

THE  
BENGAL REVERSION,

ANOTHER "EXCEPTIONAL CASE."

BY

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"If in the pride of our power, we ever forget the means by which it has been attained, and, casting away all our harvest of experience, are betrayed by a rash confidence in what we may deem our intrinsic strength to neglect those collateral means by which the great fabric of our power in India has hitherto been supported, we shall with our own hands precipitate the downfall of our authority"

SIR JOHN MALCOLM.

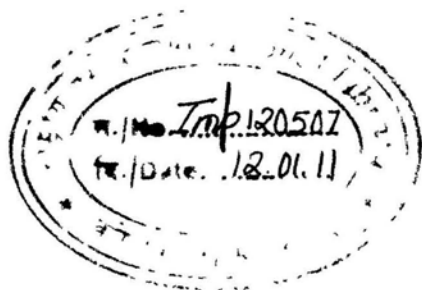
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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE first actual outbreak of the Indian mutiny in 1857 took place at Berhampore, a military station on the banks of the Ganges about a hundred miles North of Calcutta. Sir John Kaye informs us that the place was "well suited by its position for the development of the desired results."

"For only a few" (five) "miles beyond it lay the city of Moorshedabad, the home of the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, the representative of the line of Soubahdars, who, under the Imperial Government, had once ruled that great Province. It was known that the Nawab, who, though stripped of his ancestral power, lived in a Palace with great wealth and titular dignity and the surroundings of a Court, was rankling under a sense of indignities put upon him by the British Government, and that there were thousands in the city who would have risen at the signal of one who, weak himself, was yet strong in the prestige of a great name. At Berhampore there were no European troops; there were none anywhere near to it. A Regiment of Native Infantry, the Nineteenth, was stationed there, with a corps of Irregular Cavalry, and a battery of post guns manned by Native gunners. It was not difficult to see that if these troops were to rise against their English officers, and the people of Moorshedabad were to fraternise with them in the name of the Nawab, all Bengal would soon be in a blaze. No

thoughts of this kind disturbed the minds of our people, but the truth was very patent to the understanding of their enemies."

The historian relates how the routine-action of our Government favoured the growth of the evil,—how detachments from the most disaffected Regiments of all came in succession to Berhampore "to spread by personal intercourse the great contagion of alarm," and were received by their comrades of the Nineteenth "open-armed and open-mouthed." He describes the state of excitement and panic—"so often the prelude of dangerous revolt,"—into which the station and its neighbourhood were thrown, and finally explains how the "hostile combinations, by which the mutiny of a Regiment might have been converted into the rebellion of a Province," were, at this time and place, baffled and overthrown.

"Under the guidance of Colonel George Macgregor, the Nawab Nazim of Bengal threw the weight of his influence into the scale on the side of order and peace; and whatsoever might have been stirring in the hearts of the Mussulman population of Moorshedabad, in the absence of any signal from their Chief, they remained outwardly quiescent."\*

The "indignities" that are very naturally supposed to have been "rankling" in the heart of the Nawab were not of distant date, and he had then very little prospect or hope of redress. Lord Dalhousie, in 1853, had pronounced the Nawab guilty of allowing "a monstrous outrage upon humanity" to be "perpetrated under his very eyes," on the mere assumption that his Highness must have been cognizant of whatever occurred in his hunting encampment, even when he was absent from it. A petty theft having been committed in the camp, two persons, a

\* *The Sepoy War*, vol. i, chapter iv, p. 498-508.



boy and a beggar, were seized by the man who had been robbed, and violent measures were adopted by him and his companions to extort a confession and recover the goods. The two poor creatures were most cruelly beaten, and died a few days afterwards, and in the words of General Colin Mackenzie, who was Agent at Moorshedabad in 1858, and who carefully analysed the case in a report to Government,—“it is in the highest degree probable that they died from the beating, but there is no positive proof that they did so.” Several servants of the Nawab were tried on a charge of complicity in this murder—one of them, Aman Ali Khan, being a confidential chamberlain,—and were acquitted. The guilty parties were convicted and condemned. Lord Dalhousie, in defiance of the solemn verdict of the highest Court of Justice in India, decided that Aman Ali Khan, who had been acquitted, *was guilty*, and that the act of his Highness in agreeing with the Sudder Nizamut by believing him innocent, was a proof of his favour and affection for a murderer. He called for an explanation, but the expressions he used in so doing sufficiently show that he had made up his mind not only as to the guilt of the acquitted persons, but as to that of the Nawab Nazim himself. The Nawab Nazim was required to state “why he failed to exert his authority to prevent the perpetration of so outrageous a crime, *almost in his very presence*”, thus taking for granted that his Highness had known all about it.

The Nawab sent in an explanation which any impartial person would consider amply sufficient, but which Lord Dalhousie declared to be “most unsatisfactory”. In reply to Lord Dalhousie’s inquiry “why he continued to show favour and countenance to those who” (in his Lordship’s opinion, not in that of the Judges) “were concerned in the murder,” the Nazim naturally replied that

"when they were acquitted by the Sudder Court, after being so strictly tried, *I really thought them to be not guilty.*" The Nawab was peremptorily required by the Governor-General "to dismiss them altogether from his service," and to "hold no further communication with any of them." The Agent, Colonel Macgregor, was required to "report within one week" whether "this requisition had been complied with or not."

We shall quote one more passage from the Narrative of 1858 by General Colin Mackenzie.

"His Highness had an undoubted right to be of the same opinion as the Sudder Nizamut, but this Lord Dalhousie would by no means permit, and being in the only position in the world in which a British Sovereign or subject can punish those who have been legally acquitted, he decided that the eunuchs were guilty, and punished his Highness for believing them innocent, not only by depriving him of air and exercise, and of his right to have his travelling expenses paid from the Deposit Fund, but by recommending to the Court of Directors to diminish his Highness's stipend, to take away the salute of nineteen guns due to his rank as the acknowledged equal and brother of the Governor-General, or at least to diminish it to thirteen, 'so that the Nawab should no longer receive in public as he now does, higher honours than the Members of the Supreme Government of India!' He even declined to comply with an indent for military stores required for the Nazim's use, and brought in a Bill depriving his Highness, his family and relations, including the ladies, of all immunities and rights which had been secured to them by Treaties, by pledges from successive Governors-General, and by no less than four Acts of Council."

At this period Lord Dalhousie's influence with the Home Government was unbounded; his word was law. The Nawab's remonstrances were of no avail. The Court of Directors sanctioned all Lord Dalhousie's proposals except that of abolishing the salute,—"*it appeared sufficient that the number of guns be altered from nineteen to thirteen,*"—and that of reducing his Highness's income.

In 1859, as a reward for the Nawab's "numerous and valuable services rendered to the British Government

during the Sonthal rebellion in 1855, and at the more serious crisis which followed, the mutiny of the Bengal army in 1857," the public honours due to his Highness were replaced on their former scale, and the restrictions and deprivations imposed by Lord Dalhousie were wholly removed; but the immunity from certain legal processes previously enjoyed by the Nawab and the ladies of his family was not restored, the Governor-General considering that such a step 'would have "undesirable consequences", and would not be so advantageous to the Nawab as he supposed. In Lord Canning's letter, announcing the good news, the Nawab was assured that the Minute on the subject by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, "recorded in the archives of the Government, will serve as a perpetual remembrance of your Highness's active and zealous support, and of the firm friendship which exists between your Highness and the British Government".\*

The Nawab having now been reinstated very much on the old footing, it was, doubtless, expected by the authorities at Calcutta that, under a proper sense of these unexampled concessions, he would rest and be thankful. But the evil effects of an iniquitous act are not so easily dispelled. The Nawab was relieved from the personal indignity and the restraint over his movements ordained by Lord Dalhousie, but the charge of privity to a murder and of harbouring and favouring the murderers, which had been used as the pretext for these penalties, was not withdrawn or modified. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Frederick Halliday, on whose Minute Lord Canning's measures of recompense were based, had concurred in 1853, as a Member of Council, in Lord Dalhousie's condemnation of the Nawab. He had thus pre-

\* *Return to the House of Lords, Honours and Rewards to Native Princes* (77 of 1860), p. 163.

judged the case, and was not prepared to admit in 1859 that his condemnation had been hasty and ill-founded.

Mr. Grant Duff, the Under Secretary of State for India, in the debate on Mr. Havilland Burke's motion on the 4th July, 1871, does, indeed, so far modify the original charge as to say that "*the Court of Directors* never accused the Nawab of having been actually an accomplice in the murder. What they accused him of"—continued the honourable gentleman, "was only of having falsely stated to the Governor-General's Agent that he had dismissed from his service the persons who had committed the murder, and having afterwards extended marked and especial favour to one, at least, of these persons". And the Under Secretary suggests that "the whole story of his" (the Nawab's) "misconduct would have been utterly forgotten if he had not gone out of his way to revive it".

But the Agent to the Governor-General in 1858, under Lord Canning's Government,—still, happily, living to answer for himself,—could see nothing of that "misconduct", which the Under Secretary considers himself justified in imputing.

General Colin Mackenzie, in that *Narrative of Nizamut Affairs* already cited, declares that "the Nawab Nazim's explanation bears truth on the face of it;" and thus dismisses the incident on which the Under Secretary,—following, as he says, the Court of Directors' despatch of 1854,—founds the charge of making a false statement, to which the accusation against the Nawab is now reduced.

"His Highness seems at first to have understood that the Governor-General had ordered the dismissal of the eunuchs, though nothing is said of this in Lord Dalhousie's letter, but hearing nothing of the matter during an interval of four months, and having information that the affair had been referred to the Court of Directors, he thought they never would sanction such an injustice as punishing men for a crime of which they had been acquitted, nor such an interference with his own domestic arrange-

ments, and therefore instead of depriving himself wholly of old and favourite attendants, he allowed them to continue among his retinue, although not exercising their functions, until the matter should be finally decided. This turned out a most unfortunate step. The Agent reported that they were still in His Highness's service, and that Aman Ali Khan had resumed his duties."

Lord Dalhousie declared the charge against the Nawab to be much aggravated by this "unfortunate step", but he never reduced the charge to that of a mere false statement. And if the Court of Directors, as Mr. Grant Duff states, "put the most lenient construction possible" on the Nawab's acts or omissions, they were certainly not very lenient in the penalties they sanctioned and confirmed, and which were enforced for six years. If anyone, therefore, will try to place himself in the position of the Nawab,—or to adopt, for the moment, the conclusions formed by General Colin Mackenzie in 1858, after a careful review of the whole case,—it will be easily understood how his Highness, conscious of his innocence and of the undeserved sentence passed on him, should not regard the remission of the indignities and deprivations under which he had suffered quite as a reward, but rather as a partial reparation, and an imperfect reinstatement.

Some of the Nawab's occasional expenses had been, by one of the penal conditions of 1854 and during their continuance, thrown upon his personal allowance, instead of being defrayed, according to the long established practice, from the Nizamut Fund; and, by one of the restorative conditions of 1859, the usual payments were to be made from the Fund, when required on future occasions. But the more extensive questions, which had long been in dispute, as to the real ownership of that Fund, and as to the right of the Nawab Nazim to be consulted in its investment and disbursement, were still left open and unsettled. The Nizamut Fund was formed by deductions

and savings from the stipend allotted to the Nawab, under arrangements made from time to time with his predecessors, and the accumulations were annually increasing. Although this Fund had been constantly pronounced by the Government of India and by the Court of Directors, *not* to be "public money", to be "the inalienable property of the Nizamut," and "a part of the assignment secured by Treaty to the family", Lord Dalhousie had evinced an intention of disregarding the terms of the various trusts, and of treating the Fund as if it were entirely at the disposal of Government.

But worse remained behind. From the very terms in which the Court of Directors had negatived one of the proposed measures against the Nawab, there appeared reason to suspect that something still more harsh and hostile had been recommended by Lord Dalhousie. The Court of Directors would not reduce the Nawab's income,—they would not interfere with the Nizamut stipend, "*during his Highness's life-time*", thus causing the most serious alarm as to what they might be disposed to do after his demise. In short, the fact became known, (formally stated in General Colin Mackenzie's *Narrative*, and since published in several official Papers,) that the Nawab's alleged misconduct had been turned to account by Lord Dalhousie for the furtherance of his policy—avowed in 1848,—of losing no "such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory *or revenue* as may from time to time present themselves", and of obtaining "ultimate reversions of revenue into the general exchequer of India",\*—that in his Minutes and despatches on the subject the Governor-General had recorded his opinion that the Nawab had "no right or title whatever to any allowance by treaty or compact, or by virtue of any agreement", but that he and

\* *Post*, p. 53.

his predecessors had hitherto received their stipend "of the free grace and favour of the British Government." The future existence of the family was threatened. All security for their dignities and possessions was denied.

Alarmed by these ominous intimations and still more portentous rumours, but encouraged by the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, and by the favourable change in the aspect of our Government, the Nawab, having got his inch in 1859, has ever since continued asking for his ell in several memorials to the Government of India and to the Secretary of State. After a great deal of correspondence, a crisis was reached in a despatch from the Secretary of State, Sir Charles Wood (now Lord Halifax) dated the 17th of June, 1864, an "Extract" from which was forwarded for the information of his Highness the Nawab Nazim. This "Extract" is certified as a "true copy" by no less than three officials,—by "C. U. Aitchison, Under Secretary to the Government of India," by "Maurice Power, Assistant in charge of office on tour", and by "W. B. Buckle, Agent to the Governor-General",—showing, we may presume, the stages by which it was transmitted to the hands of the Nawab Nazim. At each stage the "Extract" was, it would appear, copied, but at which of them it was manipulated so as to render it anything but a "true copy", does not appear. The despatch in its complete form (as in the *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 371 of 1870,) consists of fourteen paragraphs. After mentioning the "long series of official papers" from the Government of India, and the memorials received from the Nawab, the Secretary of State proceeds to "review all the circumstances of his Highness's position." There are many historical inaccuracies in the sketch of the relations between the East India Company and the Nawab's predecessors which occupies paragraphs 4 and 5 of the de-

spatch ; but although the opinion is expressed, as a matter of abstract argument, that "the family of the Nawab Nazim of Bengal have, under the Firman of Shah Allum, no claim upon the British Government", and that "under the Treaties" concluded with his ancestors, "the Nawab Nazim of Bengal has no acquired rights," the practical conclusion laid down in paragraph 6—duly communicated to the Nawab in the "Extract,"—is of the most reassuring nature.

"In 1772, by an order of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, passed on a review of the proceedings of the Bengal Government upon the accession of Moobaruk-ood-Dowlah, and of the Treaty concluded with him by the Indian Government, the stipend of the Nawab Nazim was fixed at the annual amount of 16 lacs of rupees. No treaties of a later date than 1770 were entered into with the descendants of Meer Jaffier, but, on the occasion of each succession, the member of the House entitled to succeed by Mahomedan Law has been recognised by the British Government as Nawab Nazim, and the stipend of 16 lacs of rupees has continued to be appropriated to the benefit of the Nazim and other members of the family. By whatsoever terms, strictly defined, the Nawab Nazim may hold the titles and privileges which he now enjoys, it is obvious to me that they could not be interfered with or altered, during good conduct, without a violation of the spirit, at least, of the assurances which have been given to him by our Government, and a departure from the whole tenure of our transactions with him during a long course of years. I perceive with satisfaction, therefore, that your Government have no intention of disturbing subsisting arrangements for the pecuniary provision of the Nawab Nazim and his family, and the maintenance of the titular dignity of his Highness".\*

In the Extract furnished to the Nawab there is a hiatus, marked by asterisks, between paragraphs 11 and 13 ; and though any reservation in communicating a despatch of this kind may have raised some anxiety in the minds of those interested, no one could have been prepared for the eventual disclosure that the confidence created by paragraph 6 was proved to be false by para-

\* *Papers, Nawab Nuzim* (371 of 1870), p. 4.



graph 12,—that the promises apparently made to the Nawab Nazim and his family in the paragraph communicated, were made of no effect in the paragraph reserved. The omitted passage runs as follows :—

“12. It appears to have been the intention of your Government to leave the adjustment of future relations with the family of the Nawab Nazim until the necessity shall actually arise. But I am of opinion that it is advisable that the future position of the Nawab Nazim's sons should be fixed and defined with as little delay as possible, in order that the young men may be made acquainted with the status which they are to hold after the death of the present Nawab whilst they are yet sufficiently young to form habits adapted to the circumstances in which they may be placed. With reference to this consideration, Her Majesty's Government desire to be put in possession of the views of your Excellency in Council with respect to the future provision to be made for the Nazim's family. Your Excellency is aware that this Government are fully sensible of the inconvenience of perpetuating, in this or in any other family, a line of titled stipendiaries, without power and responsibility, and without salutary employment conducive to their happiness and their respectability. It would seem to be the desire of the Nazim that his sons should be trained to useful occupations, and I should be glad, therefore, to learn from your Excellency's Government whether, in your opinion any arrangements can be made to place these young noblemen in an honourable position, enabling them to become useful members of society, before they are so moulded to habits of idleness as to render it difficult, if not impossible, to make a favourable impression upon them. It is possible that the accumulations in the Deposit Fund may, in some manner, be so employed as to form, to a certain extent, a permanent endowment for some members of the family, and, at the same time, to supply those incentives to exertion which cannot exist in the case of mere Government stipendiaries.”\*

The omission of this all-important portion of the despatch from the “Extract” for the Nawab's information was open and undisguised; and we may fully admit the indispensable discretionary power of withholding from persons interested, or from the general community, any parts of an official document that the Government, from

\* *Papers, Nawab Nazim* (371 of 1870), p. 6.

a regard for the public weal, may consider it would be unadvisable to make known.

Although a critical analysis of the language employed in paragraph 6 may show that its letter is not quite irreconcilable with that of paragraph 12, and that its conciliatory spirit is very superficial and indefinite, no impartial reader can, we think, examine the two passages in conjunction without being irresistibly led to the conclusion that the one was expressly written to be shown, and the other not to be shown,—that paragraph 12 announced the real policy, and the course to be pursued at the next demise, while paragraph 6 was carefully worded to keep the present Nawab quiet, and to make things pleasant during his life time.

There was another paragraph in the despatch calculated to make things pleasant for the Nawab, which, however, was withheld from him in the "Extract." Whether this was done at the first stage, in the office of the Secretary to Government, or at the last, in that of the Agent to the Governor-General at Moorshedabad, does not appear, but in either case the reservation was made in an irregular style, quite disentitling the "Extract" to the triple certificate of being a "true copy." Of course this may have been a fortuitous occurrence,—though that is hardly credible,—it may have been the unauthorised act of a subordinate, undertaken either as a volunteer stroke of state-craft, or with transcendental views of clerical symmetry, but the effect is decidedly undignified, and painfully suggestive of deception. The paragraph omitted is numbered 8. But instead of there being any hiatus between 7 and 9 in the "true copy" sent to the Nawab, a paragraph numbered 8 still appears therein,—the real paragraph 7 being, with this object, divided into two parts, numbered 7 and 8.

PARAGRAPH 7 OF SIR CHARLES WOOD'S DESPATCH, DATED  
17TH JUNE, 1864.

*As in the Parliamentary Papers,  
No. 371 of 1870.*

*As subdivided in the "true copy"  
sent for the Nawab's information.*

"7. It appears that the personal allowance of the Nawab Nazim himself is about seven lakhs of rupees, that, from the remaining nine lakhs, provision is made for other members of the family, and that the balance goes to the formation of an accumulating fund, known as the 'Nizamut Deposit Fund'. It is unnecessary to trace further the history of this Fund. Its accumulations, representing, as they do, the unappropriated portions from year to year of the sixteen lakhs stipend, unquestionably belong to the Nazim and his family, and can properly be expended only for their benefit. But this does not confer upon the Nazim himself any right to dispose, or to superintend the disposal, of these balances. This right belongs to the Government, under the conditions upon which the Fund was constituted. It was assumed, in the first instance, mainly for the benefit and protection of the Nazim and his family; and I am of opinion that it is to the advantage of his Highness and his family that this system should be maintained. At the same time, it would seem to be desirable, and I believe that, to some extent, it has been the practice, in past time, for your Government, through the Agent at Moorshedabad, occasionally to consult the Nazim with respect to any extraordinary expenditure from the Nizamut Fund."

"7. It appears that the personal allowance of the Nawab Nazim himself is about seven lakhs of rupees, that, from the remaining nine lakhs, provision is made for the members of the family, and that the balance goes to the formation of an accumulating fund known as the 'Nizamut Deposit Fund'.

"8. It is unnecessary to trace further the history of the Fund. Its accumulations, representing, as they do, the unappropriated portions from year to year, of the sixteen lakhs stipend, unquestionably belong to the Nawab Nazim and his family, and can properly be expended only for their benefit. But this does not confer upon the Nazim himself any right to dispose, or to superintend the disposal, of these balances. This right belongs to the Government under the conditions upon which the Fund was constituted. It was assumed in the first instance mainly for the benefit and protection of the Nazim and his family; and I am of opinion that it is to the advantage of His Highness and his family that this system should be maintained. At the same time it would seem to be desirable, and, I believe, that to some extent, it has been the practice in past time, for your Government, through the Agent at Moorshedabad, occasionally to consult the Nazim with respect to any extraordinary expenditure from the Nizamut Fund."

The real paragraph 8, thus withdrawn from the Nawab's

observation and inquisitiveness, was to the following effect :—

“8. It has always been the desire of Her Majesty’s Government that a liberal view should be taken of the claims of the family of the Nazim, in respect to the appropriation of the accumulations in the Deposit Fund to objects calculated to advance their happiness and to support their dignity. To this end, in my Despatch of the 7th of July, 1859, I authorised an advance of four lakhs of rupees from the Deposit Fund for the payment of the Nawab Nazim’s debts, leaving it to the discretion of the Government whether this sum should be a loan, to be repaid by instalments, or a substantive grant for the above purpose. In the same Despatch I requested that the decision upon this point might be communicated to Her Majesty’s Government at the earliest convenience of the Governor-General in Council, and that the money might be paid to the Nawab Nazim without any further delay. But I regret that I have not received from your Government any communication whatsoever on the subject, and I cannot ascertain that the money has ever been advanced in any shape ; I desire, therefore, to be informed whether anything was done in consequence of these instructions.”\*

The claims of the Nazim and his family to the Nizamut Fund having occupied a great space in the discussions which caused the appeal to the Home Government, this paragraph with its “liberal view” of the question in general, and the directions for an immediate advance of four lakhs of rupees (£40,000), would have been most gratifying to the Nawab. But apparently the Government at Calcutta considered that the communication of this paragraph would be much too gratifying, and desired to avoid or postpone the advance of four lakhs of rupees, notwithstanding the instructions on that head of the Secretary of State, amounting almost to a positive order. Several years elapsed before it became known to the Nawab Nazim that this advance had been authorised, and if we apply rightly some passages in the speech of Mr. Grant

\* *Papers, Nawab Nazim* (371 of 1870), pp. 4, 5.

Duff on the 4th July, 1871, the grant had not been fully disbursed even on that date.\*

The peculiar manner in which paragraph 8 was withdrawn from view, prevented all inquiry on the subject. But the Nawab soon got wind of the far more important paragraph 12, denouncing, in terms equivalent to Red Republican invectives against "an idle and profligate nobility", the very existence of the Nizamut family. The historian of the Sepoy War remarks, with reference to Lord Dalhousie's plan for annexing Kerowlee, which caused a panic throughout the States of Rajpootana, that "it was well known at every Native Court, in every Native bazaar". In such matters there is "no Secret Department".† Perhaps all the secondary and subordinate officials who were cognizant of these denunciations, had not been properly impressed by their superiors with the advisability of keeping things quiet and pleasant during the Nawab's lifetime. Somehow or other the facts leaked out. It became known that the Secretary of State had objected to "*the inconvenience of perpetuating a line of titled stipendiaries*", had declared that the sons of the Nawab Nazim would be placed in altered circumstances "*after the death of the present Nawab*", and had suggested that they should not be "*moulded to habits of idleness*", but "*trained to useful occupations*".‡

As the Secretary of State propounds no scheme for extinguishing or annihilating this "line of titled stipendiaries", it is not easy to imagine how he intends to prevent it from "perpetuating" itself. Nor is it any easier to divine how the "inconvenience" of such a "line" exist-

\* "Then the Government undertook to give him £40,000 to clear off certain debts, if that sum was found necessary. The Government has given him, or is going to give him, the money—£25,000 it has given him, and £15,000 it is going to give him."

† *Kaye's Sepoy War*, vol. i, p. 96.

‡ *Ante*, p. xiii.

ing can be removed by its comparative impoverishment and degradation. Unless the acquisition of revenue by any means is to over-ride all other considerations, it is difficult to see the advantage of perverting a family of great influence from a state of contented quiescence and harmonious co-operation to a state of morbid activity and discontented opposition.

It is not enough to say in condemnation of the visionary plausibilities brought forward in paragraph 12 of the despatch of 17th June, 1864, that they evince an utter and contemptuous want of sympathy with the class attacked: they betray an utter ignorance of the conditions of Indian society, and of its most energetic and sensitive constituent, Mahomedan society. How did Lord Halifax expect the Princes of the Moorshedabad family to be weaned from what he stigmatises as "habits of idleness", and to be "trained to useful occupations"? To what part of the globe could he refer them for an example? Such efforts of self-denial and self-abasement are not expected of European "Royalties retired from business," whether of ancient or *parvenu* origin,—of a Bonaparte or a Bourbon, a Murat or a Vasa. Oriental Royalties, their followers and adherents, have the same prejudices and pride, and lack the outlets and consolations that are possessed by their Western compeers. The British Government of India opens no road to the honourable ambition of young Nawabs and Rajahs. Mediatised Princes find places in the Army, the diplomatic service and the executive administration of Germany and Austria. There is room for a Saxe-Weimar in our Army, for a Leiningen and a Gleichen in our Navy. The Dukes of Chartres and Penthièvre can serve Republican France. But no son of a Princely line in India, reigning or mediatised, is admitted into the Army or Civil Service of the

Empire, unless he should solicit employment in some inferior situation such as no English gentleman would accept. When the head of one of these families is deprived of the stipend on which he maintains a host of relatives and connections,—and to a somewhat less degree when the stipend is reduced and sub-divided, with the prospect of gradual extinction,—the result must be immediate ruin to many, loss and humiliation to the whole tribe, while the only life of activity to which our Government invites them is one of conspiracy and fanaticism.

As soon as the Nawab Nazim had ascertained beyond the possibility of doubt that it was to a fate like this his family was destined, unless our Government could be induced to reconsider the sentence passed by Lord Dalhousie in 1853, he determined to proceed in person to London,—there, at the foot of the Throne and before the Great Council of the Empire, to ask for inquiry and redress.

The Nawab never did, and does not, claim a sum of more than eighteen millions sterling, exclusive of interest, as a settlement of the arrears and outstanding balances due to the Nizamut. He does *not* ask that the stipend may be raised, either with retrospective or prospective effect, to the amount mentioned in the Treaty of 1770, £318,000, instead of £160,000, the annual sum that has been allotted since the year 1772, and during five successions, for the support of the Nizamut. He did not “assert”—as the Government of India suggested by way of a *reductio ad absurdum* of his case,—“that Her Majesty in the year 1870 ought to reconsider the justice and propriety of the policy of Warren Hastings in 1770, with the view, if it should appear to have been unjust or impolitic, of reestablishing the representative of Meer Jaffier as hereditary Soubadar of Bengal, and of reducing

herself to the position of Dewan.”\* The Nawab has not made the extravagant demands, or preferred the monstrous pretensions that have been ascribed to him, the rumour of which,—not entirely of spontaneous growth,—is known to have raised a prejudice in many minds against his Highness’s case, and to have diverted attention from its real nature and merits.

What the Nawab really does ask is an assurance by the Imperial Government, in any form that may be considered becoming, that the honours and dignities of the Nizamut and Soobahdarry of Bengal are what they were publicly proclaimed to be at his accession,—and at the accession of every one of his predecessors,—“*hereditary honours and dignities.*”† He also asks that the stipend which has been for a century, and during five successions, settled on the Nawab Nazim, shall be pronounced to be what it was declared to be by the Home Government in 1840,—two years after the present Nawab’s accession,—“*the assignment secured by Treaty to the family,*”‡ and shall not be again diminished.

He asks that the Nizamut Fund may be clearly acknowledged to be what it was invariably declared to be until 1853,—when the new doctrines of Lord Dalhousie were propounded,—“*the inalienable property of the Nizamut*”; or, in the words of the Home Government in 1840, “*not ‘public money’, but a part of the assignment secured by Treaty to the Family, which part is allowed to accumulate for its general benefit,*”§ or in the words of the Secretary of State’s despatch of 17th June, 1864, paragraph 8, “*to belong unquestionably to the Nawab Nazim and his family,*” “*to be expended only for their*

\* Despatch to the Secretary of State, dated 29th July, 1870, *Papers, Nawab Nazim* (116 of 1871), p. 4.

† *Post*, pp. 17, 18.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 78.



*benefit.*"\* So much being granted, he asks that this Fund may be really maintained and expended for the benefit of the Nawab Nazim and his family, and that it may be not applied, at his demise, to form what is called in paragraph 12 of the same despatch, "a permanent endowment" for his sons and other "members of the family",—that is to say, a provision on a reduced scale made out of the accumulated savings of the "assignment secured by Treaty", the assignment being no longer paid. This would really be to apply "the inalienable property of the Nizamut" for the benefit of the British Government.

The Nizamut stipend, instituted in 1765, when, on being invested with the Dewannee or Financial Administration of Bengal, the East India Company became entitled to exercise control over the expenditure, was intended, in the words of the original agreement, to cover the expenses of the Nawab's "*household, servants,*" and "*retinue*", and "*the support of his dignity only*".† It was, therefore, distinctly of the nature of a Civil List, and the argument that has been sometimes brought forward, that the word "Nizamut" means simply "government," and that those allowances were for the expense of carrying on the administration, falls to the ground at once. No part of the expense of administration was ever paid out of the Nizamut stipend.

After their acquisition of the Dewannee, but more particularly during the minority of two Nawabs in succession, between 1766 and 1782, the East India Company contrived to possess themselves of all the functions of executive administration; the judicial department alone being left under the partial control of the Native Prince until 1793. The Nawab Nazim was thus gradually reduced to the position of a mediatised Sovereign.

\* *Ante*, p. xiv.

† *Papers, Nawab Nazim* (371 of 1870), pp. 13, 14; *Post*, p. 27.

During this double minority, also,—by means of two Treaties, and the arbitrary suspension by order of the Court of Directors of one half of the Nawab's allowances during "the nonage" of the younger of these Princes, which suspension was extended indefinitely until it became permanent,—the Nizamut stipend was gradually reduced to the amount at which it has been fixed for the last hundred years, £160,000 per annum.

During this same period of their "nonage", the two minor Nawabs were, by some process of management or guardianship, deprived of large landed estates, the possession of which would for ever have secured the family from being entirely dependent on the honour and forbearance of the stronger party to the Treaty of 1770, and from being stigmatised in 1871 by Mr. Grant Duff, the Under Secretary of State for India, as "titled stipendiaries," "recipients of the bounty of the British Government." The Nizamut stipend, therefore, is not merely a perpetual annuity, settled on a mediatised Princely family in consideration of the loss of their sovereignty, and of great political services rendered to the Imperial Government, but stands also as compensation for the loss of their domains. In consequence of these losses and reductions, the Nawab Nazim has a much smaller income than several noblemen and land-holders in Bengal,—the Rajah of Burdwan, for example, about the richest man in India,—who, nevertheless, would not think of claiming for themselves anything like an equality of rank with the descendant of the rulers of the country and grantors of their estates, and would never address him in writing except in the style of a humble petitioner.

For the whole of the Nizamut stipend of £160,000 the Nawab Nazim is required to grant his acquittance, although only the sum of £70,000 is paid directly to

him,—the rest being apportioned out to other members of the family, or added to the Nizamut Fund. The present Nawab alleges—in pursuance of long-standing claims—that the accumulations of this Fund have been allowed to grow far beyond what was contemplated and stipulated in the several arrangements between his predecessors and the Government of India; that lapsed pensions and allowances of deceased relatives and dependents are constantly being absorbed into the Fund, instead of being restored to the income of the head of the family; that sums from the Fund are applied to purposes foreign to the interests of the Nizamut; and that by these processes a great part of the assignment under treaty is improperly withheld from the Nawab, and a large amount of family property intercepted by the British Government.

But these are points of minor importance, mere details in the inquiry for which the Nawab sues, when compared with the main point of the threatened subjection of his heir, at the next succession, to a very considerable diminution of his prescriptive income, to the total sequestration, however disguised and glorified, of the accumulated family capital, and to the denial of his hereditary rank, with the necessary consequences of social humiliation and heavy loss to the entire family.

In 1869 the Nawab Nazim arrived in London. On the 28th of July in that year he presented his Memorial to the Secretary of State, the Duke of Argyll. In conformity with the rule in such cases, the Memorial was sent to the Government of India for their comments and report. A full year and a day elapsed before the opinions of the Governor-General and Council were embodied in a despatch dated the 29th of July, 1870.\* It reached this country of course after the close of the Parliamentary

\* *Papers, Nawab Nazim* (116 of 1871), p. 2. :

session; and the Duke of Argyll's letter to the Nawab, in reply to his Highness's Memorial, is dated the 23rd of December, 1870.\* This communication from the Secretary of State conveys, in colourless language and with a total avoidance of argumentative exposition, his general concurrence with the views of the despatch of the 17th June, 1864, from Sir Charles Wood, who was then Secretary of State, while the Duke of Argyll was Lord Privy Seal, and who now, as Lord Halifax, holds the Privy Seal in the same Cabinet in which the Duke sits as Secretary of State for India.

The only noteworthy passage in the Duke's letter to the Nawab is his Grace's declaration that "having deliberately considered the circumstances of the treaties" between his "Highness's predecessors on the one side and the British Government on the other", he "can come to no other conclusion than that they were *not of an hereditary nature*",—a conclusion which, even if it were sound and tenable, entirely passes by the prescriptive claims of the Nizamut, proved and displayed by the uniform and reiterated statements and acts of all British authorities, at home and in India, for a hundred years, and which, in the absence of any Treaty, would amply suffice to establish the hereditary nature of the Nawab's dignity and revenue.

But if the Duke's letter calls for no critical remark, confined as it is to a pointless declaration of adherence to previous official proceedings, the same cannot be said of the positions assumed in the House of Commons by the Under-Secretary of State on the 4th July, 1871, when after an interval of two years—caused, as we have seen, by no delay on the Nawab's part,—the motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the Treaties between

\* *Papers, Nawab Nazim* (116 of 1871), p. 8

the East India Company and the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, was introduced by Mr. Haviland Burke. No one on that occasion can have been prepared for the offensive weapons produced and the new ground occupied by Mr. Grant Duff. We shall endeavour to show in the following pages that these newly invented weapons of offence are by no means arms of precision, and that, however well calculated to inflict pain, their effect cannot be fatal. We shall endeavour to show that the new ground occupied is false and treacherous, and that although for once a lightly equipped partisan may skim over the surface, it will not bear even his weight a second time.

When a professed judge has adopted the style and tactics of a partisan, the appellant may be excused, and his cause ought to suffer no prejudice, if he calls in the aid of a professed advocate.\* The only tribunal before which the appeal can be heard is by no means generally well instructed in Indian affairs. It will be one of our objects to expose the flagrant misdirection of the tribunal,

\* Although I have no objection to the character of advocate in this case, —one of a class especially needing advocacy, and accepted for advocacy or advice by some of the most eminent living judges and counsel,—let me observe that the principles and political considerations on which my arguments proceed are not the growth of the present occasion, but have been brought forward by me, in season and out of season,—officially, more strongly than such humble places as I filled usually permit, officiously, by such literary means as were available,—for more than fifteen years; and that I did not want a rebellion to teach them to me; that in 1856 I placed on official record the cruel results of disinheriting the heir of the Rajah of Nagpore; that in 1857, under very peculiar circumstances, I addressed a refutation of Lord Dalhousie's novel doctrine of "Lapse", as applied in the recent annexations of Nagpore and Jhansi, directly to Lord Canning, and suggested the reconstitution of the former Native State. In April 1861, an article from my pen (reprinted in 1864 in *The Empire in India*), recommended the very policy towards Mysore,—the maintenance of the State under an adopted heir, and the gradual restoration of Native agency,—which in 1867 was ordered by the Secretary of State to be carried out in every particular.—E. B.

at the first hearing last year, by the official representative of the Imperial Government, who would naturally be expected and trusted to give full and accurate information as to the facts of the case, and its political and social bearings.

What is to become of this expectation and trust, what can be thought of the merits of the official answer, when it appears that Mr. Grant Duff's contemptuous assertions, that "the Nawab Nazim of Bengal is no Prince", that "his father was no Prince", that "his grandfather was no Prince", that "none of his predecessors have been Indian Princes", constitute an irreconcilable defiance of history, of law, and of the innumerable declarations and uniform practice of our Government down to the present day? What will be thought of the inherent strength of the official case, when Mr. Grant Duff's bold assertion that the Treaty of 1770 between the East India Company and the Nawab Mobaruk-ood-Dowlah, "was never ratified by the proper authority, and never acted on during the whole of the life of the person to whose life it exclusively applied," appears to be totally without foundation,—when it is proved that it *was* "ratified by the proper authority"; that the Court of Directors (to whose arbitrary action the Under Secretary most inaccurately refers,) approved and confirmed the Treaty; that it was "acted on" in every respect, without a jot or tittle of deduction, during two years of the life of the Nawab Mobaruk-ood-Dowlah, and, saving the arbitrary and professedly temporary modification of one of its provisions, during the whole of his life; and that so far from this Treaty being "exclusively applied" to the life of that Nawab, it was to be "inviolably observed for ever", and has been repeatedly and continuously recognised as a still subsisting Treaty during the life of every successor to the Nizamut, including the present Nawab?

What can be thought of the competence of Mr. Grant Duff to grasp the complex problem of the social and sectarian forces at work in India, when he is found speaking of the people of Bengal as "a Hindoo population,"\* totally ignoring the Mussulman inhabitants, who form a considerable part of the population, and who far surpass all other sects and classes in average intelligence and spirit, in social organisation and political capacity?

The Under Secretary's failure to appreciate the importance of the Mussulman community as a constituent in the population of Bengal,—his utter inability to realise the scene of action, the plot of the drama, or the places of the several performers,—tempt us to hazard a conjecture that he must have been tutored in his own part by some one accepted at the India Office as an expert in Bengal affairs. Keeping in view the high probability of such instruction, it is necessary to recollect that in the whole matter of the Nawab's appeal the original respondent is the provincial Government of Bengal, under which the immediate supervision of Nizamut affairs has always been left; and that the functionaries of that Province have evinced on every possible occasion, from the first establishment of British power down to the present day, the most marvellous lack of insight into Mahomedan opinion and feeling, and into the fluctuations and progress of the Mahomedan movement. It matters not whether this blindness is altogether an incurable defect, or whether,—as we are inclined to think,—it arises from that haughty and unsympathetic indifference to every social and spiritual force of purely Native growth, which a true statesman might be expected to overcome, but which has always been the weakness of our system in India, hardly less prevalent among the supreme than

\* *Post*, p. 64.

among the subordinate authorities, most conspicuous at the great centres of British power, and preeminently so at Calcutta.

At Calcutta, where everything is bedaubed with a thin wash of European culture,—where gas-lamps and an Italian Opera House, daily newspapers and an Art Union, attest the progress of humanity, where the palanquin has given place to the brougham, and Baboos in patent-leather boots display their enlightenment by eating beef-steaks and drinking bottled porter,—the highly placed English officials of long service and great experience become quite unable to realise the possibility of any attack on Government within the Regulation Provinces more formidable than an ‘indignation’ meeting at the Town Hall, a memorial from the British Indian Association, or an article in the *Hindoo Patriot*. The same arrogant confidence has always been equally characteristic of the Viceregal Cabinet and Secretariat, and of the local Government of Bengal, in ordinary times, and has been very rapidly recovered after any shock or convulsion.

It is well known that at the outbreak of the Rebellion of 1857, the only man in Lord Canning’s Council who perceived the dangerous crisis that had arrived, who forecast the magnitude of the struggle, and insisted that there must be no trifling with it, was General Sir John Low. The great Civilians were all for adhering to the strict forms of law. At first they would not believe that the contagion would spread through the army,—“they laid it down as a maxim that no corps ever mutinied which was properly commanded”.\* When the defection of seventy Regiments overturned that theory, they maintained that no civil district had risen, would or could rise

\* *The Mutiny of the Bengal Army*, by One who has served under Sir Charles Napier (1857), p. 175.



in revolt, or that any part of the civil population could join or sympathise with the Sepoys, for this was a purely military mutiny. The extended area of insurrection soon upset this theory also; but the old colleagues and supporters of Lord Dalhousie stuck to it as long as they could.

In the extract already given from Sir John Kaye's history we are told that the great danger of a Mahomedan rising in Bengal—more particularly if it could start from Moorshedabad as a centre, with the ostensible countenance of the Nawab,—was “very patent to the understanding of our enemies”, but that “no thoughts of this kind disturbed the minds of our people”.\*

In the same beautiful spirit of undisturbed tranquillity and uninquiring confidence, Mr. (now Sir Frederick) Halliday, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, totally disapproved and denounced the precautionary measures taken in the middle of June, 1857,—the highest crisis of the insurrectionary spirit,—by Mr. William Tayler, Commissioner of Patna, to frustrate the machinations of Wahabee conspirators.

In order fully to appreciate what the situation was, it must be understood that Mr. Tayler was the responsible executive authority in the Province of Behar, with a population of several millions, composed of Hindoo tribes far more sturdy and turbulent than those of the Lower Districts of Bengal, and that the city of Patna, 380 miles from Calcutta, contains about 300,000 inhabitants, at least one-third being Mahomedan.

Acting on good information which none but a ruler who was popular, genial, and accessible, as well as able, would have been likely to procure, and the accuracy of which has been marvellously proved by events long sub-

\* *Ante*, p. iv.

sequent, Mr. Tayler quietly arrested and kept in close but honourable custody the leaders of the Wahabee sect, among whom was a person of considerable wealth and influence in the city of Patna, Moulavee Ahmed-oolla. Immediately on receiving intelligence of this step, the Lieutenant-Governor sent Mr. Tayler a curt requisition for copies of the documents on which he had based the arrest of the principal "*Wahabee gentlemen*". Mr. Halliday did not officially or openly condemn this measure at the time, nor directly interfere with Mr. Tayler's orders. But his constant warnings and exhortations to do nothing "harsh or illegal", and to take care not to overstep the law; his complimentary designation of the "*Wahabee gentlemen*"; his extraordinary opinion, publicly recorded, that it was "*inconceivable the Sepoys at Dinapore*" (ten miles from Patna) "*should mutiny*", which, however, they did on the 23rd July, and that he "*could not believe we were in any danger at Patna*"; are sufficient to show the justice of our allegation, that the Bengal authorities, even at the moment of greatest peril, have ever manifested an ignorant contempt for the social and spiritual forces that sway the masses around them.

Mr. Tayler checked and confounded the Wahabee designs until military operations rendered their immediate renewal hopeless; he saved our Government from an immeasurable aggravation of its difficulties, but he did not duly revere those in the brotherhood of the Bengal Civil Service who had attained to a higher step in the hierarchy. He observed, inquired, thought and acted promptly, but in an unheard-of predicament some of his acts were unprecedented and officially irregular. He was removed from Patna; and, being a man of high courage and independent spirit, the treatment he received from Government,—for, of course the Lieutenant-Governor's authority was supported.—drove him from the service.

Mr. Tayler's successor at Patna, carefully instructed to repair all breaches in the Regulations, at once released the "Wahabee gentlemen" from their confinement, received Moulavee Ahmed-oollah, their chief, with open arms, condoled with him on his unmerited sufferings, and congratulated him on his emancipation. The new Commissioner also reported, in words expressly approved by the Lieutenant-Governor,—

"With regard to the Wahabees, it is only necessary to say that there is not the slightest proof that any danger was to be apprehended from this sect."

"Mr. Tayler, indeed, talks of the men he arrested as the Wahabee leaders, but they were book-men, and had the sect been inclined to fight they would assuredly have selected other leaders."

"Without positively affirming the fact, I confess a doubt has often occurred to me whether Mr. Tayler was not worked upon to arrest the Wahabees, simply in order to get out of the way men who were likely to interfere with the plans of the conspirators. There is at least, as will be seen, some grounds for this hypothesis. There is none for attributing seditious designs to the Wahabees."

Mr. Tayler and his principal Mussulman subordinate, Mowla Buksh,—the confidence placed in whom proves that the Commissioner had no prejudice against Mahomedans,—having been removed from Patna, the much-injured Wahabees were taken into high favour. As if to demonstrate the absurdity of all suspicions against these harmless "book-men", their leader, that respectable "Wahabee gentleman", Moulavee Ahmed-oollah, was placed on the Committee of Public Instruction at Patna, where he sat for several years with the Commissioner, Collector, Civil Surgeon, and other English officials. He was also made an Assessor of Income Tax. These two appointments, giving him constant access to the local authorities, and showing how well he stood with them, were calculated very much to strengthen his position. Had not

Wahabee influence reached far beyond the limits of the Bengal Presidency, it might apparently have continued to spread and work, unseen and unchecked, recruiting its followers and over-awing its opponents, until the supreme opportunity arrived. But the very extent of its operations led to the detection of its leaders.

In 1863 Moulavee Ahmed-oollah had the honour of being presented to the Viceroy of India in the reception-hall of Belvedere House at Calcutta. In 1864 he was transported for life to the Andaman Islands.

Seven years had scarcely elapsed since Mr. Tayler was removed from Patna, condemned as having "caused general scandal and discontent" by his administration, particularly by that act of wanton oppression against those inoffensive and loyal subjects, the "Wahabee gentlemen",—seven years had scarcely elapsed since Mr. Halliday, the Lieutenant-Governor, sent an official letter containing high praise of the "Wahabee gentlemen" to the public journals, and had it placed on record in every Commissioner's office in Bengal,—when a police-officer from the Punjaub arrived at Patna, apprehended Moulavee Ahmed-oollah and his brother Yahya Ali, searched their houses, and carried them off to be tried for their lives on several charges of treason.

For immediately after the costly and bloody Umbeyla campaign of 1863, under General Sir Neville Chamberlain, against the Wahabee fanatics of Sittana, judicial investigations clearly established the fact that the hostile colony beyond the North-Western corner of the Punjaub frontier was recruited and subsidised from the British Provinces of Bengal and Hindostan, that Patna had been for many years the head-quarters, arsenal, and bank, the very centre and hot-bed of this fanatical and treasonable organisation; and that those innocent "book-men",

Moulavee Ahmed-oolla and his brother Yahiya Ali, were its leading spirits and most active supporters, incessantly preaching a Jihād or religious war against the British Government, deputing emissaries throughout Bengal to promote the enterprise, and forwarding men, money, and arms to the stronghold of the brigands beyond our frontier. They were condemned to death, but the sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

Immediately after the conviction of Moulavee Ahmed-oolla, the life of the Judge of Patna, Mr. Ainslie, who had tried the case, was attempted by a Mahomedan, who, after being found guilty in the local court, was acquitted by the appellate tribunal on the ground of insanity. The murderous assault failed, and the prosecution of the assailant failed also. It has been suspected that if he was mad, there was some method in his madness.

The suspicion that there is some method in such madness, cannot but become still stronger when the circumstances of two similar acts that have been perpetrated within the last year,—with no failure, alas! in either instance,—are duly considered. Two noble victims have fallen before the knife of the assassin, and in each case there was that same apparent absence of motive for the crime which gave plausibility to the plea of insanity in the case of unsuccessful assault on the Judge of Patna. The fact that he had just convicted and sentenced Moulavee Ahmed-oolla, was at the time scarcely noted.

In consequence of fresh information from the Punjab and North-West Provinces, inquiries into the Wahabee conspiracy and *propaganda* were pursued with augmented energy in 1869 and 1870. Several persons allied by relationship or close business connections with the “head centres” of Wahabeesism at Patna, were apprehended,—two of higher position and greater wealth than the others

being kept in jail for more than a year by a special process, very seldom put in force, a simple warrant of detention under the seal and sign manual of the Viceroy himself. These persons applied to the High Court of Calcutta for a writ of *habeas corpus*. After long argument this application and several others made on their behalf, were rejected by Mr. Justice Norman. The same Judge was expected to preside, as Acting Chief Justice, when their appeal from the verdict and sentence of the Sessions Court on their trial came up for hearing. On the threshold of the High Court, where the Wahabee conspirators would have been brought for judgment before him, Chief Justice Norman was struck down in open day. The assassin, having in all probability heard something, or having been instructed, as to the escape of the criminal on a previous occasion, feigned insanity. That expedient proving useless, he died and made no sign.

Lord Mayo was the Viceroy who instituted and carried on with unprecedented vigour, the renewed inquisition into the doings of the Wahabee confederacy. By a strange fatality he visits the very place to which Moulavee Ahmed-oolla and the other convicted leaders of that confederacy were transported, and where they are known to have been allowed to hold communication with a large number of other prisoners, and to maintain a correspondence with their brethren and co-religionists at home. It may not be clear whether they had notice of the intended visit, or not, though the necessary preparations in the settlement must have told them; but the broad facts at least are certain, that their arch-enemy, the highest embodiment of the great Infidel Power possessing India, who had even put forth his personal prerogative for the arrest and detention of the elect, comes to the Andaman Islands, where these fanatics are kept under very loose

discipline, and the knife of an assassin once more strikes down the most exalted person within reach, the person above all others whom the Wahabees had reason to hate. That may be a merely fortuitous concurrence of circumstances. Here are three murderous assaults by Mahomedans on high English officials. In not one of these cases is there any trace of private vengeance to be gratified, or of personal rancour against the intended victim. The strange points of agreement between these three outrages, of which one only failed in its fatal object, and their apparent coincidence in time and place with the trial and punishment of certain Wahabee traitors, may be quite accidental and really insignificant; but we are certainly not going to be brought over to that opinion by any assurances from the very highest officials at Calcutta, or from the most experienced and distinguished advisers of the Crown in London who have been transplanted from Calcutta. We have had too much proof of the arrogant apathy and blind self-complacency that have long prevailed in that quarter, to look there for an intelligent, patient, and tolerant appreciation of what is bad, or of what is good, in any one of the religious and social movements that are stirring the depths of the Indian population. They care for none of these things, and therefore they have never known anything about them, until some paroxysm has revealed their existence. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who in 1857 "could not believe we were in any danger at Patna", who considered that there were no "grounds for attributing seditious designs to the Wahabees", and "not the slightest proof that any danger was to be apprehended from this sect",\* who evinced so much pity and sympathy for the harmless "book-men" cruelly confined on suspicion by Commissioner Tayler,

\* *Ante*, pp xxx, xxxi.

and who gave them public favour and confidence while they were actually engaged in those hostile and treasonable operations against the British Government for which they were eventually transported to the Andaman Islands, —was the same Lieutenant-Governor who in 1853 concurred as Councillor in Lord Dalhousie's persecution of the Nawab Nazim for imaginary misconduct. Very highly, therefore, as any one may estimate the services and reputation of Sir Frederick Halliday, who is now a Member of the Secretary of State's Council, we must urge that in this particular matter of the Nawab Nazim's claims, his opinion can hardly be accepted as an unbiassed one, and that in the general matter of Mahomedanism in India, and of the policy to be pursued for the guidance and control of the Mahomedan movement, his opinion can scarcely be considered as of any value at all. We should say the same of any other permanent official or Councillor at the India Office, who has been trained amidst the narrow prejudices and odious exclusiveness of Bengal Civilianism. And therefore we are not in the least surprised that Mr. Grant Duff was so badly instructed.

A few sentences from the recently recorded views of two eminent men, both of whom have had a more extensive and varied experience of Indian life than falls to the lot of most public servants, and whose opportunities of inquiry and observation have not been confined to the scenes of their military achievements, will afford a brief but sufficient testimony that this is not a period of general contentment and stagnation in India, but that it is a period of political stir and intellectual unrest, and that, among other symptoms of that unrest, there is a widely-spread Mahomedan movement in progress, which deserves to be studied and understood. The late Commander-in-Chief of India, Lord Sandhurst, in a Minute dated the



9th September, 1870, after speaking of "many great changes", which have "tended to disturb and perplex, not only the Native soldiers themselves, but all that part of the population directly or indirectly connected with them", and of the possibilities of a "time of disorder", and of "embodied insurrection", says :—

"Our whole experience of India should warn us that we cannot always depend upon tranquillity ; that disturbances arise when they are least expected ; and, when they commence at one point, unless immediately checked, they are sure to be followed at others."\*

The present Commander-in-Chief in India, Lord Napier of Magdala, in a Minute dated 14th November, 1870, warns us emphatically not to be too confident in our inherent strength :—

"In looking to our general position in India, I cannot find ground for believing that we may neglect any means of maintaining our supremacy, or disarm, without risk, in a fancied security. It appears to me that we never had less hold on the affections of the people than at the present.

"The remembrance of the benefits which we conferred on the people of the parts of India which we relieved from oppression and misrule, has passed away with the people of those days ; the present generation only consider their present restraints and the obligations imposed on them ; and the more educated and ambitious look for a larger share of places of influence and emolument than they now possess.

"The Mahomedan movement, though the scope of its objects and intentions has not been fully brought to light, shows a much wider extent and combination than we have hitherto appreciated."†

It might be thought, to say the least, very doubtful whether the Mahomedan movement can be mitigated or managed by persecuting the Conservative leaders of Mahomedan society.

Mr. Grant Duff,—badly instructed, as we said before,—

\* *Papers, Indian Military Expenditure* (467 of 1871), p. 349.

† *Ibid.*, p. 371.

seems to know nothing of the Mussulman community in Bengal, and places the supposed interests of "a Hindoo population" in direct antagonism with those of "a Mahomedan family". In protesting against the continuance of the large assignment of public revenue to the Nizamut after the demise of the present Nawab, the Under Secretary professes to speak on behalf of "the tax-payers", the people of India. Any professions of a regard for economy may be received thankfully, if not with great confidence, from the official spokesman of the most extravagant Government in the world. But after all there is not much in what he said on this point. The only question is whether the Nizamut stipend is hereditary or not. Of course by the repudiation or reduction of any annual charge on the revenue,—the interest on public debt, for example,—there is an apparent gain for the Government and the taxpayer. The same may be said of annexations of territory, the confiscation of estates and personal property. But the gain is very often merely apparent and utterly fallacious. The only question worth asking is whether the proposed acquisition or resumption is just or not. All our Indian experience hitherto shows that whatever revenue we have acquired by an illegitimate process we have always had to expend, and more too, in establishments. Moral force and willing allegiance being lost or impaired, must be replaced by physical force. \* A British garrison costs more than a British Resident.

It may well be doubted whether either the Bonaparte family or the French tax-payers have gained anything—or ever could have gained anything, if the Second Empire had lasted,—by the confiscation of the Orleans property.

If Mr. Grant Duff can devise no more effectual means for improving the financial condition of India, and for

making our Government popular with the tax-payers, than that of impoverishing the great political stipendiaries, he will never make a name as an Indian statesman. Neither popularity nor a balance is to be got in that way. That way madness lies.

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## THE BENGAL REVERSION.

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BURIED in a confused mass of official documents—a few needles in a huge bin of chaff,—the points of the case of the Nawab Nazim of Bengal may well have eluded the search of many who really sought the truth of the matter. As to the great majority of public men, among the hundred subjects that are daily contending for their attention, it is difficult to conceive of any one that can appear, *primâ facie*, more uninteresting or less urgent. It is not too much to say that there is a general aversion to Indian affairs, as being peculiarly unintelligible and having no direct bearing on the interests of constituencies, and of the immediate circles within which the Members of both Houses of Parliament live and move and have their being and business. And this general aversion very naturally tends to become special, when the Indian affair in question presents itself in the form of a personal grievance, and is depicted by those responsible Ministers and officials who ought to know all about it, as merely the discontented demand of a great stipendiary for some additional emoluments and privileges, “not only far greater in degree, but totally different in kind”—in the words of Mr. Grant Duff, the Under Secretary of State for India,\*—from what he has hitherto enjoyed.

If this were really a fair epitome of the Nawab's claims,—confessedly incapable, as they are, of prosecution or realisation by any legal process,—it would be hopeless to try to get a hearing for them by any statesman or any political critic whose help would be valuable. But it is by no means a fair epitome of the question.

The Nawab does not, in fact, claim anything for him-

\* Speech in the House of Commons, 4th July, 1871.

self or for his descendants, "greater in degree," or "different in kind," from what he now possesses. The question, from his point of view, is whether on his decease the dignity and the endowment settled on his family by treaty, shall be lowered and lessened in a very great degree, and the existing securities for their continuance formally disavowed and destroyed,—whether his son and successor shall be reduced to a mere stipendiary, invested, perhaps, with some new title of nobility, but degraded from his hereditary rank.

The question for the statesman, in office or in opposition, who takes, or has taken, or aspires to take, a part in ruling the Empire, is whether it is worth while, for the sake of an insignificant pecuniary saving, to violate a most conspicuous engagement, thereby awakening throughout India alarming recollections that had almost been set at rest, shaking general confidence in British good faith, and encouraging a spirit of lawlessness and fanaticism.

The question for the practical as well as for the critical politician, wherever his work may lie,—in Parliament, in the press or in party management, is this,—whether the rapacious policy, from which the late Lord Dalhousie's name will be for ever inseparable, and which has been dormant for some years, is to be insidiously revived, so as to form the starting-point and precedent for a new series of confiscations.

+ In the interval of about three years immediately following the mutinies and rebellion of 1857, during which Indian affairs occupied an unusual space in public attention and underwent a thorough discussion, one principle for the future government of our great Eastern Empire seemed to have got hold of the national conscience,—that the levelling system of grasping by every doubtful pretext and pretence at opportunities of appropriating estates and revenue, to the detriment and ruin of the heads of Native society, should cease.† And this principle was apparently accepted by nearly all statesmen of eminence, without distinction of party, who were not themselves officially implicated in the process of disinheritance and forfeiture.

Many remarkable speeches by leading men in both Houses of Parliament, and many public measures, contributed in that interval of about three years to the general impression in India that the Government would henceforward maintain a restorative and conservative policy in their dealings with Native Princes.

On the 2nd August, 1858, the great statute was passed whereby the Queen assumed the direct administration of her Oriental dominions. On the 1st of the ensuing November the Royal Proclamation was issued from Allahabad by her Majesty's first Viceroy, Earl Canning, and was published on the same day in every city and large station of India. The Sovereign of the British Empire spoke face to face for the first time with her Indian Allies, feudatories and subjects. No document published by the British Government in India has ever produced so profound a sensation. Appearing in the hour of strength and triumph, breathing words of mercy and benevolence where vengeance and mistrust might have been expected, this Proclamation gave with no uncertain sound the true ring of Royal magnanimity.

But more especially, in consequence of the following weighty assurances, the Queen's Proclamation was hailed as a solemn pledge of security in the future for the great representative families of every tribe and creed, so many of whom had fallen from their high estate under the policy of Lord Dalhousie's administration.

"We hereby announce to the Native Princes of India that all Treaties and Engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable the East India Company, are by Us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained; and We look for the like observance on their part.

"We desire no extension of Our present territorial possessions; and, while we will permit no aggression upon Our dominions or Our rights to be attempted with impunity, We shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of Native Princes as Our own."

A copy of this Royal Proclamation was officially furnished to his Highness the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, Behar and Orissa.

In Lord Canning's despatch to the Secretary of State,

dated 30th April 1860, commonly called the Adoption Despatch, the unfounded prerogative of "Lapse" was expressly surrendered, which had been the most fatal weapon in Lord Dalhousie's armoury; and repeated admissions were therein made, in contravention of the doctrine recently held as orthodox at Calcutta, to the effect that "the safety of our rule is increased, not diminished, by the maintenance of Native Chiefs well affected to us," and that it must always be advisable to "treat the Chiefs and influential families with consideration and generosity". Two remarkable passages may well be quoted here.

"Notwithstanding the greater purity and enlightenment of our administration, its higher tone, and its surer promise of future benefit to the people, as compared with any Native Government, I still think that we have before us a higher and more pressing duty than that of extending our direct rule, and that our first care should be to strengthen that rule within its present limits, and to secure for our general supremacy the contented acquiescence and respect of all who are subjected to it.

"Our supremacy will never be heartily accepted and respected so long as we leave ourselves open to the doubts which are now felt, and which our uncertain policy has justified, as to our ultimate intentions towards Native States."

Sir Charles Wood, in his reply of the 26th of July, 1860, to Lord Canning's Adoption Despatch, says:—

"In the sentiments expressed in your Excellency's letter of the 30th of April, I entirely concur. It is not by the extension of our Empire that its permanence is to be secured, but by the character of British rule in the territories already committed to our care, and by practically demonstrating that we are as willing to respect the rights of others as we are capable of maintaining our own."

Now it is very true that in the complete or partial resumption of the revenue assigned under Treaty to the Nawab Nazim, and the extinction of his titular dignity, there would be no territorial extension of the Empire. It would be a confiscation of income, not of land, a reduction of Princely rank, not of sovereign power. But at the same time, it appears very doubtful whether "the character of British rule" would be exalted by such a measure, or

whether it would amount to a "practical demonstration" that "we are as willing to respect the rights of others as we are capable of maintaining our own". Some people might suppose that it would have a contrary tendency.

Soon after the arrival in India of Sir Charles Wood's reply, both despatches were published for general information. And in consequence of the entire approval by the Home authorities of the measures he had suggested, Lord Canning then circulated to the Princes and Chieftains of India, *sunnuks* or patents.—all or nearly all of them dated 11th March, 1862,—assuring those who were Hindoos, that "on failure of natural heirs, the British Government would permit and confirm any adoption of a successor," and those who were Mahomedans, that "the British Government would recognise and confirm any succession which may be legitimate according to Mahomedan law".

In the Adoption Despatch Lord Canning had proposed "that the assurance should be given to every *Chief who now governs his own territory, and who holds a position higher than that of a Jaghiredar*". And in every one of the circular *sunnuks* it was announced that "Her Majesty" was "desirous that the Governments of the several Princes and Chieftains *who now govern their own territories* should be perpetuated, and that the representation and dignity of their Houses should be continued." Lord Canning, however, did not rigidly confine the distribution of these patents within the prescribed limits; some inconsistencies and irregularities may be pointed out, while in certain instances there was a decided inapplicability in the stereotyped language of the *sunnuks* to the political status of the recipient.

For example, *sunnuks* were sent to two Mahratta Princes,—the Rajah of Kolapore, who had not "governed his own territories" for sixteen years, and the Rajah of Sawunt Warree, who had not "governed his own territories" for twenty-four years.\* These two States were taken, just as Mysore had been taken in 1831, under

\* *Aitchison's Treaties*, Calcutta, 1864 (Longmans, London), vol. vi, pp. 90, 114, 118.



British management,—Sawunt Warree in 1838, Kolapore in 1846,—after a period of disorder and rebellion, which in the case of Kolapore assumed the proportions of a war against the British Government. Both of these Principalities had also, like Mysore, been marked down for annexation on the death of the reigning Princes; but being, unlike Mysore, very small and poor States, they were reprieved in 1860, when it began to be acknowledged, even at Calcutta, that the policy of annexation was for the most part a financial failure.

The Rajah of Sawunt Warree does not “*now* govern his own territories”. He receives at this day a fixed allowance from the revenues of the State, which is still retained under British management.

Again, *sunnuds* were issued to Sirdar Shumsher Sing Sindhanwalla and to Rajah Tej Sing, in which they were styled “Princes who now govern their own territories,” although, as admitted subsequently in the authorised Collection of Treaties, they were in fact, “ordinary jaghi-redars, having ordinary magisterial and revenue powers within their estates, but no powers of government”.†

A *sunnud* in the same terms was granted to the Rajah of Benares,‡ a personage of great dignity and influence, but actually no more than a Zemindar or land-holder, having no “State” under his rule, and no powers of government.

Lord Dalhousie had refused in 1854 to recognise the succession of Janojee Bhonsla, the grand-nephew and adopted heir of the last Rajah of Nagpore, and had annexed the State as a “lapse”. In consideration of the good conduct of the family during the rebellion of 1857, the title of Rajah and the ancient estates of the family were secured to Janojee Bhonsla and his heirs, with the right of adoption recognised, under a *sunnud* from Lord Canning.§ It does not, however, appear that this was one of the circular *sunnuds* of the 11th of March, 1862.

Thus the circulation of the patents of 1862, restoring some of the rights of inheritance which a previous admini-

\* *Aitchison's Treaties*, Calcutta, 1863 (Longmans, and Co., London), vol. ii, p. 375.

† *Ibid.*, p. 67.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 94.

stration had done so much to destroy, was not in practice confined by Lord Canning to those Princes who were then "governing their own territories". In going as far as he did, that upright and high-minded ruler went far beyond his immediate advisers and chief officials at Calcutta. And yet he was not so completely free from local influences as to relinquish any of the past encroachments, or even to abandon, by a clearly declared principle, all claim to similar "lapses" in the future. A few reservations were still made, *in petto*; and, with the avowed object of securing these reserved cases, the following plan was proposed in the Adoption Despatch.

"I recommend that in every case, Mahomedan or Hindoo, the assurance should be conveyed to each Chief individually, and not by a general notification addressed to all. This would be necessary, in order to avoid future claims from petty Jaghiredars or others, whom it is not intended to include in this measure."

Among those "*others*," whom it was "not intended to include in this measure," were two of the highest importance,—the Rajah of Mysore and the Nawab of Bengal, neither of whom "governed his own territories,"—the Rajah, however, being unquestionably the Sovereign of Mysore, although his executive powers were suspended; while the Nawab, as unquestionably, merely held in Bengal, under Treaties that deprived him of all administrative authority, the position of a mediatised Prince.

The Principality of Mysore, producing an annual revenue of more than a million sterling, was, with the exception of that of the Nizam of Hyderabad, the richest Native State in India. The Rajah's personal income was nearly £140,000 a year.

The Nawab of Bengal was the richest of all the mediatised Princes. His charge on the revenues of Bengal,—much reduced from its original amount by the recorded concessions, and subsequently by the helpless acquiescence of his predecessors,—stood then, as it stands at present, by the prescription of a century, and after five successions, at £160,000 per annum.

These two rich benefices had been duly registered by Lord Dalhousie for sequestration on the death of their

respective incumbents, but the lives did not happen to fall in during his tenure of office. Nothing could have saved either of them if a demise had occurred in the midst of that brilliant career,—brilliant, that is to say, as painted by the principal actor himself. Every piece of work that he produced was blindly accepted at the value he chose to put upon it. The actual cost at the time was much greater than his English admirers imagined. But the real cost of the annexations only came to light, the real price only began to be paid, after he had left India. It is very doubtful whether it has yet been paid up in full.

Although Lord Canning, enlightened by the phenomena of the mutinies and rebellion, manifested a large appreciation of what would be a sound Imperial policy in the Adoption Despatch and in some of his later dealings with Native States, he was not, as we have said, so fully emancipated from official orthodoxy as to reject the two rich legacies bequeathed by his predecessor. In secret Minutes recorded for his successor's edification, Lord Dalhousie had pointed out the Mysore Rajah's Principality and the Bengal Nawab's endowment as good things that were likely to fall in, and must not be allowed to slip through our fingers.\*

Lord Canning unquestionably so far consented to the views of his predecessor as not to send the new patent of succession to either the Rajah of Mysore or the Nawab of Bengal. Besides these negative indications of concurrence, two letters must be mentioned,—one addressed to the Rajah, the other intended for the Nawab's perusal,—despatched within two months of Lord Canning's departure from India, when he was enfeebled by the illness that was so soon to prove fatal. The letter for the Nawab's information was dated on the 14th of January, and that addressed to the Rajah of Mysore on the 11th of March, 1862, the very day before Lord Canning left Calcutta. He died in London on the 17th of June. These letters

\* The first Minute aimed against the permanence of the Nawab Nazim's dignity was written in November, 1853. The Minute marking down the State of Mysore is dated 16th January, 1856.

are notoriously not of his composition, nor of the tone and temper that he was wont to sanction, although he signed them at the last moment, glad, probably, amidst an accumulation of arrears, to dispose of two irritating and perplexing subjects that pressed for settlement, and which he felt ought not to be transferred to Lord Elgin, after long delay, in an undetermined state. Both of these letters are written in a peculiarly offensive style, that became well known in subsequent years through the productions of the Calcutta Foreign Office. A remarkable similarity in language and in argument characterises these two despatches. In both of them a perfectly novel position is taken up; the Nawab and the Rajah are plainly told, for the first time in their lives, that their dignities and possessions are not hereditary. The Secretary to the Government of India thus instructs the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal :—

“It should be clearly explained to His Highness, that the Governor-General in Council entirely rejects his claims so far as they are founded on the assertion of any Treaty-rights, or of any sovereign or hereditary titles, and that his recognised position in regard to the sum of sixteen lacs of Sicca rupees, now annually set apart for Nizamut purposes, and to the accumulations thereof, is as follows :—

“Since 1771, sixteen lacs of Rupees have been granted for Nizamut purposes. The continued payment of this sum is guaranteed by no Treaty, and it has hitherto been paid of the free grace and favour of the British Government. It may cease, or may be diminished, whenever the Government shall determine, but there is no intention of making any change in the present arrangement during the lifetime of the present Nawab.”

The Nawab of Bengal is charged in this despatch with having “set forth unfounded pretensions,” “erroneous statements and inferences”.

In the letter addressed to the Rajah of Mysore, his Highness is accused of putting forward “pretensions based upon erroneous assumptions,” and “assumptions without foundation,” and his actual position, as interpreted by the official writer, is expounded as follows :—

“Your Highness is now enjoying the personal provision which was secured to you in the event of that Government resuming

the administration of Mysore. This provision is a personal right, not a heritable one. It is not claimable as a right even by a natural-born heir, however liberally the Government might of its own grace be disposed to deal with a claim from such a quarter.

"Your title to that right is exactly the same as was your title to the authority which you forfeited through misrule; that is, it rests upon favour shown to your Highness by the British Government in its mode of dealing with other rights which it had acquired by conquest."\*

Just as the Nawab of Bengal was informed that the Governor-General rejected his claims, "founded on the assertion of treaty-rights, or of sovereign or hereditary titles," so the Rajah of Mysore was told that he was "very ill-advised" to call in question the treatment of his affairs, "upon the grounds of assumed ancestral and hereditary rights which have no existence," and that "the rights of conquest and sovereignty" belonged to the British Government, which had "become Sovereign" over the people of Mysore.

But we know that Lord Canning's policy in the Mysore case, as avowed in documents undoubtedly from his own pen, was based on grounds quite incompatible with the claim to territorial sovereignty in Mysore on the part of the British Government. Two years before this novel claim was advanced, Lord Canning had declared his belief that "by a little patience" the British Government would obtain "a bequest" of the Principality of Mysore "in free will" and "full sovereignty," and "in a spirit of loyal attachment," by its "venerable Sovereign,"—"more than sixty years of age, and of a family notoriously short-lived."† In the despatch to the Secretary of State just quoted, Lord Canning repeatedly terms the Rajah the Sovereign of Mysore, and the people of that country "the subjects" of the Rajah, terms quite inconsistent with the alleged sovereignty of the British Government, to which Lord Canning set his signature one day before he left India. From the same despatch we learn that Lord Canning had been for a long time under the erroneous impression that

\* *Papers, Mysore* (No. 112), 1866, p. 6.

† Despatch to the Secretary of State (Sir Charles Wood), dated 30th March, 1860.

the Rajah did not wish to adopt an heir, and was desirous "that everything that he possessed should at his death pass into the hands" of the British Government, which will probably account for the adoption patent—forwarded, as we have seen, to several Princes who did not then "govern their own territories"—not having been sent to the Rajah of Mysore.

It is impossible to say what would have been the counsel of Lord Canning if he had known that the Maharajah of Mysore would long outlive the period officially allotted to him, and would in due course adopt a young kinsman to be heir to all his possessions, as he did on the 18th of June, 1865.

It is impossible to say how Lord Canning would have treated the Bengal Nawab's case, if he had been able to give it his personal attention, instead of being compelled by ill health and an excessive press of business to leave it for disposal by a Secretary. But it is quite incredible that he should have ever deliberately denied the Nawab's "*hereditary titles*" and "*treaty-rights*," as was done in the passage extracted above from the letter of the 14th of January, 1862.\* Such a denial would have been in flagrant contradiction to all the previous utterances and acts of his official intercourse with the Nawab, as an example of which a sentence may be quoted from the letter addressed to his Highness by Lord Canning,—in conformity with twenty precedents during the last century,—on arriving at Calcutta, to assume the office of Governor-General, and dated the 11th of March, 1856.

"Your Highness may be assured, the consideration, respect, and friendly interest in the prosperous administration of your affairs, and just regard to the honours and dignities due to your hereditary rank and the prescriptive privileges of your high station, guaranteed by the stipulations of subsisting Treaties and long established relations, observed and cherished by former Governors-General, will on the part also of this sincere friend, be fervently fostered and punctually fulfilled."

Mr. Edmonstone, also, Foreign Secretary under Lord Canning's Government, wrote a semi-official letter, dated

\* *Ante*, p. 9.

8th January, 1859, to Colonel Colin Mackenzie, who was then the Governor-General's Agent at the Nawab's Court, one passage in which is enough to prove how far Lord Canning's real opinions and feelings were from accordance with the acrimonious rejection of hereditary right contained in the letter of the 14th of January, 1862. The Agent had written to the Foreign Secretary, submitting a "Narrative of Nizamut affairs" for the consideration of Government, giving a general support to the Nawab's claims and complaints, and laying particular stress on the hereditary tenure of his Highness's dignity and revenue. Here is the extract from Mr. Edmonstone's reply:—

"The narrative is extremely useful, and should awaken the attention of Government to the position of the Nawab and the state of its relations with him. The whole subject has been more than once under the consideration of the Governor-General, and has also been discussed with me as often; but no final decision has been recorded, although I believe the Governor-General has made up his mind on the matter. I am not, of course, at liberty to inform you of the opinion the Governor-General appears to me to have formed, but I may say confidentially that it is not unfavourable. I wish you well in your endeavours to right His Highness, and have little doubt that you will succeed in some measure."

Of course it must be unequivocally acknowledged that no inferences or conjectures, however logical and reasonable, will suffice to disassociate Lord Canning personally from any proceeding of his Government, so far as to release him from formal responsibility. The only grounds, indeed, on which we can hope to strip the two disinheriting despatches of such moral support as they might derive from Lord Canning's deliberate approval, are those of the fatal illness which, during the last two months of his residence in India, must have materially diminished his capacity for work, never equal to that of his indefatigable predecessor.

For all practical purposes, however, it has become an immaterial question whether the technical irregularity of separating Lord Canning from some of the last acts of his administration can be tolerated or not, for any weight or authority that the two disinheriting despatches may ever



have possessed has already been broken down by one of them having been utterly rejected and set aside by the Imperial Government with the cognizance and sanction of Parliament. And when Lord Cranborne (now Marquis of Salisbury), on the 23rd of February, and his immediate successor, Sir Stafford Northcote, on the 24th of May, 1867, without the proposal of a division, almost without a word of doubt being heard, announced in the House of Commons their intention of reversing the decision of the Indian Government, repeatedly avowed, that Mysore must be annexed, and of maintaining that Principality by the recognition of the Maharajah's adopted heir, many Members, many Peers, and many persons of influence outside Parliament, may well have been deterred from upholding the threatened confiscation because they knew that the sentence passed on Mysore was not in fact Lord Canning's, but had been recorded in 1856, so that the authorities in 1867 really had to decide whether they would act as executors under a deferred process of Lord Dalhousie's reign of terror.

The same question has to be answered once more. It is an absolute certainty, not to be shaken by any plausible misrepresentation, that before the date of a certain Minute by Lord Dalhousie, afterwards embodied in a despatch to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, written in November 1853, no doubt as to the hereditary nature of the Bengal Nawab's dignity had ever been expressed or hinted at by any Governor-General or by the Home Government. No word of "grace or favour" was ever employed at any one of the five successions that have taken place since the Treaty of 1770. Neither the phrase nor the idea of "a personal Treaty," of binding force only during the life of the original contracting party, can be found in the transactions of any Governor-General, from Warren Hastings down to Lord Hardinge.

Our Ministers, our statesmen, Members of both Houses of Parliament, have to ask themselves whether they are willing by their silence, by their inaction, or by their votes, to assist in executing another confiscating clause in Lord Dalhousie's political testament.



The question of the Nawab of Bengal, as it stands at present, exactly resembles in another respect that of the Maharajah of Mysore. It is not so much an appeal against a blow, as a protest against a threat. There was this peculiarity in the Mysore case, that it offered the first opportunity that had ever been given to the British Parliament of pronouncing on an Indian annexation before it had been completed,—before, in fact, it was too late to remonstrate or interfere. Lord Dalhousie was able to carry out every one of his annexations without any awkward chance occurring of a discussion in the House of Commons. In two most important instances,—those of Jhansi and Nagpore,—he acted without any reference even to the Court of Directors, as if their concurrence were considered as a matter of certainty.\* But the Rajah of Mysore would not die in time; the recorded sentence against his heir became known and open to exception; and the Native State was reprieved.

The position of the Nawab of Bengal's protest at this moment is identical with that of the Maharajah of Mysore in 1867. Sentence of disinheritance has been recorded against the Nawab's family. The judge, however, who pronounced that sentence being the same whose condemnation of the Mysore State was quashed in 1867, the grounds alleged for the original sentence being the same as those alleged in the Mysore case, and the principles involved on both sides being equally applicable to both cases, the sentence may be reversed in the same way by the Great Council of the Empire. The only difference between the two cases is, that the Maharajah of Mysore was a territorial Sovereign, while the Nawab of Bengal is a mediatised Prince.

But Mr. Grant Duff, in the House of Commons, on the 4th of July, 1871, told us that the Nawab was not a Prince at all. The Under Secretary for India, who ought to know all about these things, delivered himself of these words :—"The Nawab Nazim of Bengal is no Prince; his father was no Prince; his grandfather was no Prince;

\* *Papers, Rajah of Berar*, 1854, page 37; *Jhansi Papers*, 1855, page 5.

none of his predecessors have been Indian Princes." And in another passage of the same speech the Nawab is called "the descendant of Meer Jaffier,—no Prince, but the officer of an officer of the King of Delhi."

If we supposed Mr. Grant Duff to be a firm believer in divine right, we could well understand such a sweeping depreciation, just as we can understand an ultra-legitimist denying the Princely rank of the Emperor Napoleon I, declaring him to be merely General Bonaparte, son of a Corsican attorney, and an officer of the King of France. We can understand the legitimist and Austrian partisan of the last century, who would refuse any higher dignity to the King of Prussia than that of Margrave of Brandenburg, the faithless and contumacious vassal of the House of Hapsburg-Lorraine. These notions are still extant, it is said, in some very exalted circles. Certainly there may now be found in Germany both Royalists and Republicans who impugn the Imperial titles and attributes assumed by William of Hohenzollern.

We cannot, however, judging from his political dissertations, suppose Mr. Grant Duff to be either a Republican or a Legitimist, or to be ignorant of modern history and the axioms of political science. Yet he says that Meer Jaffier, the first Nawab of the present line, was "no Prince, but the officer of an officer of the King of Delhi." We must conclude, therefore, that if another revolution in the Danubian Principalities—the Lower Bengal of Europe—were to send Prince Charles back to Berlin; and the first ruler of united Roumania, Colonel Couza—whose military rank was conferred by some Hospodar of Moldavia—were to be restored, Mr. Grant Duff would not recognise his Princely dignity,—would cry him down as "no Prince, but the officer of an officer" of the Sultan of Turkey.

As Mr. Grant Duff would certainly be guilty of no such absurdity, as he is neither a Republican, a Legitimist, nor an ignoramus, we must in charity suppose him to have been speaking in the Nawab of Bengal's case from his instructions, and to have been misled by some experienced gentleman at the India office who undertook to coach him for the debate.

"The Nawab Nazim of Bengal," says Mr. Grant Duff, "is no Prince; his father was no Prince; his grandfather was no Prince; none of his predecessors have been Indian Princes."

To begin with the present Nawab Nazim,—leaving his father, grandfather and their predecessors for later consideration,—if he is "no Prince," Mr. Grant Duff, or the office which he represents in the House of Commons, must possess a deposing or degrading power, and must have exercised it against his Highness about the 4th of July, 1871, for most assuredly the Nawab was fully recognised as a Prince by the Government of Great Britain and Ireland up to a very short time before the debate of that day.

If no decree of degradation has issued, and if Mr. Grant Duff did, nevertheless, on that occasion accurately expound the views of his superior, the Duke of Argyll, a singular conflict exists between two great Departments of State. The principal Secretary of State for India pronounces the Nawab of Bengal to be "no Prince"; the Lord Great Chamberlain pronounces that the Nawab of Bengal is a Prince, receives him as a Prince, and repeatedly introduces him with the forms reserved only for Royal personages into the very presence of Her Majesty. If any foreign nobleman, enjoying the title of Prince but not endowed with Royal honours, were to claim the right of being privately introduced, "with his suite," at Her Majesty's Court, and of being on all occasions of his presence there "attended" by a military officer, his claim would certainly be rejected. Yet this is the style in which, by the authority of the Lord Chamberlain, the visits of the Nawab of Bengal to Her Majesty's levees and drawing-rooms were officially announced last year.

"His Highness the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, with his sons, Prince Ali Kudr-Hassan-Ali-Bahadoor, and Prince Suleiman-Kudr-Wahid-Ali-Bahadoor, was also present at the Court, attended by Colonel Frederic Layard."

And the Nawab's first introduction to the Queen is thus recorded in the official Court Circular.

“OSBORNE, *April 28th*, 1869.

“The Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India, arrived at Osborne to day, and had an audience of the Queen.

“His Highness the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, and his eldest and seventh sons, Prince Ali-Kudr-Hassan-Ali-Bahadoor and Prince Soliman-Kudr-Wahid-Ali-Bahadoor, arrived, and were presented to Her Majesty by the Duke of Argyll.

“The suite of the Nawab were presented to Her Majesty by the Duke of Argyll, and also Colonel Frederic Layard, of the Bengal Staff Corps, who is specially appointed to attend upon his Highness.”

Here the title of Prince, refused by the Under-Secretary to the Nawab, his father, his grandfather and his predecessors, is accorded by the Secretary of State for India even to the Nawab's sons.

Having seen that the present Nawab of Bengal was received, addressed and treated as a Prince in the year 1871 by the proper authorities, during his residence in London, let us now go back to the year 1838, and see how the same personage, whom Mr. Grant Duff declares to be “no Prince,” was received, addressed and treated by the proper authorities at Calcutta, when he first attained to what Mr. Grant Duff is pleased to call “the shadowy honours of the Nizamut”. On the death of his Highness's father, the Nawab Hoomayoon Jah, the following notifications appeared in the Government Gazette at the capital of the British Empire in India.

“POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, *19th December*, 1838.

“PROCLAMATION.

“By order of the Governor-General of India, the Deputy-Governor of Bengal notifies to the Public and to the Allies of the British Government, and to all friendly Powers, that the Nawab Shoojah-ool-Moolk, Ihtishamood-Dowlah, Humayoon Jah, Syud Mobaruck Ullee Khan Bahadoor, Feeroz Jung, having departed this life at Moorshedabad, on the 3rd October, 1838, his son the Nawab Syud Munsoor Ullee Khan, *has succeeded to the hereditary honours and dignities of the Nizamut and Soobahdarry of Bengal, Behar and Orissa*, and His Highness is hereby declared, under the authority of the Government of India, to be the Nazim and Soobahdar of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, and to have assumed and to exercise the authority, dignities, and privileges thereof, under the style and title of Moontizum-ool-Moolk, Mohsen-ood-

Dowlah, Fareedoon Jah, Syud Munsoor Ullee Khan Bahadoor, Nusrut Jung.

Published and proclaimed by His Honour the Deputy-Governor of Bengal.

H. T. PRINSEP,

*Secretary to the Government of Bengal.*

*General Order by the Honourable the Deputy-Governor of Bengal, under date the 19th December, 1838.*

The Honourable the Deputy-Governor of Bengal has been pleased to direct, that a salute of nineteen guns be fired from the ramparts of Fort William at 12 o'clock this day, *in honour of the accession of his Highness Syud Munsoor Ullee Khan to the Musnud of the Provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa*, and that the above Proclamation be read at the head of all the troops in garrison at sunset this evening, under a salute of three volleys of musketry.

H. T. PRINSEP,

*Secretary to the Government of Bengal.\**

The language and tenor of these official acts would not suggest to most of us that the person they refer to was "no Prince". On the contrary, the order for a salute of cannon, and the assembly of all the troops in garrison, to fire a *feu de joie* "in honour of the accession of his Highness Syud Munsoor Ullee Khan to the Musnud of the Provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa," sounds very much like the recognition of Royal dignities. A similar ceremonial is not usually observed, in any known part of the world, when a mere nobleman succeeds to his ancestral estates, or to a charge on the public revenue. Although the full heraldic style of an English Duke is that of "high, mighty and puissant Prince," his "accession" is not publicly announced "to the Allies of the British Government and to all friendly Powers," nor are the troops called out to hear a Proclamation read, and to celebrate the event with military honours.

And before quitting this Proclamation, attention must be called to the fact that "the honours and dignities of the Nizamut," to which the present Nawab is said to have "succeeded," are therein also expressly declared to be "hereditary".

Mr. Grant Duff says, also, that the Nawab's father was

\* Extract from page 925 of the *Calcutta Gazette* of Wednesday, 19th December, 1838, No. 101. *Papers, Nawab Nazim* (116 of 1871), pp. 34, 35.

"no Prince". We might adduce the Proclamation on his accession, which is almost identical with that just quoted.

But from among many official documents publicly recorded we will only cite one as evidence against this clause in the Under Secretary's edict. In 1834, when the present Nawab's father, Meer Humayoon Jah, occupied the Musnud, an effort was made in the course of some legal proceedings to bring his Highness within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Calcutta. This was resisted, on behalf of the Nawab, by the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck.

In a letter of instructions in this matter, addressed by his order to the Advocate General, and signed by "the Deputy Secretary to the Government, C. E. Trevelyan," the following passages occur.

"It will be observed from the Treaty of 1770, of which a copy is annexed, that His Highness the Nawab has been recognised by the British Government as an independent Prince, and that the national faith is pledged for nothing being proposed or carried into execution derogating from his honor."

"As the Government has no power to regulate the proceedings of the Court towards persons acknowledged to come within its jurisdiction, if the liability of the Nazim were to be admitted, there is no degree of indignity which might not be inflicted upon him by its ordinary processes, in contravention of the pledged national faith, and of the respect which is obviously due to the representative of our oldest Ally on this side of India."

"The case of Raja Hurreenauth Rae, referred to by the Advocate-General, does not appear to His Honor in Council to bear any analogy to the present. Raja Hurreenauth Rae was a subject of this Government, from whose gift he derived his title, while the Nawab Nazim is a Prince, whose independence has been recognised by a Treaty with one of his Predecessors."\*

This, be it once more observed, was written in 1834 of the present Nawab's father, declared in 1871, by Mr. Grant Duff, to have been "no Prince".

We may, perhaps, leave the grandfather and predecessors alone for the present, for by this time even Mr. Grant Duff himself might admit that he was wrong in denying that the Nawabs were Princes. It may be urged that, after all, this was merely a verbal error, and that what Mr. Grant Duff meant was that neither the Nawab,

\* *Papers, Nawab Nazim* (116 of 1871), p. 34.

his father, nor any one of his predecessors was a Sovereign. Be it so,—we may inquire into that by and by. But surely it would not have been beyond the resources of the Under Secretary's eloquence to have stated that proposition in more accurate and measured language.

Assuming that the intention of the Under Secretary was only to impugn the Sovereignty of the Nawab, it is impossible to acquit him, or the permanent officials at the India Office on whom he incautiously relied for information, of a serious deviation from the calm and dignified course becoming those who profess to speak with authority the mind of the Imperial Government. The Nawab's case must gain in strength if it becomes manifest that the stronger party cannot, without abandoning common candour and ordinary courtesy, make even a plausible answer to it.

Mr. Grant Duff's assertions, therefore, as charitably amended, will now stand thus:—The Nawab is no Sovereign; his father was no Sovereign; his grandfather was no Sovereign; none of his predecessors have been Indian Sovereigns. His ancestor, Meer Jaffier, was no Sovereign, but the officer of an officer of the King of Delhi.

Let us begin at the beginning. Before the battle of Plassey on the 23rd of June, 1757, Meer Jaffier, the first Nawab of the existing line, was undoubtedly neither Prince nor Sovereign. He was uncle by marriage of the reigning Nawab, Suraj-ood-Dowlah, and Commander-in-Chief of his army. As such he may be said—if a disparaging designation be wanted,—to have been “an officer of an officer of the King of Delhi”. The Nawab Nazim of Bengal was—formally and ceremonially at least—an officer of the Great Mogul.

But the status of Meer Jaffier before the battle of Plassey, is a matter of merely historical or biographical interest. We want to know what Meer Jaffier became after the complete success of his confederacy with the English East India Company, and after the execution of the Treaty of 1757. For all purposes of political science or international law, it matters no more what Meer Jaffier was before his installation, than what Napoleon Bonaparte was before he became Emperor of the French.



Foreign nations recognised Napoleon as the Sovereign of France. The English, the Dutch and the French recognised Meer Jaffier as the Sovereign of Bengal.

Formally and ceremonially the Nawab of Bengal was an officer and a vassal of the Mogul Emperor, just as Mehemet Ali, during the height of his rebellious career, was the humble servant of the Sultan, just as his descendant, the Khedive of Egypt, is to this day. The rulers of Bengal in the eighteenth century, like the rulers of Egypt since 1840, paid tribute to their Suzerain, assumed no higher titles than were conferred by the fountain of honour, and petitioned for confirmation and investiture at each succession. But like the rulers of Egypt they maintained all the substance of administrative independence.

In writing history, and in discussing political events, we must accept the condition and powers of States and Princes as we find them when each transaction takes place. We must neither anticipate nor retrograde. We must not revive dogmatically bygone prerogatives, destroyed amidst the revolutionary changes which opened the road for our interference, for the purpose of depreciating at this late hour the local authorities whose co-operation was in former days indispensable for our safety and success.

To speak of the Nazim of Hyderabad or the Nawab Vizier of Oude as refractory Deputies or Lord Lieutenants, —to talk of the Nawab of Bengal as merely an officer of the King of Delhi,—is as absurd as it would be to speak of the King of Prussia in the eighteenth century as merely the Margrave of Brandenburg and Arch-Chamberlain of the German Emperor.

It is true that some of the Indian Princes, with whom our adventurous countrymen first came in contact, or those Princes' ancestors, had been tributaries, feudatories, or provincial Governors under the Great Mogul; some of them had no better original title than that of a rebellious vassal or contumacious Lieutenant; but then the East India Company entered upon the field of negotiation with no more secure footing, with no higher pretensions.

The English Authorities avowed themselves to be vas-