

the general reader in search of entertainment or instruction ; and the insight they afforded into native character, proved hardly of less value than the actual services they recorded. Foremost among the most interesting and valuable of these reports rank those of Colonel Sleeman, under whose administration some of the earliest and busiest years of this department were passed. Throughout the native states of Central India, and specially in the Nizam's dominions, this crime was most at home ; and though it is one of rare commission now, yet in many parts of India, remote from the intercourse of white men, travellers are still wary of accepting proffered fellowship on a journey, much preferring the fear of solitary hunger, thirst, the wild beast at night, and maybe open pillage, to the dread of being decoyed and strangled by a fancied boon-companion. Of late years Colonel Hervey has filled the office of General Superintendent of Thuggee and Dacoitee ; and even if it be true that he inherited a moribund machine whose special labours, it might be thought, had been sufficiently performed to admit of their being handed over to the various local services and administrations, yet it is but naked justice to a never-tiring public servant to record, that it was under his directions that a final blow was dealt at the hereditary existence of a sect of professional men, by whom the fact of taking life without the shed of blood was deemed a cardinal tenet of religion.

Thus, under the conditions of which the barren outlines only have been roughly sketched within the previous chapters, Anglo-Indian administration certainly possesses in itself numerous elements essential to the life of what are sometimes termed "permanent institutions." The powers that be, however, should not too far indulge themselves in this gratifying reflection ; for

it is not the less true, that many little surface clouds still interpose between the native races and their own contentment. One prominent cause of dissatisfaction exists perchance in the greater taste and aptitude for splitting hairs that past prestige, and the fact of framing their own laws and penal code, have generated among covenanted civilians, as compared with the handy, free-and-easy justice, dealt out by military or native agents engaged in the conduct of affairs. Probably it is to this fact that the preference exhibited by natives for non-regulation government may in some degree be traced; for though this invention of Lord Dalhousie places at the control of one individual a wider field, both for good government and for abuse, than could exist under the more tortuous formalities and conditions of divided responsibility maintained in the system of Bengal and the North-West Provinces, yet, not unlike ourselves, natives often prefer a speedy and practically irrevocable decision at the hands of a local judge, to the prospective satisfaction to be derived from the tardy revision of a sentence, by remote machinery with whose working they are but imperfectly acquainted. In the support of these assertions some extracts from the correspondence of native ex-legislative members of both prevailing creeds, and of councils both local and supreme, may not be here considered out of place; and these, if analysed, will appear to lead to the conclusion that our native legislators do not think so highly as we do ourselves, of the progress we have made in conciliating the Eastern races confided to our rule and governance.

One of these legislators writes from India under date of December 21, 1865, in a tone in which it is not difficult to trace a vein of bitter disappointment. "The present general condition of affairs," he writes, "combined

with my thirty years' exertions, induce me to prefer devotion to the Almighty in seclusion to anything else. Still it affords me pleasure to give now this general abstract of my own opinion about the administration of India. The affection of the subject, and attention to the prejudices of the people, regarding which the Queen of England spoke in her gracious Proclamation, the preservation of custom, appointment of selected and experienced officers, fixed laws and regulations, are essential to the wellbeing of a people. It must also be borne in mind that the system of constantly imposing or abolishing different taxes, in order to maintain receipts and disbursements within a condition of equilibrium, is not generally acceptable in India. It is a custom in almost all our native governments to leave sufficient balance from the income of one year to supply any probable excess of expenditure in the next; and some such scheme is necessary to insure the happiness of the Eastern subjects of the English Crown. These unhappy subjects are at a long distance from the throne, and are of a different disposition, possess different prejudices, different habits and customs, and live within the influence of a different climate. The true principle of all good government consists in the affection of the subject and the preservation of good faith. Since the mutiny of 1857 many appear to think that it is difficult to gain the affection of the subject; but I do not agree with them, because the subject here is poorer than anywhere else. Their poorness and affection is self-evident from the fact that so vast a continent as India has come so speedily and easily beneath the rule of the British Government. You say that the attention of the great statesmen in England is directed towards the real improvement of India; but you

should bear in mind that it is but little use to repair the upper storey of a building the foundation of which has been damaged. 'After the mutiny, when I and my friends suffered many difficulties which will never be forgotten, Lord Canning had the opportunity to bring the whole of British India under non-regulation system, and thereupon depend the fortunes of the subject.'

The foregoing expressions were penned by one whose character for extreme loyalty towards the English Crown ranks second to none in India. There seems no reason for withholding from the public that the man referred to is Raja Dinkur Rao of Gwalior; and since the services which circumstances have enabled him to render have been so continuous and conspicuous that modesty in glossing over his deserts would be misplaced, we venture to transcribe the following, from the pen of Major Meade, Agent to the Governor-General for Central India, dated Indore Presidency, April, 1865 :—

. . . . "I can have no hesitation in stating that I fully concur in, and can endorse every word of, the late Sir Richmond Shakespeare's memorandum, and that it is simply impossible, in my opinion, to do adequate justice to Raja Dinkur Rao's services and admirable character in such documents.

"His administrative ability and thorough knowledge of the people generally of the Gwalior State (including his own class, which filled most of the offices of the Government, and the various tribes and clans making up the two millions odd subject to the rule of Maharaja Scindia), and of the measures and policy which were best suited to their requirements, and the real interests of the State and his chief, aided by his singular acquaintance with, and appreciation of, the merits and

defects of the system of British administration, enabled him, from the date of his assumption of the Dewanship,* to introduce improvements, order, and organisation in every branch and department of the State, and in a wonderfully brief time, under the circumstances, to establish a Government such as had never before existed in the territories of his master, and which gave promise, if maintained in the spirit and on the principles in which it was conceived, to make Gwalior the first of native kingdoms.

“In all this the Honourable Raja had much to contend with : for his measures were necessarily opposed to the traditional policy of the governing classes of the country, and to the interests of the many influential persons who had fattened on the abuses they were specially intended to abolish ; but his tact, calm temper, and good judgment, aided by the example of unimpeachable integrity he set to all around him, enabled him to effect what to those acquainted with the circumstances of the State might well have appeared hopeless.

“The people of the country were relieved from the system of oppression and misrule which had made some districts, as Tourghar, a prey to the most lawless disorder, in which the Durbar possessed no real authority but such as was exercised under the guns of a large military force, and the revenue was periodically collected at the point of the bayonet ; and had made others, as Esaghur, which had formerly been prosperous and flourishing, in many parts a desert, and abandoned by its impoverished and ruined inhabitants ; and a general feeling of contentment and satisfaction, and of love and respect for the Minister who had so changed their condition, prevailed among all classes.

* Office of Prime Minister.

“To this policy the safety of Maharaja Scindia and his Government during the troubles of 1857 may assuredly be fairly and justly ascribed: the people generally,—instead of taking advantage of the disruption of authority consequent on the mutiny and rebellion of the British native troops (including the local contingents), on whose presence the peace of the territories of Central India had previously principally depended, and who were openly sympathised with by all, and actively aided by many of the troops and armed police of the native states,—remained obedient to the local officials; and the presence at the capital of a large number of them, hastily collected and summoned by the Minister for the purpose, enabled Maharaja Scindia to overawe his own disaffected troops and to withstand the otherwise overpowering force of the Gwalior contingent, which, confident of the full support of the Gwalior army and of the many influential people in the Lushkur and about the chief, for upwards of three eventful months endeavoured to cajole or compel his Highness to comply with their objects and demands.

“The triumphant manner in which Scindia emerged from these difficulties was, viewed by the light of former times, the best proof of the wisdom of the measures of administration previously adopted by the Minister. Throughout the trying events of 1857-58 Raja Dinkur Rao's devotion and services to his master were beyond all praise. He was in truth an impersonation in his own territory of loyalty to his chief, and of order amidst the wild anarchy then raging, and which threatened to sweep away all before it; and his attachment for, and friendly good feeling towards, the British Government and its officers when the power of that Government was for a time at its lowest point of depression, can never be

forgotten by those who experienced or benefited thereby, or were acquainted therewith.

“With the complete suppression of the mutiny, and amidst the changes in the administration of the Gwalior State which followed, the position of the Minister unavoidably became greatly altered.

“The Maharaja desired to direct the Government himself, and to retain the business of administration wholly in his own hands; and after a time Raja Dinkur Rao withdrew, not without grief and disappointment, from the laborious post he had filled for eight years with unmeasurable benefit to his chief and the State, and with lasting credit and honour to himself.

“In truth his work for the time was done, and it was but fitting that he should take some repose from the wearing fatigues of the business and struggles incidental to the high position he had held for so long a period.

“He was not, however, suffered to remain unnoticed; for on the establishment of the Governor-General’s Legislative Council in 1861, he was among the first members selected to sit therein as representatives of the native community of the Empire.

“His services and usefulness in the lofty and novel sphere to which he was thus transferred were such as might have been expected from his previous career and character, and are well known to have been much appreciated by the Viceroy of India.

“At the date at which I am writing, the Honourable Raja’s term of service in Council having expired, he is unemployed and living in retirement, and there appears to be at present no prospect of his return to the business of public life in a fitting position.

“It is a subject of the deepest regret to me that the services of one so experienced and gifted, by far and in

every respect the ablest native administrator I have ever met, should be thus lost to the public ; but there seems to be no help therefor at present.

“ Whatever the future may have in this respect in store for the Honourable Raja Dinkur Rao—and that the time will sooner or later come when, if spared, he will reoccupy a public post suited to his great talents and high character I have the fullest confidence—he must for the present console himself with the proud and gratifying conviction that, as remarked by Sir Richmond Shakespeare, he is respected and beloved by the rich and poor of his own country, in which his name will long be known as, *par excellence*, The Dewan, and that he enjoys the high consideration of the British Government, and the esteem and regard of such of its officers as have had the pleasure of knowing him either privately or officially.”

All comment on the above quotation is unnecessary ; but it should be known by those who take an interest in Indian affairs, what rewards the gratitude of England has meted out to this exemplary native statesman ; and we think that most who read these pages will admit that these rewards compare somewhat strangely, and not much to the credit of our discernment, with the imperial extravagance of, for instance, the Mysore grant, by which a yearly income of £40,000 was secured to the already wealthy sons and grandchildren of a low-born usurper and oppressor of a peaceful people.

The magnanimity of the Company towards the Maharaja Dhuleep Singh does not rank, in our opinion, as a case in point, for he was the representative of Runjeet Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, who gathered together by his force of character ten millions of the scattered tribes once ruled by Tamerlane ; and it should be remembered

that nearest to the heart of every Hindostanee proper is the appreciation of hereditary honours, and the continuance of an historic name.' Now Dinkur Rao was illustrious by descent; and when it is considered that, with the exception of some unimportant complimentary prefix, the only rank* conferred upon him was that of Honourable, as a member of the Viceroy's Council, and that the only solid token of our goodwill he has received is a small confiscated estate in the neighbourhood, not of his home in Gwalior, but of Benares in Bengal, worth £500 per annum, on which, as a crowning proof of our generosity, some trifling taxes are remitted, one cannot help contrasting his services and their reward, with those of white men, military and civilian, on whom pensions and estates have been showered in such profusion.

Raja Dinkur Rao was, as has been said, a Hindoo Mahratta of the very highest caste, and it may be therefore argued, a representative man of but one portion of our Indian dominions. Yet that the feelings entertained by him find utterance in other mouths, and prey on other minds of a widely different type, may, we think, be fairly gathered from a final extract, penned by perhaps the ablest Mahomedan of Bengal. Between him, a liberal-minded, self-made man, and the aristocratic and conservative Dinkur Rao, there can exist no bond of sympathy in politics or religion, save the one am-

* Since this work was published, Sir John Lawrence has availed himself of a grand Durbar at Agra, to bestow the collar of the Star of India upon this most enlightened statesman. "Not the least interesting incident in the Durbar was the knighting of Dinkur Rao, after which he magnanimously went up to Scindia and gracefully said, 'I owe this honour to you, my master.' As the Viceroy is about to pay a complimentary visit to Scindia at Gwalior, let us hope that he may be able to effect a reconciliation. For ability and veracity there is no native in India equal to Dinkur Rao, and this Lord Canning well knew."—'The Times,' December 22, 1866.

bition, to promote good government and the welfare of the subject. On December 18, 1865, this Mussulman, writing to one of whose goodwill he felt assured, expressed himself in the following not very hopeful language, of which we must fain confess the fact of Dinkur Rao's career tends somewhat sadly to illustrate the truth :—

“ You at least are aware of the humble and precarious tenure on which natives, even the greatest among us, hold our offices. Literally and in fact a breath can unmake us, even as a breath has made. No talents, no integrity, no claims founded on length of service, can avail a day against the active displeasure of our covenanted white superiors. In these cases, and in such a Government as India, justice in a great measure depends upon individuals in power at the time. It is useless to blink at the truth, and I believe it is notorious that in a great many Anglo-Indian minds there lies an undercurrent of hatred towards the natives ; but as unfortunately the natives have not one head for convenient decapitation, this feeling finds too often vent against those unhappy natives whom circumstances bring into prominence, and it may be conflict, with the pride of Englishmen. God knows there are many and even numerous exceptions ; but the danger is not small to those children of the soil who may act as if the exceptions were the rule.”

Now those who would form impressions for themselves on things regarding India, may compare the extracts just quoted, coming as they do unprepared for the public eye, fresh from the pen of loyal natives versed in the genius of our rule, whose title to sit in the Councils of their country we have at length approved, with the promises held forth in the gracious Proclamation where-

by Her Majesty the Queen assumed the sovereignty of Hindostan. This document is one that cannot be too often read by, or too deeply graven on the hearts of, Anglo-Indian statesmen. It forms the Magna Charta of 180,000,000 souls belonging to mixed creeds, and may be studied with advantage by all who search for landmarks in contemporary history; but it should not be forgotten that it is a far cry from the banks of the Ganges to those of the Thames, and that although the distance is great, even in the case of wealthy appellants to the Privy Council, it is infinitely more felt by the impoverished, uneducated, and scantily-fed ryots who constitute nineteen-twentieths of an Eastern population.

This Proclamation was published by Lord Canning at Allahabad on 1st November 1858, and was addressed directly from the Queen to the Princes, Chiefs, and people of India. Its preamble is devoted to announcing that Her Majesty has, with the advice and consent of Parliament, taken upon herself the governance of the territories hitherto vested in the East India Company, and it then proceeds in the following terms:—

“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 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; and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity and social advancement which can only be secured

by internal peace and good government. We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil. Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us, that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects, on pain of our highest displeasure. And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge. We know and respect the feelings of attachment with which the natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State; and we will that generally in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India. We deeply lament the evils and misery which have been brought upon India by the acts of ambitious men, who have deceived their countrymen by false reports, and led them into open rebellion. Our power has been shown by the suppression of that rebellion in the field; we desire to show our mercy by pardoning the offences of those

who have been thus misled, but who desire to return to the path of duty."

The above are truly royal words, admitting of no cavil or misinterpretation, and they were closely followed by a distinct approval of the clement policy with which Lord Canning's name will ever be associated—an approval emanating from the highest terrestrial authority we acknowledge, and from which there happily is no appeal.

"Our clemency," it was written, "will be extended to all offenders, save and except those who have been or shall be convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects. With regard to such, the demands of justice forbid the exercise of mercy. To those who have willingly given an asylum to murderers, knowing them to be such, their lives alone can be guaranteed; but in apportioning the penalty due to such persons, full consideration will be given to any circumstances under which they have been induced to throw off their allegiance; and large indulgence will be shown to those whose crimes may appear to have originated in too credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing men. To all others in arms against the Government we hereby promise unconditional pardon, amnesty and oblivion of all offence against ourselves, our crown, and dignity, on their return to their homes and peaceful pursuits. It is our royal pleasure that these terms of grace and amnesty should be extended to all those who comply with these conditions before the first day of January next. When, by the blessing of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to admin-

ister its government for the benefit of all our subjects therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people."

THE END.

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