by a mutiny among the native soldiers recently under their command. Malcolm was despatched to calm the tumult, but soon became himself involved in the same peril with those whom he came to rescue. His escape is thus described by Mr. Kaye:—"Among the crowd of mutineers were some men who had formerly belonged to Malcolm's company, in the 29th battalion, but had deserted to the French corps. They now recognised their old officer, and went at once to his assistance. He had been kind to them in former days, and they had not forgotten his kindness. Lifting him up, and bearing him away on their heads, they rescued him from the hands of the infuriated mob."

While contrasting this little anecdote with the terrible tales brought by each successive mail, it is difficult so to divest ourselves of the partialities of nation and race, as to be able to decide fairly on the question of who is changed, ourselves, or those over whom our sway has hitherto rested, on moral influence rather than on superior physical force? The probability arising out of our own progressive nature, and the stationary character of the Asiatic, is turned into certainty by our knowledge of what has lately been going on among our Indian rulers, both at home and abroad; and we must pronounce that it is *we* who are not what we were. A perception of this fact is indicated in the question said to be asked by natives, "Whether the English gentlemen of the present day are of the same caste as those of former times?" It is more distinctly shown in the following extract from the pamphlet of the late Mr. Francis Horsley Robinson, of the Bengal Civil Service, published in the year 1855. Having been officially compelled to make a communication to an old retired officer of Gardiner's Irregular Horse, and to a Mahomedan of rank, calculated to hurt the religious feelings of both, Mr. Robinson thus describes what followed:—

"I shall never forget the looks of mortification, anger, and, at first, of incredulity, with which this announcement was received by both, nor the bitter irony with which the old Russuldar remarked, that no doubt the wisdom of the *new gentlemen* (Sahibilogue, so they designate the English) had shown them the folly and ignorance of the gentlemen of the old time, on whom it pleased God, nevertheless, to bestow the government of India."—(Page 17)

But it is needless to cite authorities in support of what, so far from being denied, is with all of us more or less a subject of congratulation. That there was much room for improvement in the manners and morals of the Anglo-Indian community of former days, must be admitted even by those who regret that this improvement has not come unmingled with a certain unwinning bearing, in English functionaries of every grade, towards all natives but those who evince a disposition to Europeanize.

Our regimental officers, not being exempt from this change, it may be doubted whether an increase to their number would have abated the evil of scanty intercourse between them and the native soldiery; and it certainly would have added little to their general efficiency, under a system of centralisation calculated to lessen their influence and deaden their zeal. The conclusion to be drawn from what has just been stated is, that it is not by the inadequate officering of our army that the pending mutiny has been provoked, and, on general grounds, it may be asserted that such a cause is totally insufficient to account for the event. Insubordination in a battalion or two might thus be brought about, but it seems absurd to suppose that a large body of men would throw away pay, promotion, pension, and rush into frantic excesses, through mere disgust at the incompetency of their leaders. Such incompetency may further their ends, when revolt has been resolved on, but it requires some more stirring motive to engender the spirit to give birth to so desperate a movement.

Annexation, and consequent extension of our direct dominion, comes next in the list of causes assigned for this revolt. Whether such extension be matter for praise or blame, it is

desirable at the outset to make it clear to whose account it ought to be charged

An examination of the various blue-books published since the year 1838 will show, that it is from Downing Street that the policy of extension has of late years, in almost every instance, emanated. The prophetic protest of the Chairman of the Court of Directors, the late Mr. St. George Tucker, against the invasion of Afghanistan is on record; and we know that some, who ought to have studied it before, could hardly, when they did peruse that able document, bring themselves to believe that it was not written after the event. The questionable sequel to that unhappy war, the seizure of Scinde, was, we all know, condemned by the same Court. The conquest of the Punjaub, to be sure, was forced upon us by circumstances, and of that even the natives do not complain. On the three remaining Indian annexations (for Pegu falls not within the limits of India) carried through by the late Government of our Eastern Empire, what judgment was pronounced by the Court of Directors is uncertain; but it is well known that each of these steps has been taken in direct opposition to the declared opinion of some one or other of their ablest servants in India *

On the whole, then, it may be assumed that Her Majesty's Ministers, and not the Court of Directors, are the authors of that annexation-policy alleged by some to be one main cause of the prevailing disorder.

A remark of Lord Metcalfe's, made in the hearing of the author, in the year 1835, deserves to be here recorded. When an opinion was expressed in favour of sending some slight aid to Dost Moohammed, the then reigning and friendly chief of Afghanistan, Lord Metcalfe's reply was: "Depend upon it, that the surest way to bring Russia upon ourselves is, for us to cross

* The extent and population of each of the three provinces thus annexed may be roughly stated as follows —

Benar, in Central India, is 70,000 square miles in extent, with a population of 3,000,000.

Satara in the south-west, 14,000 square miles in extent, with a population of 1,500,000

Oude, on the north east, 20,000 square miles in extent, with a population of 3,000,000

the Indus." Had the East India Company and its servants been allowed at that juncture to rule the country, for which the British public persist in holding them responsible, it is pretty clear, from what has just been stated, that the war in Afghanistan, and all its humbling and damaging consequences, would have been avoided. That the since-ensuing annexations would, in that case, have all of them been avoided, cannot be confidently asserted; but thus much is clear, that in the plunge made in the Afghan affair our Government seemed to get rid of all those scruples about the rights of others, and strict adherence to agreements, which sufficed to hamper such weak politicians as Wellington and Malcolm in dealing with the native princes of their day.

While these two men of a former age were engaged together in settling terms of peace with the beaten Mahattas, a question arose as to whether the important fortress of Gwahior should belong to us or to Scindiah. The Governor-General, Lord Wellesley, was for keeping; his illustrious brother, and Malcolm, for resigning it to Scindiah. In a letter to a private friend on the subject, Malcolm argued that the mere fact of doubt existing ought to decide the case in favour of the weaker party; "For," he wrote, "if we decide a case of disputable nature in our own favour, because we have power, we shall give a blow to our faith that will, in my opinion, be more injurious to our interests than the loss of fifty provinces. What has taken us through this last war with such unexampled success? First, no doubt, the gallantry of our armies, but, secondly, and hardly secondly, our reputation for good faith." In the same strain his glorious colleague, then plain Arthur Wellesley, writes on the same subject. "I would sacrifice Gwahior, or every other frontier of India, ten times over, in order to preserve our credit for scrupulous good faith. What brought me through many difficulties in the war, and the negotiations of peace? The British good faith, and nothing else."

The wisdom evinced in these sentences, written by two of our most distinguished countrymen more than fifty years since, receives a most mortifying confirmation from the following lines, penned in the English language by a most intelligent Brahmin,

on the 23rd of June last, at Indore, the capital of Holkar's dominions, in Central India:—"There can be no doubt that much of the disturbance owes its rise to the bad name our Government have lately acquired through annexations. People don't keep it a secret now, and say that our Government has become faithless ('be-cceman'), and none but the mercantile community would be glad to see order restored. I was glad to know from your kind favour that they did not warmly wish for annexation in England. This is good, but how one can believe what is in one's mind when the act is against it? Why were the measures carried? Indeed, *the* annexation-policy has done the Government of India a harm which will not be easily repaired."

Passing from the question of the value of a reputation for good faith, it may be interesting to view the contrasted opinions of two high authorities, equally remote from each other in point of time, on the subject of annexation. Sir John Malcolm, in a letter to a friend, about the year 1818, thus expresses himself on that most important question:—"The native governments are abused as intolerably bad. Why, even in this view, the very contrast of their government with ours is strength. Make all India into zillas (civil districts), and I will assert that it is not in the order of things, considering the new sentiments that must be infused—the operation (unchecked by comparison) of that dislike to rule which all human beings have, and that depression and exclusion from all high rank and fame, civil or military, of more than a crore (million) of men, which must be the consequence of the establishment of our direct authority, that our empire should last fifty years; but if we can contrive to keep up a number of native states without political power, but as royal instruments, we shall, I believe, exist in India as long as we can maintain our naval superiority in Europe: beyond this date it is impossible. But, on the other hand, while we have that superiority, no European power, not even the redoubted Russians, can shake our Eastern throne, if we have wisdom enough (which I doubt) not to destroy ourselves."*

* Kaye's "*Life of Malcolm*," vol. 1 p. 271.

Thus wrote the soldier-statesman of the beginning of this century. Let us now see how the same subject is treated by an Editor of the present day, whose very clever paper, "The Friend of India," was not long since reputed to be the organ of the Supreme Government in Calcutta.—"The policy of annexation may be considered secure. One by one its opponents convinced, or otherwise confess by their silence, that they are logically defunct. The dreamers who feared that the empire would be weakened by extension, and the Orientalists who believed native governments better than civilised rule, are already, for practical politics, extinct. The more generous class, who invested native princes with a right of property in their subjects, and hold conquest to be excusable only by invasion, are rapidly passing to the grave; they will soon be extinct as the dodo, or the party of protection." *

A single glance at the history of the brief period separating us from the date of this manifesto is enough to check our disposition to smile at the arrogance of its assertions. Even while it was being written, the extension of our dominion over Oude had caused a European battalion to be withdrawn from Cawnpore, and so weakened the chief military station on the Upper Ganges, as to prepare it for becoming the scene of events so dreadful, that we shudder to read the recital of their details. "Dreamers," indeed, were they who "feared that the empire would be weakened by extension;" but such dreamers as seem to have seen farther in their sleep than those who sneer at them did in their waking moments. If the writer of this passage stood alone, his presumption might do little more than provoke mirth; but unhappily he is the organ of a party,—and a party having in its ranks many a name of mark, both in England and in India. The peculiar characteristic of this party is a fanaticism in favour of its own measures; so that it cannot be made to believe that the reasonable being is to be found who would take offence at their enforcement. It was to this sort of feeling that Sir Thomas Munro, though he lived before the period of

* "Friend of India," June 6th, 1856.

its fuller development, alluded, when he said that "the English are as fanatical in regard to their institutions as the Mahomedans are with their religion."

Take the case of Oude. Admit that humanity required us to eject in favour of ourselves the very ruler whom we were pledged to support, in return for the vast cession made to us by his ancestor at the beginning of the century,—admit all of this, for the sake of argument,—but the question will still remain, what grounds had we for supposing that such an enormous addition to our empire should not bring with it a proportionable addition to our risks? If it were reasonably to be assumed that the cultivator, and the agricultural community generally, would gain by the substitution of our power for that of the native ruler, were there not many, and those of the more active and energetic classes, who would suffer by the change? Were there no existing and expectant placemen to have their pride mortified, their hopes blasted, by the coming in of what the wits of Upper India have long since called the "Sweeper's rule?"

Was it not more than imprudence to take no precaution against the animosity of such a class, beyond the lamentable measure of bringing over from Cawnpore to Lucknow—a distance of fifty miles—the only European regiment to be found along a line of about 500 miles in extent? How is this apparent fool-hardiness on the part of men of eminent ability to be accounted for, but by imputing it to an overweening reliance on the power inherent in their favourite measures to command the applause and assent of all mankind?

That some material benefits would accrue to the inhabitants of Oude from its annexation was seen. What the feelings of any class among them might be was not, therefore, deemed worthy of a thought. Yet there was plenty of proof, in printed works, as well as in unpublished despatches, to show that our seizure of the country would irritate a very formidable body among its inhabitants. Bishop Heber, five-and-thirty years ago, in his hasty progress through the land, perceived this; and in repeating a conversation between a friend of his and a horseman forming part of his escort from Cawnpore mentions that, though

full of complaints against his own rulers, this man fired up at the mere suggestion of the extension of British rule as a remedy for the abuses complained of, and said that any tyranny was preferable to such a degradation. The late Colonel Sleeman, known even in Europe by his successful operations against the Thugs, and who knew the natives better than any man of his time, when afterwards Resident at Lucknow, warned the Government of the umbrage that would be taken by many classes at our seizure of the country, mentioning particularly that our own Sepoys would be likely to be offended by such a step.

Another Resident, when compelled, some twenty years ago, to address a remonstrance to the rulers of Oude, on the alleged disorders in that kingdom, was met by the significant question, "Whether there had been any emigration from that territory into ours?" But the warnings of danger were not confined to India. More than twenty years since, on the design being hinted at in the House of Commons, the late Sir Robert Peel, not then in power, expressed his apprehension that the absorption of Oude would shake the confidence of every independent prince in India in the good faith of our Government. Thus warned of the agitation likely to ensue, common prudence seemed to require that the measure should have been postponed until, at least, two strong European regiments could be added to our force in Oude, without weakening our strength at other important points, like Cawnpore. It was not, however, only before the step was taken, that the warnings of approaching danger must have been apparent, for the author has himself seen a letter written in Hindee, in the month of November last, addressed to an officer now in England, commencing with these words:—"By the seizure of Oude all Hindostan has been thrown into consternation." Yet it was at this very juncture that the Government of India, receiving its instructions direct from Downing Street, was compelled to reduce its European force by sending regiments to Persia. Meanwhile, extension in another quarter had reduced the strength of the European portion of the Indian army. Pegu, so needlessly added to our dominions in 1852, furnished employment to four or five stout European battalions, who were thus virtually lost to British India,

properly so called ; for Pegu, it must be remembered, is not a part of India, but an entirely distinct country. Annexation has, then, unquestionably contributed, both directly and indirectly, to bring about the disastrous revolt of our Bengal army. Directly, by weakening our European force, in spreading it over a wider surface, indirectly, by stirring up the animosity of influential classes, not only in the countries added to our rule, but also in the original provinces of our empire. Our annexation of Satara and Barar, on the by then accounted insufficient plea of default of natural heirs, alarmed the Hindoos, while our seizure of Oude galled the Mahommedans, every one of whom felt a pride in the independence of that principality. Thus, by these almost simultaneous measures, we have supplied a motive of potency to bind in temporary league against ourselves those two discordant races, whose dissension was our strength ; and thus it probably is, that Mahommedans and Brahmms have been brought to co operate in spreading disaffection among our Sepoys of either persuasion.

The last and most difficult question remains to be considered. Has, or has not, any indiscreet meddling on our part with their religious prejudices operated to provoke our Mahomedan and Hindoo Sepoys, hitherto so faithful, to break out into such a hideous display of perfidious cruelty as they are even now exhibiting to the world ? The question is a thorny one, and whoever enters upon it must be prepared for much misconception.

Judging by the analogy of all past history, there is to be found in the very ferocity of the Hindoo portion of the native soldiery a proof that some religious delusion must have been at the bottom of their hostility, however mixed may have been the motives of their Mahomedan comrades.

The Hindoo Sepoys have, for nearly a century, been esteemed, by those who knew them best, to be a kindly dispositioned race, and, when well managed, ever well affected towards their English chiefs. That such a body, having literally no wrong wherewith to garnish the manifesto issued from their rebellious stronghold at Delhi, should have been worked up into a state of deadly and unreflecting fury, by any feeling short of religious

exasperation, would be at variance with what we know of the history of mankind.

Excepting in the one case of the French Revolution, the author can call to mind no instance of men becoming for a while divested of their humanity, through the action of any weaker emotion than one of religious wrath. It seems almost superfluous to do more than allude to the recorded instances of revolting barbarities perpetrated by members of the great European family on one another, on account of a disagreeable or so-called religious point of faith. It is remarkable, also, that women and children have always been the victims of these outbreaks of fanaticism, and that such slaughter has never been accounted by their own partizans as discreditable to the perpetrators. In every record of the struggles of parties during the first centuries of Christian history, we find mention made of women and infants being murdered.* Neither sex nor age were spared in the crusade against the Albigenses in the thirteenth, or in the massacre of St. Bartholomew in the sixteenth, or the Irish insurrection in the middle of the seventeenth century; while Milton's celebrated Sonnet tells us how

The bloody Pied montese roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks.†

Yet Dante devotes a whole canto of his *Paradiso* to the praises of Dominick, who was the main promoter of the war of extermination standing first in this list; the court of Rome returned thanks to Heaven for the treacherous butchery in Paris; no Roman Catholic writer has expressed any great horror at the event in Ireland; and the acts denounced by Milton were doubtless accounted pious by those whose descendants have, in our own days, evinced something like a desire for their repetition.

Instances of like barbarity towards females can be found even in the early annals of Scotland, as appears from the following passage in Tytler's "*History*," vol. i. p. 113.—"Their revenge seems especially to have been directed against the English ecclesiastics who were possessed of Scottish livings. A public edict passed by the Scottish Estates, in 1296, had banished these

* See Fuller's '*Profane State*,' book v. chap. ii.

intruders from Scotland, and this cruel Wallace, it is said, improved upon with a refinement in cruelty. Some aged priests, and it is even asserted, although almost too horrid to believe, some *helpless women*, had their hands tied behind their backs, and in this helpless state were thrown from high bridges into rivers, their dying agonies affording sport to their merciless captors."

If such is the power of this principle, even on the comparatively phlegmatic European temperament, what must not its influence be over the more excitable Asiatic races? With these its force is the greater, because it is the only one that tells at all upon their collective feelings. Patriotism is almost unknown in the East; no encroachment not trespassing, directly or indirectly, upon their religion would ever there excite any general indignation. But, then, religion is in those regions so intertwined with all social institutions, that none of these can be touched without risk of jarring with the great master-principle of the Oriental mind. It may be observed, also, that the nearer any European nation approaches in character to the people of the East, the more sensitive do we find it on points affecting religion; and we have within the last few months seen a disturbance arise at Belfast, that might have swollen into something as bad as the massacre of 1641, if the restraining hand of government had been suddenly paralysed in Ireland, as it has been in India. *A priori*, probability is, we therefore think, on the side of those who assert the present Indian movement to be essentially a religious one; and there is nothing in after-events to warrant the adoption of a contrary conclusion. It is urged by some, for whom the author feels the sincerest respect, though he cannot adopt their opinions, that a movement participated in both by Mahomedans and Hindoos cannot have religion for its source, because it is impossible to believe that these two races can be actuated by any community of feeling on such a point. Their antagonism may be admitted, without acquiescing in the inference thence deduced. The Mahomedan is astute enough, when it serves his purpose; to feign a regard which he does not feel; and the Hindoo, being by far the simpler of the two, may be so blinded

by his choler as to lend a willing ear to the suggestions of his hereditary antagonist. Cardinal Richelieu was no friend to the Protestants when he used their zeal as a weapon of offence against the house of Austria, yet surely no one will, for that reason, deny that the movement in Germany was a religious one? The real question is, what was the character of that distempered mood which fitted the Hindoo Sepoy to become, as many believe, a tool in the hands of the more wily and steadily vindictive Mahomedan? That mood was evidently one of extreme religious exasperation, arising out of dark suspicions of our designs, infused into his mind through some as yet undiscovered agency, and deriving confirmation from several indiscretions on the part of our Indian legislature, as of various individual members of the Anglo Indian community, some of whom, we know, have acted as missionaries, without resigning their military commissions, while others, we have heard, have even gone so far as to compel their native servants to attend daily at family prayers. This view of the case is supported by the declaration of the Sepoys themselves, who loudly proclaim that they are acting in defence of their faith, and in their manifesto from Delhi accuse their rulers of nothing but a design to make Christians of them by force or fraud.

So great, however, is the reluctance to give credit to the Sepoys' own statement of their own motives, that we see continual attempts made to account for their conduct on some other principle. Not long since, in defiance, apparently (perhaps in ignorance) of the fact that for a hundred years past a million of millions has been faithfully guarded and escorted by Sepoys alone, it was stated at a public meeting, that their motives on the present occasion have been entirely sordid. Riots, of course, lead to plunder, and accordingly the Sepoys, having once broken loose from authority, obeyed the instinct of all mobs, and rifled the treasures, which they had for so many years protected, but, like those who followed Lord George Gordon in 1782, though they ended with pillage, it was by a religious feeling that they were first set in motion.

The point is not one of mere curiosity, but of vast prospective political importance, and it may not, therefore, be lost labour

to bring together some of the proofs to be collected from the blue-books, of a religious feeling having been at the bottom of the discontents which, after long smouldering in the breasts of our native soldiery, have at last been fanned into a flame by the unwise attempt to force the obnoxious cartridge upon the 3d Cavalry at Meerut. At Amballah, the station on the plains nearest to Simla, where the Commander in Chief was then residing, no less than fifteen fires were reported by the cantonment magistrate to have occurred between the 26th March and the 1st May, and these he, in a letter dated 4th May, distinctly ascribes to "the newly-introduced cartridges," and the Sepoy's ineradicable belief, that "the innovation is derogatory both to his caste and religion."

The magistrate further remarks, that "similar conflagrations had occurred at Banackpore, Oude, Meerut, and Lahore, all owing to the supposed impure and tainted cartridge." These conflagrations, unmistakable symptoms of discontent, as every reader of Eastern tales must know, ought to have made the Commander in Chief pause before he offered to the troops at Meerut a choice between the cartridge and the jail. The latter was accepted, and those consigned to it from that moment were regarded as martyrs. The whole Bengal army being one great military family, the feeling rapidly spread, and the contagion of revolt extended to every station. Panic aided its development, for it is clear that, in many instances, the Sepoys flew to arms under an impression that the European troops were advancing to attack them. In a Division Order of Major General Hearnsey's, published at Banackpore on the 5th April, the conduct of the Sepoy, Mungul Pande, then under sentence of death for mutiny, is ascribed to his having been "in a state of religious frenzy." In a previous letter, dated 23d January, the same gallant officer, and thorough Orientalist, informs the Government, that "a report has been spread about by some designing persons, most likely Brahmans, or agents of the religious Hindoo party in Calcutta (I believe it is called the Dhumna Sobha), that they (the Sepoys) are to be forced to embrace the Christian faith." In the Governor-General's Minute of the 27th March, it is recorded that the men of the 7th Native Infantry assigned as a

reason for their mutinous movement at Behampore, that they thought that "the guns and European troops were coming; and they said they were prepared to die rather than lose caste." A letter from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner in the Punjab, dated 16th May, asserts the "cartridge" (which word is the embodiment of the religious feeling) to be the cause of the existing disaffection, recommends its immediate disuse, predicts that nothing else will stop the spread of the evil, and ends with the following remarkable passage: "Even punishment will not prove effective, for the sufferers will become objects of sympathy, and be looked upon as martyrs for the religion."

Mr. Colvin, the late-lamented Lieutenant-Governor of the North-western Provinces, in a letter dated 22d May, after noticing his own address to the troops on parade at Agra, adds the following remarks: "They all at the moment expressed their belief of my communications to them; and I have seen them in a familiar way on several occasions since. They have undoubtedly been infected by a deep distrust of our purposes. The general scope of the notion by which they have been influenced may be expressed in the remarks of one of them, a Hindoo, Tewantee Biahm, to the effect that men were created of different faiths; and that the notion attributed to us, of having but one religion, because we had now but one uninterrupted dominion throughout India, was a tyrannical and impious one."

Again, in a letter dated 24th May, Mr. Colvin says of the mutineers: "Many are in the rebels' ranks because they could not get away. Many certainly thought we were tricking them out of their caste; and this opinion is held, however unwisely, by the mass of the population, and even by some of the more intelligent classes. Never was delusion more wide or deep. Many of the best soldiers in the army, amongst others, of its most faithful section, the Irregular Cavalry, show a marked reluctance to engage in a war against men whom they believe to have been misled on the point of religious honour." *

* In confirmation of what is stated in Mr. Colvin's letter regarding the mass of the population and their feelings, it may not be out of place to mention that a system of feeding the prisoners in masses—a system not to be carried out without occasional violation of the laws of caste—has caused the inmates of our jails to become objects of sympathy to those without.

The concurrent testimony of three such authorities as General Hearsay, Sir John Lawrence, and Mr. Colvin, ought to be conclusive; and those who still demur had better, perhaps, be left to their prejudices, nevertheless, it is as well to draw attention to a circumstance showing, in the strongest light, the extreme improbability of the Sepoys having acted under any influence of less power than one of religious delusion. Two regiments, the 26th and the 46th, broke out into open mutiny at Meer Meer, and Sealkote* in the Punjab, after they had been disarmed, when success was impossible, and swift retribution certain, from the proximity of a strong European force. The reasonable conclusion, therefore, is, that they were not quite free agents, but were impelled by the same kind of force as has often driven our fellow-subjects in Ireland to crime, and sometimes to rebellion.

There is one other reason assigned for the mutiny, to which alliteration lends its artful aid. The Sepoys have, it is constantly repeated, been "pampered and petted" into a state of insurrection. In one sense, though not in that generally attached to the words, there is some truth in the saying. Ever since that lamentable expedition to Cabool, which destroyed our reputation for good faith, and the prestige of our invincibility, the native army has been led to think too much of its own strength and importance, and an insubordinate spirit, has too often been passed over, from the necessity of gently handling a cord which might snap, if pulled too tightly. The spirit alluded to showed itself in a very formidable shape before Sir George Pollock's advance to retrieve our disasters in Afghanistan; and few know how much his country is indebted to that distinguished officer for the patience and skill with which he allayed the discontents, and raised the "morale" of the native portion of his army, before he advanced into the Khyber Pass. Various indications of the presence of such a spirit in the Bengal army have since broken

* The 5th I regular Cavalry acted in the same manner at Bhangulpoie, a station on the Ganges below Patna, on learning that Sir J. Outram had arrived off that place, *en route* to Upper India with a large European force. Another regiment at Chittagong, far down to the south-east and completely cut off from the rest of the army, is stated in the last accounts to have broken out into the same sort of hopeless and objectless mutiny.

out from time to time, but the Indian Government were powerless to apply the only sufficient check, by increasing the numerical strength of the European branch of its force.

In so far, therefore, as mere discipline is concerned, there, perhaps, is some truth in the assertion, that the Sepoy has been over-leniently dealt with at times, when there was a call for rigour, but, as regards his scruples of caste, it can only mean that the Government have adhered to the conditions on which the high-caste men have entered its service. One of the first of these stipulations is that of not being obliged to embark. When service beyond the sea was in prospect, volunteers were ever to be found for the duty. Certain regiments, called "General Service Battalions," were raised, upon an understanding that they were to embark when required. Of late years it has been ordered that all recruits are to be enlisted on this understanding. This order practically excludes the relations of half the men in an old regiment—men who served as much in the hope of being able to push on their kinsfolk, as to advance themselves. This order, therefore, savoured of bad faith, and must have tended to add strength to the distrust of our designs, which, however engendered, was, during this period, excited by the malevolence of the native and the extravagance of the European press,* until at last "the cartridge" appeared, with its alleged pigs' and cows' fat, to cement the union of the two classes of our subjects against us.

The cartridge was the proximate cause of the revolt; and the revolt itself is now becoming the fulcrum on which the lever to upset the East India Company is to be made to rest. Yet the revolt proves nothing against the general administration of India, and only shows that there have been great mistakes committed in the military department, where the Company holds

* How closely the English press is watched by many of the more educated natives may be seen from the following passage, copied from a letter written by a Hindoo of rank, in the month of June last—

'I cannot but regret the tone of several recent articles on religious subjects, especially one in the *Bengal Hukam* headed Christianity v Brahminism. These things with a greased cartridge have led to fearful results. They may promote the cause of Christianity but they can hardly be said to promote that of humanity, when they cause so many innocent people to be slaughtered.'

but divided sway. It was not, be it remembered, from a servant of the Company, but of the Crown, that the order issued which provoked the explosion at Meerut. But though there has been a mutiny, there has been no insurrection. We have lost control over a large tract of country, not by the people driving us out of it (they were too well pleased with our rule for that), but by our European officials being compelled to flee from bands of mutineers, who sought to destroy them and plunder the country. Chiefs and Princes have stood by us to a marvel, all the trading classes are with us, so are the landholders, and even the peasantry, with few exceptions, in every province but Oude, where, as yet, we are regarded as invaders. It behoves us now to beware, lest by indiscreet public speaking, and precipitate passionate legislation, we bring upon ourselves the evil from which we seem to have escaped, and cause the very suppression of the mutiny to give birth to a popular insurrection.

It unfortunately happens that the East India Company and its servants, though closely connected with, we might almost say, every family in the country, are viewed with unfriendly eyes by men of every class and order. This probably arises from their having to deal with races whose habits and feelings are so foreign to our own, that measures suited to meet their wants often strike those not conversant with Eastern subjects as being strange and unaccountable. It is easier to blame than to learn, and a fluent abuse of what they do not understand enables many to escape from the mortification of avowing that they are ignorant. Jealousy ever treads hard upon success, and the East India Company, when left to itself, has been the most uniformly successful governing body in the world. Every check which it has ever sustained may be traced in some shape or other to those disturbing influences which the late Lord Metcalfe had in his mind when he said, in the hearing of the author, that "the real dangers of British India would commence from the day when the party spirit of the British Parliament should be brought to bear directly on its administration."

The Company's troops were successful in every war, and every war engaged in was admitted to be justifiable, until the luckless Afghan expedition was forced upon the reluctant Court

in Leadenhall Street by the ministry of the day, in 1838. Since then, the Company's rule has ceased to be as firm and consistent as it was before, because Governor-Generals took their tone from Downing Street, and shaped their measures accordingly. Still it is most unjust to tax the Company with remissness in those branches of administration over which they retained their sway. If their Government in India has erred, it has been less from hanging back than from advancing too rapidly with its improvements, and striving too hard to keep up with "the spirit of the age." If the thirty years' settlement of the revenue, a work of immense labour, were all that there was to show, the agricultural classes in Upper India evince by their present conduct their sense of the value of that blessing. Conscious of its own anxiety to promote the welfare of its subjects, the Indian Government for a while forgot the necessity of being physically strong, as well as benevolently disposed. It was consequently taken by surprise, but has not found the fabric of its power to crumble beneath the shock. How is this? Is it not a proof that for one hundred years we have been moving in the right direction, slowly, it may be, in the opinion of platform orators, but as rapidly as is consistent with safety in such a country as India? Those who "account mechanical inventions the great agents in the history of mankind" will, of course, blame the Indian Government for not having overspread the land with railroads. Yet the truth is, that works of this class have perhaps gone on with greater speed than is quite consistent with safety; and the only blame attaching to the Government is, for not having sufficiently appreciated their tendency to create alarm in that Brahminical body whose influence it was folly to ignore.

Another cry, proceeding from the same quarter, blames the Indian Government for not having covered their territory with European colonists. No account is taken of the obstacles opposed by Nature to British colonisation in any but temperate climates. Englishmen will never go to India, excepting to make fortunes to be enjoyed in other lands, and under a milder sun. Landed estates would by such settlers be merely held as subsidiary to commercial speculations. Should they become numerous, the effects of the domination of race over race would

be exhibited on a scale to surpass, as is well remarked by the *Indophilus* of "The Times," all that is recorded of the Normans in England, or of the Orangemen in Ireland. In confirmation of this view, take the following passages in a letter addressed to the author, in the year 1854, by a most intelligent Hindoo gentleman in Bengal —

"The fact is, that European traders have obtained, in many places in the interior of the Bengal Presidency, almost uncontrolled power,—a power which they are seldom sufficiently scrupulous not to exert to the injury of those with whom they come in contact. It is not exaggeration to say each indigo factory, together with its surrounding estate, is a little kingdom within itself, wherein avarice and tyranny hold unlimited sway. The police is too feeble to render effectual aid in suppressing the lawless oppression of the factor."

Those who raise the cry for colonisation, and other kindred measures, are the original authors of the clamour commenced in Calcutta, and, though now dying out, for a while is echoed in London against the present Governor-General and his councillors. These gentlemen, who undertake to teach the Governor-General his duty, and choose the most embarrassing moment for doing so, have, in fact, but one great object at heart, and that is, to get rid of the Civil Service, which stands as a protecting barrier between them and the people of the country. It is with this end in view that they have spread rumours of dissension in the Supreme Council, and sought to stir the gallant Commander-in-Chief into opposition to the Government, of which he is at once a member and the servant. The furious abuse of Mr. J. P. Grant springs from the same source, and tends to the same end. That gentleman's talents being unquestionable, he is taxed with presumption and vanity by a writer who, having served, as he tells us, under Sir Charles Napier, has caught not a few of the witty old General's foibles, among others, that of an outrageous antipathy to the Civil Service. To explain to the English reader the nature of Mr. Grant's mission, it is necessary to state that, as the enemy is expelled from the rich provinces of Upper India, it becomes actually necessary to provide for the resuscitation of something

like regular government, otherwise all the revenue now in abeyance would be lost, and the provision of food and carriage for the army would become almost impracticable.

Mr. Grant's mission has two objects, one is to put together, into something like working order, the fragments of our temporarily shattered system of internal government; the other, that of putting as speedy a stop as possible to the fierce measures of vindictive retaliation, burning of villages, and wholesale hanging, which, however natural under the circumstances of the time, could not but have a ruinous effect, if persisted in for a moment longer than stern necessity warranted. What those measures were, will be seen from the following passage, extracted from a letter written at Cawnpore by an intelligent young officer, detained at that station by wounds received in General Havelock's first advance towards Lucknow.

"The English newspapers are frightfully bloodthirsty and revengeful. So are the people here; but I hope a stop will be put to wholesale hanging. I have seen a tree ornamented with nine or ten Sepoys in a few minutes by our men. They just tied feet together and hands behind back, rope round neck, and throwing the other end over a low branch, up the fellow went. But these were fellows caught with arms in their hands. The talk here is, 'Hunt down every Sepoy!' If they do, they will keep the flames alive for long. As to their massacres, I should like to come in upon them *à propos*, to teach them manners; but our civilised officers and men would, if allowed, surpass them in horrors by way of reprisal, which I think as bad as the original." *

* The following is from a second letter from the same pen. "People at home, as well as those here seem to have gone mad about revenge. Half-a-year ago it was wrong, cruel, and tyrannical to hit a native, even if he were impertinent. and as to calling him a 'nigger' oh, horror! but now nothing is half punishment enough. The magistrate catches a nigger upon some sort of evidence he is made out a Sepoy, or rebel, and of course ordered off to the gallows and sometimes is previously flogged. The gallows are erected where the women were murdered, and the culprit is made to lie on the ground where blood is supposed to exist, and every soldier or person gives the rascal a look with a stick till the man's head bleeds. Some cram glass into his mouth, and if the wretch refuses to open his mouth the most gentle means are not resorted to in order to compel

It is hardly necessary here to repeat the refutation of the silly story of the release of 150 mutineers by Mr. Grant, though, in spite of its manifest falsehood, it obtained credence in quarters supposed to be above the reach of vulgar delusion. Had editors been capable of cool reflection, a glance at the map might have assured them that the whole was a fabrication. Cawnpore is about 200 miles from Benares. If General Neill had taken any mutineers, red hand, it was most unlikely that he, who had hung so many, should suddenly have recanted, and referred their cases to Mr. Grant, who, without such reference, could not have had time to intermeddle.* But the object was to get up a cry against the Civil Service; and so the tale was seized on, and written about, until the next mail came in, and the spiteful bubble burst. We are as yet without any information as to the limits of Mr. Grant's powers, but we may be assured that there will be no interference with the military authorities where martial law prevails, though much will doubtless be done in anticipation of the period when civil authority may with safety be re-established.

The destruction of all the records will make the re-adjustment of the revenue, and the recognition of landed tenures, a work of the first importance to individuals as well as to the state, and one which none but an experienced civil functionary can possibly perform. Let those who propose to leave all such matters in military hands reflect whether, if a similar storm had visited England, and swept away all the title-deeds and documents in the country, it is from the Horse Guards that they would have sought for the man to clear away the rubbish, and reduce the troubled mass into order.* The great danger that now threatens

him to do so - and many other like *practical jokes* are carried on. Now, I would hang the culprit myself and flog him too with pleasure - but as many natives come to enjoy the *entertainment* I would read the crime and sentence, and nothing more should be inflicted, but here I am considered mad, because I see any harm in such reprisals. What a very just idea the natives must have of the atrocities they committed when they see us now trying our utmost to vie with their ingenuity. It won't be many months before 'The Times' will turn round, and then we shall not have many confessing they assisted at the *fun*.'

* It may here be allowed to say a word about the salaries of Civil servants. Those who think them too high should ask themselves this question. Would any man with 1000*l* a year, secured to him in London, go out to live under an

Upper India is death, perhaps famine. To avert this evil may be difficult, and, if the sanguinary politicians of Calcutta held the sway, would be impossible. Judging from the tenor of their writings, indeed, we may almost assume that they would exterminate the fifty millions of Upper India, and then rail at the Government for letting the land fall out of cultivation.

Of all the absurdities springing up in the course of this discussion, none is more extravagant than the attempt to link the mutiny in some way with the torture-story brought home from some remote province in Southern India, where, as was well remarked by the Earl of Harrowby, "it is difficult to protect the people, because they will not help you to protect themselves." It is ever necessary to remind the purely English reader that India is a country as large as Europe, and that what may be true of one province may never have been heard of in another. In the Gangetic portion of British India no such thing as authorised torture has ever been known; and this, indeed, was admitted in the House of Lords, and accounted for by the charitable supposition that the hardy character of the people in that quarter deterred the Court of Directors from sanctioning its introduction! As the author limits his remarks to the provinces connected with the Bengal Presidency, he must leave the members of the Madras Service to defend themselves, as they are well able to do. But though it is strange that the cruel practices of which a man of some note, not long since, told a farmers' meeting that he had inflicted a volume of official proofs on a happy party assembled at a country seat, did not stir even the softer races of Southern India to some acts of mutiny, it is stranger still to know what actually did once provoke a rebellious movement in that very region.

In the year 1837 a rebellion broke out in the district of Mangalore, on the western coast of the Indian Peninsula. It

Ind an sun and lead a lonely life in the interior for less than double or even treble that sum? Multiply a stay-at home salary by three, and you will come near to the Indian equivalent. Moreover, where men are largely trusted, they must be largely paid, and no man as so largely trusted as the Civil and Political servants of the Indian Government.—See on this point, Lord Macaulay's 'Essays on Clive and Hastings'

spread like an epidemic, infecting every class, even the officers of Government of every grade, some of whom tried to dissuade the Collector from sending off the public treasure to a vessel that was luckily at hand, in order that it might be reserved for the insurgents who were then advancing towards the station. This movement was suppressed by the arrival of troops in steamers from Bombay, and with the aid of the people of the newly-conquered province of Coorg. Now, what was the cause of this insurrection? It was nothing more nor less than our humane substitution of the process of selling land, in realisation of public and private debts, for the simple coercive measures in use under Asiatic rulers, or what we should call torture. Now, no one would propose to allay the discontents on the Malabar coast by the re-introduction of the good old practice of subjecting the bodies of defaulters to a little suffering, and leaving their lands untouched, but such instances as the above should teach those whose knowledge of India is scanty, to beware of passing hasty censures upon the men by whom that extraordinary empire has been governed, with such undeniable success, from the days of Clive until the outbreak of the present disturbances, for which it remains to be seen who is responsible. A letter of the Duke of Wellington, dated 13th October, 1803, is full of instruction to censors of the class in question. Writing on the absurdity of trying to reduce things in India to the European standard, he thus expresses himself: "In short, the only conclusion to be drawn from all reflection and reasoning on this subject is, that the British Government in India is a phenomenon, and that it will not answer to apply to it, in its present state, either the rules which guide other governments, or the reasoning on which these rules are founded" *

But the most serious, and certainly the most popular, as being the most easily understood, charge against the Indian Government is, that of taxing it with religious indifference, and even hostility, to the diffusion of Christian knowledge throughout its dominions.

At the by-gone period, when that charge had some appear-

* Gurwood, vol. p. 411.

ance of truth, it might have been brought against the Government of England, as well as against that of India. The early years of this century were certainly not years of religious zeal, and our public men in the East partook of the apathy which prevailed among our Galleys in office at home. As religious feeling revived in the mother country, it was gradually communicated to the dependency. Bishops were appointed, churches built, the numerical strength of the clerical body was increased, the strict, at least the decorous, observance of the Sabbath was enforced, the utmost freedom was allowed to missionary bodies, American as well as British, whose agents traversed the length and breadth of the country at their pleasure, and, more than that, were, when well-mannered and good linguists, ever treated, not only with politeness, but with respect, by the natives, especially by the Hindoos. Higher testimony was never borne to the moral and intellectual merits of any body of men, than will be found in a speech delivered in the English language by a native gentleman in Calcutta, himself a Hindoo, on the 25th July last, in praise of the Christian missionaries in Bengal.

It is curious to observe how the disposition to carp at our Eastern administration veers round with the varying humour of the time. At the beginning of this century, the Bard of Hope winds up the first part of his poem with an apostrophe to the Hindoo Olympus, imploring its intervention to avenge the wrongs endured by the "children of Biana" at the hands of the "free-born Britons" of those days. Scriswattee, Canideo, and Gunesa, are invoked by name, and the "tenth avatar" is hailed by a Christian poet with more than Hindoo fervour. Now a-days the tide is turned, and our countrymen in India are accused, with equal injustice, though less imagination, of undue deference to the scruples and feelings of the people over whom they were once said to tyrannise. Both charges may, in as far as the Gangetic provinces are concerned, be pronounced to be figments. The religious or superstitious feelings of our subjects have, in that part of our empire, never been either outraged or petted. Salutes to idols, or parades in honour of Hindoo festivals, are unknown on the banks of the

Ganges, whatever may be the case in the Southern Peninsula. All that can be alleged against the Company's government in that quarter is, that it has kept faith with those high-caste men whom it received into its service, and with religious establishments found by us in possession of endowments when we took the land from its former rulers. Even in this respect, the leaning of our administration has for the last thirty years been directly the reverse of what is often, with over confidence, asserted. This will appear from the following passage taken from the pamphlet of Mr. F. H. Robinson, to which we have before referred:—

“The Government have of late years systematically resumed all religious endowments, an extensive inquiry has been going on into all endowments, grants, and pensions; and in almost every one in which the continuance of religious endowments has been recommended by subordinate revenue authorities, backed by the Board of Revenue, the fiat of confiscation has been issued by the Government.”—(Page 17)

Whether these confiscations, or resumptions, as they were called, were wise or just, is a matter of dispute; the fact of their occurrence is unquestioned, and that fact alone is a proof of no over-indulgence having been shown to establishments having the support of either the Hindoo or the Mahomedan faith for their object. It is remarkable also that the natives themselves coupled the idea of religious zeal in their Christian rulers with activity in carrying out these very measures. The author has more than once had the question put to him whether Mr. A. B., and Mr. C. D., gentlemen known for the strictness of their views, did not account it a duty to bear hard upon the Moosulman and the Brahmin, and the conjunction of these hitherto dissociable names struck him at the time as ominous. It may be recorded, as worthy of notice, that Hurdeo Bukhs, the landholder, to whose good offices Messrs. Edwards and Probyn, of the Civil Service, owed their escape from the fate which overtook the other fugitives from Futtehghur, is said to have declared, that in saving these English men, at some hazard to himself, he was actuated by his grateful recollection of kindness shown to

his father by the very gentleman * from whose pamphlet the passage above cited is taken. Much stress has been laid on the case of the Brahmin native officer gently withdrawn from his regiment after his conversion to Christianity. This event happened nearly forty years ago, and yet it is spoken of and preached upon as if it were an act of the ruling power of the present day. Those concerned in it have long since passed away. Yet, in justice to the departed, let us consider what the circumstances of our empire were in the year 1819. Two great wars, that with Nepal on the East, and with the Mahattas and Pindarries on the West, had just been brought to a conclusion, but the passions excited by the struggle had not even begun to cool. Runjeet Sing, at the head of the Sikhs, stronger at that time than when they afterwards tested our mettle to the utmost, though his good sense had withheld him from taking advantage of our merely apparent difficulties, while engaged only with foreign foes, might have found, in such a falling off of our own troops as we are now witnessing, an opportunity too tempting for even his prudence to have withstood. A mutiny in 1819 would have been a more serious matter than we find it now, for *then* there was no steam to shorten distance. Twelve months must have elapsed before any succours could have reached India from England. To assert that no mutiny was to be dreaded, is merely to beg the whole question at issue, and therefore we must conclude that they who blame what was done by the Government of the Marquis of Hastings, in 1819, would, if they had been in power, have followed a contrary course, and taken their chance for the consequences, even if the loss of the empire itself had been among the results to be apprehended. What would have happened in that case cannot, of course, be known, but what has happened we see and feel. The men of 1819 have transmitted to us an empire which has not certainly been brought into jeopardy by over-adherence to their principles of government, but which

* The late Mr. P. H. Robinson had held the office of Commissioner of the Tutteghur division not long before he left India. It is hoped that the above anecdote may draw attention to his clever and original pamphlet.

we are, nevertheless, now reduced to a struggle to preserve and hand down to our successors

But in what form are we to transmit it? As an absolute conquest, to be ruled over in the manner most consonant with the wishes and passions of the dominant minority, or as a country held by an official tenure, where the duty of the Government, acting as trustee to the estate, is to endeavour to administer it for the benefit of the various races interested in its well-being? The first of these two modes of rule will be the most popular in England, and with what are called "the independent Europeans" in India. It will be popular with that more numerous than sagacious class, which hates the East India Company, it knows not why. It may allure the ministry of the day by the promise of a vast accession of direct power, freed from the harassing necessity of having often to contend with men of superior intelligence, whose counsels there is a pre-determination to overrule. To the House-Guards, also, the cry for a re-modelling of the Government of India, and the re-conquest of a country which has never revolted, must have an attractive sound, for it holds out a prospect of increased patronage, and the riddance of that standing perplexity—the Company's army. The absolute-conquest scheme will also command the suffrages of such proselytising societies as seek for the co-operation of Government, without distinctly declaring what the nature of that co-operation is to be. The same scheme will, of course, be in favour with the "independent European" class in India, for it is with them that it originates. Thus there is a formidable display of interests in support of a scheme which, nevertheless, appears to be fraught with both injustice and danger. It is unjust to visit millions with permanent humiliation on account of the misconduct of some thousands, whom we have ourselves detached from the bulk of the people and brought into an artificial state, more directly under our own influence than that of any other section of the community. It will be dangerous to attempt, with our numerical disparity, to introduce a system only to be sustained by an ever present and ever-watchful superiority of physical force. Admit that we can conquer and scatter every enemy whom we may for the next three or four

years encounter in the field, still the question will remain of, How is the pressure to be kept up which, in the case supposed, will continually be required to suppress the heavings of discontent? A mighty force is now assembling on the Upper Ganges, — a force, perhaps, a little in excess to the means of feeding or moving; cavalry without horses, sappers who cannot work in the sun, and artillery to supersede, rather than to co-operate with, that noble corps of Bengal, pronounced even by Sir Charles Napier to be perfect. Of all this array, if deprived of the assistance of native troops in the discharge of duties involving continued exposure to climate, at least twenty per cent would, before a year is out, be dead, and few forthcoming to supply their place in what would then be considered an unattractive service.

It is necessary here to remind the English reader how almost incredibly small is the European machinery employed in the government of India. Excepting at about ten stations, far apart from each other, along a line of nearly 1200 miles in extent, there is not an armed European to be seen from the sea to the boundary of the Punjaub. These stations are mostly on the Ganges and the Jumna; while to the right and left of those rivers vast provinces, peopled by more millions than half Europe contains, are governed by little knots of English functionaries, sometimes only two or three, and seldom more than five or six in number, with nothing but native physical force to support them. In its very essence, such a system, resting mainly on moral influence, is of course one of compromise. The people yield then obedience to all the fair behests of their rulers, but expect in return to have their social freedom respected, and to be exempt from all authoritative intermeddling with their religion. They also calculate upon being subjected to no novel mode of taxation, and upon the bulk of what is levied on them being taken in the form of the portion of the produce of the land, assigned by immemorial custom to the ruling power to meet the exigencies of the state. Partial deviations from this course may be submitted to (though even to these fierce opposition has at times been made), but any such alteration of the whole revenue system, as is evidently contemplated by the advo-

ates of the "colonising" policy, would estrange from us the good-will of the now well-affected agricultural class. Two instances of open resistance to fiscal innovations may here be noticed, the one took place in the year 1809, when the townspeople of Benares, to the number of half-a-million, left their homes and bivouacked in the fields, until the Government yielded to their petition for the abolition of a recently imposed house-tax; the other occurred at Barilly in the year 1816, when a police tax, eventually carried into effect, provoked on its first enforcement an armed resistance, which soon assumed a religious Mahomedan aspect, and was only quelled, with the loss to the insurgents of about 1500 killed and wounded, by the firmness of three companies of Bengal Sepoys.

The proposed substitute for the immemorial land revenue has not yet been distinctly stated, but, considering the quarter whence it may be expected to proceed, its tendency most probably will be to make the Indian Government pay for the cotton to be supplied to Manchester. This end will be virtually gained merely by reducing the assessment on land, and leaving it to the Eastern exchequer to find in new imposts an equivalent for that of which it will thus, for the first time in the history of India, be deprived.

It is impossible to read what daily appears in print without perceiving that the scheme of Colonial Government, once cried up as fraught with blessings to the people of India, is now built upon a studied disregard, or rather hatred, of their race. This, indeed, is openly avowed by the hasty, and is implied in the suggestions of the more cautious, advocates of the measure. To take a specimen of each:—A letter inserted in the "Morning Post" of the 26th November, and professing to come from India to a correspondent in Paris, contains the following passage: "The hatred of the *Bengalese*, whatever his calling, is such, he will be treated like a ferocious wild beast; he is one, and we are to treat him, forsooth, as a mild and faithful Hindoo. Oh, this lovely country — for in some parts it is a paradise — to think that the race of Ham should enjoy it under a mild Christian rule, and not appreciate the goodness of God! England must make the Government a Colonial one, and no

native of India, for many years to come, privileged to enjoy a share in its bounty, or hold an office of either trust or responsibility."

The use here made of the name "Bengalese" warrants a suspicion that the letter was written by a Calcutta cockney, unaware of the fact, that although our native soldiers in that quarter are called Bengal Sepoys, there is not a Bengalee among them. Bengalee is a name exclusively applied to the native of Bengal Proper. There are forty millions of this race, and it is hard to make that portion of our subjects the special objects of our hate; for to them the triumph of the mutineers would have been so fatal, that we may be assured of the sincerity of the prayers which they offered up for our success.

The Bengalee is a timid being, and may be dealt with at discretion; but it is as well to think how the other "children of Ham" will relish the scheme for reducing them to the condition of serfs in their own land. It is almost useless to waste argument on so wild a scheme as that for Helotizing all India, with its 170 millions of inhabitants, of whom one-fourth are not yet under our dominion. More consideration is, however, due to a graver project, lately presented to the public in the form of a letter printed in "The Times" of the 2d December. The project is detailed in six separate propositions, and these it may be useful to review *seriatim*. —

1. "India must be kept free from external war, and from further expansion."

A wise suggestion, doubtless, but the English public must be changed before conquest can be stayed. If they will be so blinded by the glare and glitter of successful battle as to be unable to see when a conquest is unjust, as in the case of Scinde, or unnecessary, as in the case of Pegu, how is it to be expected that men in power abroad, to whose "quick bosoms quiet" often "is a hell," will not be tempted to indulge in the enticing luxury of military expeditions?

2. "The high lands of India, north, central, and south, must be systematically filled with European colonies"

If the mountainous tracts in the Himalaya, Cossyn, and Neelgherry ranges are here alluded to, there is no objection to

the scheme, excepting as concerns the interest of the colonists, who, in those mountainous tracts, will find very pleasant places to reside in, but few spots to promise extensive profit to any great number of agricultural settlers. Should we ever reconquer the site of the ancient Bactrian kingdom, a colony in a country blest with an almost European climate may be feasible.

3. "English citizenship must be recognised in India as a distinct element, and be cautiously imparted as a reward to individuals, to classes, and to places."

An attempt to apply the policy of a continuous continental empire, like that of ancient Rome, to a detached dominion based upon maritime superiority, like ours in India, would probably in practice fail.* It carries with it a semblance of fairness, but is intrinsically one-sided and partial, as will appear from what is to follow.

4. "Well-defined political as well as social rights should be granted to all English citizens in India."

The real drift of this proposition is, that the Government of India ought to be placed in the hands of those "unofficial" Englishmen who may migrate to that country for a while, to make or to repair a fortune. This will appear more clearly in the sequel.

5. "The Indian Government must not fluctuate with English party, nor its policy be made subservient to the shifting politics of Europe."

This, like the first proposition, is a wise one, and furnishes the best possible argument for keeping the Government of India in the hands of a body like the Court of Directors, who, as the representatives of a separate constituency, with chartered rights, can alone effect what is here truly stated to be most desirable. The same chairman of that Court who protested against the Afghan war, in 1838, the late Mr. St. George Tucker, said on another occasion, what *then* was true, that "India is of no party."

* Egypt alone of all the Roman provinces bore any resemblance to British India and there the 'Egyptians,' with an exclusive right of administration, seem to have stood in a position very like that of the Civil Service of the present day.

6. "The permanent burdens of India must, in the long run, be borne by India."

There is no objection to be urged against this. In fact, it only approves of what always has been, for the Home Treasury has little cause to complain of Indian importunities. It is, however, in the comment that follows, that the latent injustice of the whole scheme is disclosed. Taxes are to be voted in "Parliaments consisting of English citizens, and of none besides." There is a show of consideration for the native in the provision for "imparting English citizenship to him as a reward," but who, that knows anything of the bearing of the races towards each other, will fail to perceive that in such a motley parliament the voices of the dusky portion would be drowned by that of the robust whites?

The concluding passage of the letter hints at the possibility of setting up one of our own Princes as King of India, which very idea has ere this occurred to two well-informed men of different countries and races, writing at the distance of half-a-century from each other. No. 31 of the "Edinburgh Review," published in the year 1810, contains the following speculation on the future Government of India:—

"A simple form of arbitrary government, tempered by European honour and European intelligence, is the only form which is now fit for Hindostan. But that government should be one, the interests of which are identified with the interests of the country, and arbitrary as it must be, such checks and influences might easily be applied as would render it mild and paternal in its exercise.

"It has occurred to us, then, that the only way to escape great evil, both to India and to England, is at once to give the former country a government to itself. Instead of sending out a Governor-General, to be recalled in a few years, why should we not constitute one of our royal family Emperor of Hindostan, with hereditary succession? The sovereign would then be surrounded by Britons, and the spirit of Britons would animate and direct his government. Europeans of all descriptions would be invited to settle in his country, and to identify their interests with those of the nation. The productive powers of European

industry, under the protecting hand of a British Government on the spot, would soon give new life and new riches to the state, and the commercial enterprise of Britons would find a field of boundless extent, every year presenting a more vast and precious produce from which to cull for the commercial aggrandisement of their country." *

The same opinion, supported by almost the very same reasoning, is expressed in the following passage, in a letter from an intelligent Hindoo at Indore, dated 23d June, 1857, of which the first part has been already given:—

"As I have always been allowed the indulgence of writing anything to you that comes foremost in my head, I hope you will excuse a question from me, how foolish soever I may appear in putting it. Pray, why does not England send out a King for India? Surely Her Most Gracious Majesty would have no objection to instal the Prince Royal to that high office. Sir Vernon Smith and Sir George Clerk may come out as wuzzees, and the Honourable Court of Directors may come out as the council of state. The princes, and the intelligent gentry and nobility of India, may furnish material to form a parliament, and India may be governed in India, and for India; I don't know who loses by this plan. This country has always been governed by monarchs. The difference of religion between the governor and the governed will not signify a bit, seeing how endeared the Hindoos had become to Mohammedan kings. But one great point will be gained. There will then be some one to think India his own, and, so far, to take interest in its actual prosperity. A Governor-General for five years cannot take a permanent interest; he may do something to secure a pension or a name, but very little for the country.

"But I am afraid I am rising from the foolish to the presumptuous, and will end here."

Climate, the great bar to every attempt at Europeanizing India, would stand in the way of this kingly project. To give it a chance of success, an English Prince, with a retinue of courtiers, must be found ready to take a life-long leave of England, to

* *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xvi p. 156

become the denizens of a tropical country. This is as little to be expected as the emigration of the thousands of substantial Englishmen who would be wanted to thrust out, or crush, a corresponding number of native landholders, and become the basis of that democratic despotism so evidently desired by the more ardent advocates of colonisation.

Since, therefore, inexorable climate opposes every projected change, why should we quarrel with that official tenure proved by experience to adapt itself to the peculiarities of the reciprocal position of England and India better than any device that we now can hit upon? The still existing, though perhaps expiring, form of rule, gives as free a scope to the English progressive spirit as is consistent with a due regard for the stationary character of our Indian subjects. Electric telegraphs have overspread the surface of Upper India, and probably contributed to alarm what they bestride, railways are advancing steadily, and have had their share in startling the Brahminical directors of the Hindoo mind. Canals to command the admittance of all engineers have been completed, roads and bridges have been constructed, schools in villages, colleges in towns, dispensaries, attended by native practitioners educated in Calcutta, are yearly increasing in number in the interior.

The settlement of the land revenue for thirty years nominally, but in fact in perpetuity, is a blessing, their appreciation of which is shown by the general good conduct of the landholders in Upper India during our recent difficulties.

The labour attending that settlement was immense, and many a young civilian injured his health, about seventeen years since, by tarrying at the most trying season in tents, to carry on this most important, though not showy work.

The police and administration of justice in these Gangetic provinces will, if viewed with reference to the character of the people, not be found to merit all the reproaches bestowed upon them, mainly by that "independent" European class" whom it is often the painful duty of our judicial officers to reprove and restrain. The admission by Lord Brougham, that the Privy

* See ante, p. 27. Letters from a native of Bengal

Council reversed in appeal more, proportionately, of the decisions of Her Majesty's judges of the Supreme Court than it did of those passed by the Company's judges, is a clear proof that the latter cannot be so very bad, notwithstanding what some other Law-Lords have declared. If those sages of the bench could be transported to the banks of the Ganges, and placed at the head of some troublesome district in Bengal, they would soon discover that an acquaintance with the native character and language is there of more use in the administration of justice than all the knowledge that can be imported from a land of complicated rights and artificial habits like England.*

If, turning from the subject of internal management, we look abroad to what is passing on and beyond our actual boundary, what a wonderful spectacle of administrative skill meets our eye! On this, however, as it has been stamped with the recent applause of our Sovereign, it is needless and would be perhaps presumptuous, to dilate.

In one department only has there been any serious failure, and that one, as before remarked, is not under the East India Company's entire sway. The supreme command of our forces in the East has always been held by one of Her Majesty's generals, and to this circumstance, perhaps, may be ascribed that tendency to centralisation which is said to have weakened the authority and damped the zeal of commanders of battalions. Yet, if the regimental organisation of the army has proved faulty, how admirably have not its administrative departments worked! No cries have been heard from our armies before Delhi or Lucknow like those that reached us from the Crimea. Notwithstanding the prevailing disturbance, the commissariat, aided by the civil and political authorities, has proved equal to every emergency.

There is, therefore, but one great want to be supplied, namely, that of a good working native army.

In putting this indispensable force together, care will, of

* Reports of cases decided by the Sudder Courts used to be published annually. The series was begun by the late Sir W. Macnaughten. If still continued its republication in England would probably furnish the best reply to much that is said against the Company's judicial officers.

course, be taken not to fill it with too many men of the same class. Geographical circumstances tended to introduce this evil into the now dissolving army.

The Bombay army, being drawn from the motley population of a sea board, partook of the character of those from among whom it was raised. The Bengal army, on the contrary, was formed far inland and drew its recruits mainly from the agricultural class. This may account for the sort of family feeling that pervades the whole body. Henceforward we must enlist from various classes, not, perhaps, mixing them promiscuously in the ranks, but forming them into separate battalions or companies, according to their tribe.

Goonkhas and Sikhs will, of course, be largely employed, yet we must not overdo this, lest, in extinguishing one evil, we should give birth to another. Every mercenary army has its dangerous aspect, and it is possible that even our own countrymen, if stationed permanently in large bodies on the Ganges, might catch the Pietolan cohort feeling, by some believed to have been at the bottom of our Sepoys' recent misconduct. A great, but not an extravagant, increase to the permanent European force will be desirable. In Oude, Rohilcund, and perhaps in Bundelcund, new stations for European troops will be wanted; but in the rest of Gangetic India (apart from the Punjaub), it will probably be thought enough to add the fortresses of Allahabad and Delhi, and the town of Dacca,* to the posts to be in future occupied by that description of force.

Leaving, however, the resuscitation of a native army on the Ganges to be discussed by those professionally familiar with the subject, let us now consider how the civil and political branches of the public administration are likely to be affected by the disturbing influence of the late explosion on the minds of our subjects abroad, and of our countrymen both at home and

* In the Cossyn hills to the east of Dacca, at an elevation of about 5000 feet above the level of the sea, there is at a place called Myrung, a high table-land admirably suited for a European cantonment. The situation is a most commanding one, with Assam on the north and Sylhet on the south. There is water-carriage to the foot of the hills on both sides and the spot is to be reached in three marches from Assam and in two from Sylhet.

abroad. Of all the perils in prospect, none are so formidable as those to be dreaded from the last-mentioned of these two sources. If we could keep our countrymen within bounds, the difficulty of correcting or guarding against the suspicions and alarms of our native subjects would be wonderfully diminished. It is a hard thing to calm the minds of a very sensitive people, who are constantly told by Englishmen of authority and weight, that what the Local Government assures them will not be done, must, and shall, be attempted. It is true that these declarations are, for the most part, qualified by a disavowal of any desire to see coercion or bribery employed to effect the desired end. But when in the course of any discussion the mode of stating facts is calculated to make but one impression, it matters little whether the object be expressly acknowledged or not.

Detached declarations, disclaiming the only rational conclusion deducible from the premises, will, in such cases, only excite a suspicion that the real object is one that cannot, without inconvenience, be clearly and explicitly avowed.

The preceding remarks bear more immediately on the writings and speeches of the proselytizing bodies in England, who, though enjoying the fullest liberty of persuasion, are still discontented, but they may be often found to apply to those of political speculators also. Two specimens of startling lucubrations of the latter class have already been given, but as neither of these derive any weight from the quarter whence they proceed, it seems desirable to adduce another sample, having the sanction of the well-known name of the Member for Sheffield. This gentleman and his friends cannot be said to have courted discussion, for in the report of what passed at a meeting held in St. Martin's Hall, on the 17th December, it appears that all the speaking was on one side, and that a gallant captain who tried to make himself heard was, "by a unanimous vote of the meeting, expelled the room."

The speech thus guarded against any immediate contradiction opens with a fair and true description of the empire established in India; but goes too far in its adulation of the people of England, when it asserts the fabric to be one of their rearing. The people

of England as a nation, acting through its legitimate organs, the Parliament and Ministry of the day, contributed little to the completion of the work beyond furnishing the East India Company with a body of European troops, which that Company could, if permitted, easily have raised for itself. There is, of course, no question as to the power of the nation to deal as it likes with whatever may have been acquired by any of its members, but every argument adduced to defend the seizure of the imperial estate created by the East India Company through the agency of its own servants, may be used to justify the laying hands on all the property of every railway or joint-stock company in this kingdom. It was by an accident, rather than by any deep design, that a trading company was from the first interposed between Great Britain and its dependency, but to that accident is it mainly owing that the present generation has got any Eastern empire to dispute about. France started at the same time as England in the Indian race, but the French *ministry* directed the operations of the French officers, while a trading Company, presided over by men of the middle order, imparted their own homely vigour to the founders of the English dominion in the East.

Thus the great talents of Bussy, and other French officers on the spot, were neutralised by courtly influences emanating from Versailles; while Clive, with his coadjutors, were screened by the intervention of their commercial employers from what would have proved the equally baneful interference of the British Cabinet and Parliament.

All this is evidently perceived by the Member for Sheffield; but, in his anxiety to avoid ascribing any merit to the East India Company, he speaks of Clive as if he had received his mandate direct from the people of England.

The force of truth soon after extorts an admission that the British, which means the Company's, rule in India, has been a blessing to those under its sway, though the blessing might, it is urged, have been greater than it has been, if it were not for that double government, which seems to be the *bête noire* of all Indian reformers.

If, however, it be true that the President of the Board of

Control can "do exactly as he pleases," what would be gained in point of vigour by the transfer of his duties to a personage with another designation, to whom it would be impossible to impart more power than is already possessed by the functionary who is styled "the real ruler of India?"

As to responsibility, unless we mean to revive the terrors of Tower Hill, it is a term of little meaning. Will the author of any blunder in these days sleep the less soundly for knowing that he is personally responsible for the measure?

But why should a constitutional Englishman feel such a horror of a system of double government? Is it not by checks, sometimes a source of inconvenience but more often of safety, that all limited Governments must be carried on? To the despot or the democrat they may be odious, but no good reason can be shown for their proving hateful to the intelligent member of a really free community, even in the regulation of a conquered dependency. A few instances of the vicious working of the system in force would be of more avail here than any general declamation. Where any evil has been done, or good omitted, there never will be much difficulty in determining whether the controlled or the controlling authority is to blame. We may all, even now, find out, if he who caused an unjust and impolitic war has his seat in Leadenhall Street or in Cannon Row; and if the existing partition of power does not shroud him from detection, what would be gained by placing him in a more exposed position, while he is at the same time to be freed from the wholesome restraint imposed by the mere necessity of answering, even when determined to overrule, the objections of a body of able and well-informed men? Those who think such restraint to be of no use, need only peruse the correspondence that passed in the year 1833 between the Court of Directors and the Board of Control, on the subject of what was called the Dosses' claim upon the Nawab of Oude to perceive into what fearful errors a home bred statesman, if entirely unchecked, might fall in dealing with an Indian question. The sketch that follows of the character of our Indian subjects is too sweeping in its conclusions for the induction on which it rests. There is no good to be done by exasperating the hatred of

race against race. After an allusion to the barbarous acts of the Indian insurgents, it is asked whether Englishmen could "in their wildest fury have done such deeds?" Until we see order overthrown, the jails broken open, and St. Giles's let loose, we cannot say of what Englishmen may or may not be capable; but the passages cited below,* from Lord Normanby's recent account of a "Year of Revolution in Paris," show that other Europeans can be guilty of acts equalling in atrocity all that we read of the enormities committed by the Sepoys or the liberated convicts in Upper India.

The next topic touched upon is the capacity of the Hindoos for self-government. Here the Hindoos are spoken of as if they were the sole inhabitants of India, no account being made of the millions of Mahomedans residing in that land. The Hindoos are pronounced to be incapable of self government, and perhaps, if tried by a European standard, they may appear to be so. Yet the people whose ancient system of village communities is thought to have contained the germ of our own municipal institutions, cannot be so entirely destitute of all administrative capacity as the Member for Sheffield supposes † Long subjection may have deadened the governing faculties of

* "I am sorry to hear every hour fresh accounts of the barbarities committed by the insurgents upon those who fell into their hands; all tending to show that no savage tribe could have been more sure to abuse power should they unhappily have obtained the upper hand. Every one of the Garde Mobile—many of them lads from sixteen to eighteen who were taken by the n—were frightfully mutilated"—Vol. ii p. 67.

"All that has been said of the cruelties practised on the Garde Mobile is true. In one place they took four or five of these children who had surrendered as prisoners stuck a pike through their throat under the chin, tied their hands down, and placing them in front of a widow, fixed between their legs, thinking the soldiers would not return the fire when they saw the Mobiles. They cut also off a head from one, filled the mouth with pitch, lighted a match in it and danced round to the tune of 'Les Lampions' Having surprised a small Corps de Garde filled with Mobiles, they killed them all in cold blood; and some female monsters amused themselves with cutting out their tongues and stringing them upon a cord."—Vol. ii p. 75

† See on this subject, General Buggess' "India and Europe compared" p. 5, with the extract from Sir John Malcolm's letter on the subject of "Village Government," written during a day's detention on the banks of the Godavery as he was proceeding to join the army in the field in 1817

those under our rule, but many of the independent Hindoo states, both in Bundelcund and Rajpootana, exhibit every outward sign of being ruled with moderation and wisdom. The Hindoos being pronounced to be by nature placed in a state of servitude, are of course to be provided with suitable curators and guardians, who, it may be presumed, are to be taken from among the "English traders and missionaries," these being the only individuals accounted worthy of trust in matters connected with India.

The members of the Company's service, both civil and military, are all lumped together under the name of "Old Indians," and to be cast aside as useless. Yet it may be well, with the accounts of their skilful management in the Panjab, at Delhi, in Oude and Upper India, before us, to pause a little before we postpone them to either of the respectable classes to whom alone the people of England are advised to apply for information. Traders or planters, and missionaries, are both in a situation calculated to warp their judgment regarding the capacity and conduct of the officers of Government. Both must at times labour under a galling sense of subordination, for both carry about with them the feeling that their complexion alone entitles them to rank with their official countrymen, to whose authority they are, nevertheless, obliged often to submit. Both are liable to disappointments and failures, and these it is a relief to impute to the mismanagement of the local officers, under whose control they chafe. It is right, therefore, to listen to their statements, for their opportunities of acquiring information are great; but in weighing their testimony, the circumstances of their position should ever be kept in mind.

There was a time when the independent Europeans affected to make common cause with the people of the country, and though even then they never cried out about the natives being oppressed so loudly as when they had themselves been checked in some act of oppression, still then now openly avowed hostility to the whole dark-skinned race must greatly simplify the task of the legislator. No one can now deceive himself into a belief that he is promoting the happiness of the native population of India by subjecting it to the authority of legisla-

tive or other chambers, in which the unofficial European element is to predominate.

Let us hope, therefore, that whatever may be the changes to be made in the controlling authority at home, the administrative power in India may be allowed to remain in the hands of an official body, set apart from their youth for this special duty, and whose primary object it may be to administer the country for the benefit of its inhabitants, trusting thus best to promote the real interests of the crown peculiarly. It is immaterial whether the body into whose hands the internal government is to be intrusted shall be called the Civil Service, or receive any other appellation, provided the principle be maintained of employing in the territorial government of India those only who have been educated and trained expressly for that duty. If a knowledge of English law shall really prove to be a requisite for the efficient discharge of civil functions, the addition of a few years to the prescribed age of admission will probably bring what is wanted into the ranks of the Civil Service.

The prevailing impression at the present moment seems to be, that the mutiny, with the collateral insurrection in Oude, is suppressed. A careful revision of the last accounts received may warn us against being too hastily assured of this conclusion. Much, in a military point of view, remains to be done; and there will be still more of civil and political work to be performed before that province, wherein alone we have as yet encountered a hostile nationality, can be reduced even to the state of tranquillity enjoyed by it at the time when it was annexed to our possessions.

In one of those admirable letters signed "A Civilian," lately inserted in "The Times," we are told the secret of much of the resistance encountered in Oude.

Our first administrative act has therefore been to suppress the upper class of landholders, called the Talookdars, and thus to convert them into foes. It would be tedious to explain the nature of their tenure, and it may be enough to say, that it is not easy to reconcile the maintenance of the order of Talookdar with the preservation of those village communities, which present

the most pleasing feature in the old Hindoo system of rural polity. Still, as the whole of Oude seems to have been for a length of time divided into Talooks, under which, by some sort of compromise, the village proprietors still held their ground, one would have thought that the danger of abruptly reducing the former class must have been apparent from the first; yet such was the confidence felt in the inherent power of a favourite measure to command the assent even of those whom it injured, that no precaution whatever was taken against this most obvious risk. In Oude, moreover, it ought to be borne in mind, that all who oppose us are not rebels.

A letter, dated 23d November, and bearing in every line the false Calcutta stamp, tells the readers of the first "Times" of the opening year, that the three million opposed to us in Oude were composed of feudal retainers and bad characters, or what in Europe would be called adventurers.

"These," he says, "have nothing to lose, are fighters from boyhood, and detest the English, who prohibit plunder."

Instead of nothing to lose, it would be more correct to say that they have everything to lose — all upon which they prided themselves; and although it may not be consistent with our ideas of the general good that they should retain what they possessed, still, as they owe us no allegiance, they have an obvious right to resist our establishing ourselves in their country.

The hatred of all native independence that runs through this letter shows, that however great their ability, the unofficial Calcutta politicians would, if invested with power, soon involve us in a war of races.

Notwithstanding the fidelity under trying circumstances of the great bulk of the states to the west of the Jumna, the correspondent calls this part of India "a pestilent nest of rajahs, nawabs, chiefs, independent zemindars, and titled vagabonds of every kind."

Let any one reflect on what the position of our army before Delhi would have been if the native chiefs in its neighbourhood had only applied the means at their command to stop supplies, and he will perceive how much was owing to the wise

policy which had made them our friends. It was a remark made by the two most intelligent Eastern potentates with whom we have of late years come into contact, Dost Mahomed and Runjeet Sing, that the secret of our power lay in our not having reduced the native princes of the country to despair. Let us take this saying to heart, and couple it with what both Wellington and Malcolm have said on the strength derived from a reputation for good faith, and our position may be improved by the very struggle through which we are passing.

The perils recently encountered have been fearful, but they are slight in comparison with what would have assailed us if the counsels of the more violent party among ourselves had in former years been adopted. The extinction of all native independence was, as may be seen from Malcolm's reflections (formerly quoted*), long since a favourite doctrine of one class of politicians, who maintained our dangers ever to have arisen from the armies of independent states. That occasional wars did arise from that source was true enough, but these wars only kept our troops in exercise, and averted the very perils to which we are now exposed. We must ever remember, that it is not only the reigning prince who is reduced to despair by our occupation of his country, but every man among his subjects who, from hereditary pretensions or personal character, is susceptible of the impulse of ambition, even in its most subdued and best-regulated mood.

If our conquests had embraced (as many desired) the territories of all those who have lately been standing by, or abstaining from injuring us, what a terrible addition would have been made to our embarrassments.

Even now the furious prejudice against colour, which prevents many of the English in India from discriminating between the rebellious Sepoys and the natives of the country, who have in many instances suffered as much as ourselves from their violence, is producing a most pernicious effect.

The people at large, it is said in many quarters, hardly know which to dread most, their own miscreant countrymen or the

* Ante p. 13

revengeful Europeans. It is for contending against this spirit, and striving to avert the consequent risk of arousing a nationality of many millions into hatred and active resistance, that Lord Canning and his coadjutors have been so fiercely and wantonly abused. Two classes combine to keep up the outcry against any pause in the career of vengeance. The vaguely vindictive, who, to use the words of the late Sir Charles Napier, "mistake rigour for vigour," and who, to ensure the punishment of every criminal, would make complexion the criterion of crime; and the more methodically sanguinary, who dread lest any relaxation of the estrangement resulting from indiscriminate severity should lead to the firmer establishment of government on its previous footing, and so balk their hopes of seeing their own favourite schemes speedily introduced.

Both these classes are urging the Government upon what it has not the power, and ought not to have the desire, to perform. Notwithstanding the many questionable acts our rulers have lapsed into since first they lent an ear to the counsels of those who array conquest, even when unprovoked and aggressive, in the garb of a moral and religious duty, there is still so much reliance reposed in our good faith that we as yet retain many powerful and valuable allies. Nepaul, with its army of 40,000 brave and well-trained soldiers, the lately conquered Sikhs, and the hitherto uninvolved borderers beyond the Indus, the wealthy protected chieftains of the Cis-Sutledge territory, almost all the warlike tribes of Rajpootana, and even the two Mahatta princes of Indore and Gwalior, have proved faithful to our cause in our hour of extremest need. But they who thus far have stood by us cannot but have many feelings in harmony with those of our own mutinous subjects.

Community of religion, and other sympathies binding the Asiatic family of mankind together, and disparting them from the European, must, on an occasion like the present, cause those thus connected by nature to gravitate towards each other.

This tendency has been hitherto counteracted by the prestige of our uniform success, by the reliance placed in our good faith, and by the diplomatic skill of those able members of the Indian

services who, under the name of Political Agents, have been the objects of so much silly abuse.* But the resistance to a natural impulse must have a hint, and should our conduct ever give real disgust to the great body of our own native subjects, they would certainly find sympathisers among our native allies; and thus a combination might ensue too strong for us, with all our prowess, to make head against. Now nothing is more likely to generate a contagious feeling of hostility to us, as a race differing in religion, in language, in complexion, in habits, from our allies, as much as from our subjects, than a continuance of such indiscriminating severity as, it is to be feared, is still in practice in Upper India,—not without direct encouragement from the press on both sides of the water. The greater part of the favourite measures of those who write in support of systematic vengeance, would have a tendency to shake the confidence of our neighbours in the safety of an alliance with us. An almost Judaical hatred of them as idolaters has come in, to add sternness to the feelings entertained towards the people of India by the British public at home.

Judging by the tone of their speeches and writings, we might imagine that our mission in the East is believed by some to be like that of Joshua, and that we ought to go forth accordingly to smite the obstinate worshippers of false gods wherever they are to be found.

To contend by argument against such an impression would be useless; and it is here alluded to, only because it may account for the very un-English apathy exhibited by the public in general on the subject of the “wholesale hangings” which, as has been shown in a preceding passage, excite the disgust even of the youngest military men on the spot.

* It is instructive to observe how cordally the General Arthur Wellesley co-operated with the Political Agent John Malcolm when both were employed together in the very early years of the present century. It is also instructive to notice how many of those whose wisdom and energy have saved the Punjab and with it all Upper India, were included in the late Sir Charles Napier’s denunciations of the pestilent politicals who thwarted the plans of military commanders.

† See ante, p. 28.

The Gospel of peace has, it is true, often been heralded by wars and tumults, yet it is not by spreading terror and dismay among those whom we wish to bring under its benign influence that we ought to pave the way for its advance.

“Our prayer therefore,” to use the words of one of the ablest officers in Upper India, in a recent letter to a friend, “should be, that God will overrule the passions of sinful men, not of one, but of all classes.”

Let an earnest hope be added, that our rulers may not be tempted to hurry on a change in the administration of our Eastern empire at a moment like the present, when men’s minds are unhinged, and each successive mail brings intelligence of varying and deepening import.

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