

CHAPTER VII.

PUBLIC WORKS—MEANS OF FOREIGN AND
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION.

WHAT has hitherto been done for the improvement of India has generally been effected by the government. The want of capital, and whilst subject to native rule, the sense of insecurity, have conspired with the tame and unenterprising disposition of the Hindoos to discourage all private speculation, of which the cost was great and the remuneration distant.

Much therefore remains to be done to render India what it might be, and as the probability of government being able to expend money upon public works is not great, it is to private enterprise that we must look to supply what is wanting.

The culture of a large portion of India depends upon irrigation. To promote this, tanks have been constructed in immense numbers, and the repairs and restoration of reservoirs forms a heavy charge upon the government. These tanks are constantly liable to accidents, and in one district of the Madras Presidency, North Arcot, no less than eleven hundred burst in one year, 1827. Such accidents

accidents are often accelerated, and their disastrous consequences increased by the mismanagement of the natives. They are of course deficient in scientific skill, and practical experience seems in a very small degree to have supplied the deficiency of science. Independently of the heavy charge which these tanks entail upon government, injury frequently accrues to the cultivators from the delays which the necessary regulations of government interpose. Delay is ruinous, but it cannot be avoided with safety to the party at whose expense the reparation is to be effected. It is worthy of consideration, whether the construction and preservation of these important aids to cultivation might not be entrusted in many instances to private hands, with benefit alike to the government, the capitalist, and the cultivator. The ruling powers would of course take care that what was undertaken was performed. The present means of irrigation are probably sufficient for the land to which it is directed, but should more be brought into cultivation they must be extended. In this case a fitting opportunity would be afforded for ascertaining whether private or public superintendence could best accomplish this important object: a more important one to the prosperity of India it is not easy to imagine. The island of Ceylon has been greatly depopulated, in consequence of the ruin of the tanks. It formerly exported

exported grain—it now depends for its supplies upon the Continent.

Another mode in which capital might be invested, certainly with advantage to the people of India, and possibly to those embarking in the speculation, is the improvement of the means of internal communication. It is represented as being the opinion of the best-informed persons, that canals might be made in various parts with considerable benefit. One was projected between Saugor Island and Calcutta, and the line was carefully surveyed and levelled ; but from the difficulties which at the time necessarily discouraged the investment of capital in India, it was not undertaken. It has been said, also, that it would be neither difficult nor expensive to construct a canal from the Hooghley to the vicinity of the coal and iron countries of Burdwan and Beerbhoom, to which it would be extremely desirable to have better means of access than are afforded by the Dummooda, and other uncertain and dangerous rivers. Another plan which has been suggested is, for a communication between Calcutta and the Western Provinces by a line of canals. At present the communication is tedious and uncertain ; the navigation of the Hooghley is frequently interrupted, and the course by the more Eastern rivers is circuitous.

But canals must depend for their utility upon
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a regular supply of water ; and in many parts of India it might be difficult to secure it. In such circumstances, railways present an admirable substitute. Even where the difficulty of obtaining water was not great, railways might be preferable in cases where the probable amount of traffic was limited. The expense of such works would be far less than in England. In our country an enormous proportion of the expense, varying from a third to a half, arises from the purchases of land, fencings, parliamentary and law proceedings, and other causes independent of the mere construction of the railway. In India some of these charges might be avoided altogether, and others would be very much reduced. The actual expense of the work would also be less than that of similar undertakings in England. As the traffic would be comparatively small, a single road, with occasional passing places, would be sufficient ; and as the weight of the carriages and lading would be much less, the rails might be proportionably lighter. Labour in India is vastly cheaper than in England ; and, under these circumstances, the cost of railways would be extremely moderate. At present, perhaps, the use of animal power would be the most advantageous ; but this, of course, would form one point of inquiry with those who might be disposed to undertake such works.

There are various lines upon which railways
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would be immediately profitable; and if the resources of India should be improved to the full amount of their capabilities, a necessity for fresh lines would be created, whilst the old ones would become increasingly lucrative. The extension of commerce demands additional means of communication, and the increase of means of communication facilitates the extension of commerce. The wealth and prosperity of India will be limited only by the amount of capital and enterprize applied to her improvement; and in no way can this be applied more beneficially than in connecting every part of the country by modes of communication cheap, ready, and certain.

Roads and bridges are works of less novelty, and they will doubtless be multiplied in proportion to the advancement of India in prosperity. Increased facilities of intercourse will tend to the improvement of the posts, and the substitution of better modes of conveyance than those now in use. Every where the state of the post may be regarded as a test of the state of the country. At once the result and the instrument of civilization, its improvement should occupy a prominent place in the views of every legislature. It is alike important, whether the attention be directed to its financial, its commercial, or its social effects. At present the natives make little use of the post;

a circumstance strikingly indicative of the condition of the country.

Connected with the subjects to which this chapter is devoted is that of steam navigation. It has been proposed to have recourse to steam, not only for navigating the rivers of India, but also for communicating with greater rapidity and certainty between that country and England. On each of these points a few observations are required.

The experiments which have been made on some of the rivers of India have been attended with partial success, but not sufficient to justify any very sanguine hope that the introduction of steam navigation will be attended with much advantage. The boats must be of peculiar construction to navigate these rivers at all. It is admitted that they must be confined to the carriage of packages of moderate size, and that all bulky goods must be excluded. From the impediments offered by rocks, rapids, shallows, and trees, they could not be navigated in the night, and the degree of speed would be very limited. Perhaps an exception might be afforded by the Indus. The ascent is not obstructed by rocks or rapids, and it affords means of communication with Central Asia that are invaluable. The coal in the vicinity is of inferior quality, but the supply of wood is abundant. There is consequently no physical obstacle
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to the establishment of a considerable commerce upon this noble river. The moral impediments, however, which arise from the ignorance and barbarous policy of the states with which it communicates, are great, and these must be surmounted before it can be made the medium of diffusing the benefits of commerce and civilization.

The Ganges, the Jumna, and the Burhampooter present almost insurmountable obstacles to a regular and certain navigation. At particular seasons these rivers become torrents, and when the wind acts in the same direction with the stream, the united force becomes almost irresistible. With such difficulties, it may be doubted whether the attention and expenditure bestowed upon the attempt to improve the means of navigating these rivers is not misdirected; whether they would not be more beneficially employed in extending and improving the modes of conveyance by land. Roads and railways offer advantages which can never be obtained upon the rivers of India; and it is by these that the improvement of the country will be most expeditiously advanced.

The question of steam communication between Great Britain and India has given rise to much discussion, and on the practicability and value of establishing it, as well as upon the choice of the most eligible route, great difference of opinion exists. The three leading routes are, 1st, that

by the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates; 2dly, that by the Red Sea; 3dly, the usual passage by the Cape of Good Hope. From the first and last of these little is to be hoped. Round the Cape one steam trip has been made; but it occupied 113 days, and it does not appear likely that by any arrangements the time could be very considerably shortened. The expense, too, would be so heavy, that as a private speculation it would be utterly impossible that it could ever be made to pay: that it should be taken up by the government is as little probable as desirable—nothing but an urgent necessity for establishing such a system of communication, a necessity which certainly does not exist, could justify it. Steamers are much better adapted for short trips than for long ones, and the passage by the Cape may be rejected at once as ineligible. It has been well observed by Captain Wilson, that “no man who has had experience of long sea voyages by steam, or has observed the effect of long continued strain upon the vessels and engines, and also that of the protracted action of fire on the flues and boilers generally, would ever for a moment have believed it practicable that steamers could be constructed to make that voyage for a constancy with advantage.”

The route by the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates has more plausible pretensions, but on investigation

investigation they are scarcely borne out. Bombay would in this route be the most convenient point of starting, and a steam vessel would proceed from thence to Bussorah, where another, of smaller size and of a different construction, would be substituted to ascend the river, either to Beles or Bir. From thence the course would be overland to some port of the Mediterranean; and Captain Chesney suggests four ports as stations, two of them, Scanderoon and Latichea, already available, and two others, Seleucia and the mouth of the Orontes, capable of being made so. Almost every part of this route, with all its variations, are open to very serious objections. Of the Euphrates scarcely any thing is known, except from the reports of Captain Chesney. The survey made by that officer is highly creditable to his talents and spirit of laborious research, but is scarcely calculated to lead any one else to the *same conclusions with its author*. It is evident, indeed, that the impediments to the successful navigation of the Euphrates are both numerous and great, and in practice we can scarcely hope to find them less than in prospect. Captain Chesney enumerates no less than forty obstructions, arising from rocks, shallows, and falls; and although this officer did not observe any fallen trees, such occasional impediments must be anticipated, as they occur in all rivers circum-

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stanced as the Euphrates. Some of the natural obstructions are admitted by Captain Chesney to be formidable; some, indeed, would seem to be insurmountable, and most of them would occasion delay. Near Labtar Island the navigation is impeded by rocks, which render it necessary for boats to lighten a little in the low season. Near El Kaim is a much more important obstruction: a ledge of irregular rocks extends one hundred and fifty yards along the river, and crosses its bed with the exception of a narrow passage. The country boats are obliged here to discharge a part of their cargo, and the passage is regarded by the native boatmen as very difficult. A little lower is another ledge extending three or four hundred yards, broken and irregular, with a large rock rising above the water, between which and one of the banks is the passage for boats. Here Captain Chesney observes, "the steamers' paddles spreading above the water would have nothing to spare." A short distance beyond this obstruction is another, where the country boats usually discharge one-third of their lading. Below Tel Hafa Mountain, and extending towards El Wahadia Mills, is a bed of rock, stretching three-quarters of a mile in length, with a passage for boats of no great width, having a fall of a foot; over which craft are dragged with some difficulty. Still further, near El Madia, are other rocks, in
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passing which it is necessary that boats should be lightened; and at the island of Karabla, a short distance from the town of Anna, commence the rocks and pass of Bahalet, consisting of an irregular shelf, extending along the river six hundred yards, the water being broken by several small falls, one of nearly two feet. The depth of water in the shallowest places is about twenty-two inches. The passage of boats at this spot is attended with great delay and difficulty. They discharge two-thirds of their cargo; and having effected a passage with as much as they are able to carry, return for the remainder, thus making two or three trips. Twenty or thirty men are employed to drag the boats up the falls against the stream; and Captain Chesney states, that "a steamer must, in all probability, be taken up in the same way, as it is doubtful whether she could work up with the paddles." Seven or eight miles farther, the river is again obstructed by rocks; and boats discharge part of their cargo both ascending and descending. Below Hadisa, after a great number of minor obstructions, is the whirlpool of Elias. The water rushes over a rocky bottom, with a fall at the extremity of two feet in a distance of sixty or seventy, and terminates in a whirlpool directly in the passage. The descent here would, perhaps, be a matter of some difficulty, though it is said that the country boats effect

effect it in safety, merely making a half turn in the whirlpool as they pass. The ascent they never attempt, being dragged through a narrow and rocky passage by which they avoid it. Captain Chesney questions whether a steamer would be able, when the fall is at the greatest, to work up with her paddles, first passing the whirlpool, which might partly turn her round. If compelled to pursue the course of the country boats, her progress would be greatly impeded, the passage being very narrow and intricate. Five miles below the island of Jibba another rocky passage occurs, where boats are compelled to lighten. These are only a portion of the obstructions recorded by Captain Chesney. They apply, indeed, to the low period of the river; but it is impossible not to perceive that they offer very considerable resistance to a rapid and constant navigation. The Lemlun marshes present a difficulty of a different kind; here the river varies little in depth at any period of the year, as during the time it is swollen it spreads a shallow sheet of water over an immense tract of country. The difficulty is enhanced by the course of the stream, which is winding and circuitous, and full of sharp turns at short intervals. Further, the current of the Euphrates is rapid. During six weeks of the year a strong wind blows from the north-west, and this happens at the time when the current of
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the river is the strongest. Against their combined force, if a steamer could contend at all, its progress must be extremely slow. Captain Chesney thinks that he can construct a vessel capable of navigating the Euphrates at all times. This is doubted by other competent judges ; but if practicable, the disadvantages attending the route will render it of little value. At certain seasons the passage must be tedious. Through the tortuous course of the channel in the Lamlun marshes, through the narrow and intricate passes between rocks, no one would attempt to steam in the night. Steam-navigation is expensive, and in return for the expense men expect a high degree of speed, and a tolerable measure of certainty. Neither of these could be attained on the Euphrates. The heat during three months of the year would be an objection to passengers. At Bagdad the thermometer is sometimes as high as 120° in the shade. This would be 130° on a steam-boat, a degree which few travellers would be disposed to encounter. But the number of passengers could not be great. Passengers must be attracted by superior accommodation. To afford such accommodation, boats must be large ; to navigate the Euphrates, they must be small. Passengers would be further deterred by the necessity of a long and inconvenient journey by land. To obviate this, Captain Chesney suggests the

the clearing away the bar from the mouth of the Orontes, and afterwards forming a canal of sixty-three miles to connect that river with the Euphrates. These things might be done, but who is to bear the expense? This question will, it may be apprehended, tend to procrastinate their commencement to a very remote period.

The passage by the Euphrates may or may not be physically practicable, but however that may be, there is an impediment which mechanical skill certainly cannot remove, and in treating which it is to be feared political science will be alike at fault. The lawless state of the country would render the passage by the Euphrates, could it be effected, neither safe nor agreeable. The Arabs of the banks are more to be dreaded than the rocks and shallows of the river. The boats would be constantly exposed to plunder, and even if the passengers and crew were strong enough to protect themselves from robbery, they would be liable to constant and serious annoyance from the malice or levity of the lawless hordes by which they would be surrounded. This objection is felt by the advocates of the Euphrates line. It is freely admitted by Captain Chesney. He thinks, indeed, that the Arabs would not succeed in stopping a steamer, but he adds, with rather more coolness than seems suited to the occasion, "they might fire at her." The opinion of Captain Chesney,

Chesney, as to the probability of annoyance, is confirmed by the testimony of Mr. Hine, given before the Committee of the House of Commons last year. That gentleman, who resided in the country fifteen years, says, if the Arabs "saw "you were armed, they would not assault you—"they would not come down in any considerable "numbers, in order to stop you—for they would "know it would be useless, but they would fire "at you from the banks." And he adds the consoling assurance, that they are very expert marksmen. It has been proposed to compound with these marauders, by paying "black-mail." Mr. Colquhoun says, "the power of annoyance "with an Arab Sheik is an article of commerce; "he sells it, and often lives by it." The tribes, however, are numerous, and to compound with them all would be no small expense; and after the composition had been effected, the adherence of the chieftain could by no means be calculated upon as a matter of course. Mr. Colquhoun says, it "would depend upon whether he could "make more by breaking his promise." Mr. Bankes being asked, "could you trust the faith "of the Arabs after making an engagement?" answered, "I think as long as their interest goes "hand in hand with their engagement, I could; "but I am not sure that I could answer for them "much beyond that." The wild virtues of uncivilized

lised life have been usually much exaggerated, and those best acquainted with the value of Arab faith, seem not to rate it very high. It may be urged, that a man's interest will in the long-run be best promoted by honesty; but this is not a view of the subject to be taken by an untutored mind. The principle of the Arab is (in the words of one of the witnesses before the Committee) "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; if an Arab gets one piastre to-day, he thinks it better than the chance of thirty a year hence."

The land-passage is exposed to the same dangers in this respect as that by water. To elude them will be frequently impossible—to purchase the protection of the chiefs is a process, of which the expense is certain, while the benefits are doubtful*—to fight would certainly not be agreeable to that division of the travellers consisting of females and children, nor possibly to some who would feel more hesitation in avowing their dislike to it. This danger alone is therefore sufficient to render the route by the Euphrates ineligible. But it is due to Captain Chesney to say, that his various papers on the subject are not only creditable to his talents and industry, but exhibit a degree

* Captain Chesney says, that the Arab must be paid beforehand for whatever he undertakes, because he never confides in a promise, the natural consequence of not fulfilling his own.

degree of fairness which is still more honourable to him.

It remains to consider the route by the Red Sea, the only one which is in any degree likely to be made available. In this, as in the last route, the starting place would be Bombay, and, with proper depôts for fuel, a steamer might work from thence to Suez without difficulty. It has been suggested that it might be expedient to form a steam-packet station somewhere in the vicinity of the ancient Pelusium, and thus enable the mail and passengers to cross the isthmus by the shortest route. This, however, is held to be impracticable, and consequently the only course is to proceed to Cairo and Alexandria. From the former to the latter place there are various routes; two by land, a third by the mouth of the Nile and the sea, and a fourth by the canal of Alexandria, which has been cleared out by the present ruler of Egypt. The land journies may be performed with tolerable expedition. The passage by the Nile and the sea is liable to some delays. There must be two classes of boats, one for the river and one for the sea. Another impediment is occasioned by the bar of Rosetta, which can only be passed in moderate weather, and with men well accustomed to the passage. The canal is navigable only during the high waters of the Nile.

The navigation of the sea of Suez being attended
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with some difficulty, Cosseir has been recommended as a port in place of Suez. But the harbour is not a good one, and its selection would render necessary either a long journey overland, or a circuitous route by the Nile. Suez may therefore be regarded as the best station.

The distance from Bombay to Suez being three thousand miles, cannot be performed in one stage. Captain Wilson proposes two methods of dividing it. By the first, the vessel would proceed from Bombay to Mocha and from Mocha to Suez. By the second, the distance would be divided into three stages:—Bombay to Maculla, Maculla to Juddah, and Juddah to Suez. This plan appears to be the preferable one. The vessel would be certain of carrying coal enough in the worst weather, and the strain on the machinery would be much less than on the former plan. By such arrangements the voyage from Bomba to Suez might probably occupy from twenty-five to thirty days, and from Bombay to Falmouth between fifty and sixty.

The plan is thus far practicable; but to what extent it is likely to be either beneficial to the public interests, or profitable to the undertakers, are questions which cannot be answered so satisfactorily. The necessity of this rapid communication is not very urgent, nor are the advantages to be derived from it very apparent; while the
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outlay of capital must be considerable, and the returns, to say the least, extremely uncertain.

The carriage of letters would not alone cover the necessary expense, and the number of passengers cannot be expected to be very great. About one-half the passengers at present proceeding between Bombay and England are ladies and children; a large proportion of the remainder are persons in infirm health, and these would be excluded from the steam-boats by the passage overland and other circumstances. The intercourse between India and England is, indeed, likely to be increased; but many passengers will be disposed to seek the most economical mode of conveyance, which will certainly not be afforded by steamers. The passengers must also be sought almost exclusively at the place from which the vessel departs, as few persons will be disposed voluntarily to incur the fatigue and inconvenience of an unnecessary overland journey in India. Supposing a very rapid communication between England and India to be necessary, it would be indispensable that it should be constant. Neither by the Euphrates nor the Red Sea could this advantage be attained. For several months in the year we could not expect to navigate the former, and the latter would be unapproachable during the prevalence of the south-west monsoon. If it be not physically impossible for a steamer to make way against the monsoon,

monsoon, her progress must be very slow, and the wear and tear of the vessel and machinery ruinous. If effected at all, therefore, the voyage could not be performed with certainty, as to time, and the principal advantage proposed would consequently be lost. There is yet one most serious objection which applies to the two routes: they both traverse countries frequently visited by the plague. Upon the whole, there is nothing in the present prospects of steam navigation with India that is very encouraging, and it may be doubted whether the money expended in experiments by the various courses, might not be applied in a manner far better calculated to promote the permanent welfare of India.

There are some political considerations connected with this subject which imperatively press themselves upon the attention. The Russians are but fifteen days' march from the Euphrates, and although they do not require to be taught that the course of that river will bear them towards India, it may be doubted whether our appearance upon it might not give rise to jealousies which would endanger our peace, if not our dominion. In Egypt, perhaps, we have still more to apprehend. Some of those who have interested themselves in the success of steam navigation by this route, contemplate it only as a preliminary measure, and anticipate the completion of the
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much-vaunted project for a canal, connecting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. They seem to forget that this would strike a fatal blow at the commerce of England, or if this result occur to them, they disregard it. The discovery of the passage by the Cape destroyed the commerce of Italy and the Mediterranean. The restoration of the trade of the East to its old channel, would have the like effect upon those countries into whose hands it has passed. It may not be in our power to arrest the progress of events ; but it is madness to accelerate that which is fraught with ruin to ourselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOCIETY AND MANNERS.

THE Hindoo is strongly averse to change ; the Mahometan, with perhaps somewhat less of constitutional repugnance to innovation, is wrapt in a bigotry which almost precludes his seeing any thing to admire in the habits and manners of an infidel. Yet, unpromising as are these circumstances, change will take place, even in Hindostan—in fact, it has already commenced. Imitation is one of the principles of human nature most early developed and most general in its operation ; and though the progress of change in India will be slow—as, in fact, it is desirable that it should be—it will not be the less sure. In those parts of India where the influx of Europeans has been considerable, the natives have begun, in some degree, to conform to the tastes and customs of Europe. Those who are able to indulge in the more expensive practices of the West, have manifested a strong inclination to do so. They wear watches ; are fond of carriages and equipages ; and, what is more remarkable, have become considerable consumers of wines and spirits. These
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are matters trivial in themselves, but acquiring importance as indicating that a social revolution is approaching. We naturally imitate those whom we regard as our superiors; and the relation of ruler and subject is, perhaps, the only one which could have softened the prejudices of India against all modes of life alien to its own.

It is not merely in the minor details of manners that the natives are approximating to an European standard. They are anxious to form their minds upon European models, and to become acquainted with those sciences and branches of knowledge which enter into a course of liberal education. A strong desire has been manifested to become acquainted with the English language; a desire which certainly ought to be encouraged and gratified. It is proposed to make use of native agency in carrying on the functions of government, to an extent hitherto untried; and it is obvious, that to the natives selected for official station, an acquaintance with our language will be a desirable qualification. On many occasions, it will be positively useful in the discharge of their duties, and it will have the general good effect of producing a community of feeling between the supreme and the subordinate authority.

It may be asked, whether the intellectual advancement of the natives of India will not be inconsistent with the permanence of our domination.

nion. To this question it might be sufficient to answer, that we have no power to obstruct the progress of knowledge. Where the desire of information is once excited, it is not possible to stifle it. It may be added, that it would be unjust to the people over whom we have acquired authority, to withhold from them the means of improving their minds. But, whatever may be the degree of danger attending the diffusion of knowledge, there is no better mode of counteracting it than by making, as far as we can, our own language the universal object of study. By doing this, we shall identify the people of India with ourselves. The great influence which the French obtained in Europe was mainly attributable to the wide diffusion of their language. It was the common dialect of Europe ; and the universality of the French language paved the way for the universality of French dominion. The French language was every where spoken ; French authors were every where read ; and the best of them were regarded as exhibiting the finest models of taste and the highest excellencies of genius. The supremacy of French talent came to be universally admitted, and from this admission flowed a ready submission to French dictation. The extension of the English language in India will, in all probability, be attended with the like results. Its study will, of course, lead to an acquaintance with

with our literature, and our great authors will become to India what they are to us. The admiration felt for them will be transferred to the general account of their country, which will thus become associated in the mind of the educated Hindoo with all that is high in intellect and pure in feeling. This will be a far better guarantee for the security of our dominion than ignorance can offer.

A taste for our literature has already begun to diffuse itself. It appears that no inconsiderable portion of the young men of the more respectable classes speak our language fluently, and are familiar with our best authors, including those who might be supposed to be least adapted to Oriental taste, Dryden and Pope, and those more especially national, Shakespeare and Milton. To encourage and extend this taste will be true policy. The mind of England has impressed itself indelibly upon the broad plains of America. It may yet awaken the slumbering energies of India ; and the names of our poets and philosophers, which are now resounded on the shores of the Mississippi and St. Lawrence, may be re-echoed from the Ganges and Burhampooter.

Connected with the diffusion of a taste for reading and for the study of the English language, is the subject of the periodical press. Whether or not it should be entirely free from restraint, is a question

question on which difference of opinion may be expected to exist, and with regard to which, those who differ should exercise mutual candour and forbearance. In this country, and in the age in which we live, the current of opinion, of course, runs in favour of unlimited freedom; and those who think that any restraint should be imposed, will admit that it should be to no greater extent than is absolutely essential to the safety of the state. There are circumstances connected with the state of society in India, that place it beyond the reach of those arguments, which prove the expediency of a perfectly unfettered press here. Yet it is not uncommon to find the question argued as though the circumstances of the two countries were precisely similar. If India be entitled to a free press because the press in England is free, by the same rule, she is entitled to a representative government, because England possesses one. Few persons will contend that she is at present fitted for such a government, though she may, at some future period, become so. No country should be deprived of the advantages of free institutions, but in proportion as it is unfit for them; and no greater degree of restraint should be imposed upon either a nation or an individual than is necessary to secure the ends for which government exists. To inflict what is unnecessary is tyranny; to concede what is mischievous is weakness.

ness. Freedom of discussion is a plausible phrase ; but it should be recollected, that what is contended for is sometimes not freedom of discussion but freedom of abuse. The experiment, however, is now in progress, and it is to be hoped that it may be justified by success.

From the relation in which we stand to India our moral power is great ; but we must not overrate it, nor by straining it too far, run the hazard of losing it altogether. There is much in Indian society which it would be desirable to change—much that, according to the modes of thinking prevalent in modern Europe, is unfit to be permitted. But we must not expect to alter the face of society by a word ; we must not expect to accomplish at once that which must be the gradual result of time and circumstances ; we must be patient as well as persevering, and not, in our zeal to eradicate abuses, incur evils worse than those to which we refuse a temporary toleration. Slavery is unquestionably an evil ; but in India it exists in its mildest form, and its extent is not great. The humanity of the Legislature has directed that measures shall be taken for its mitigation and ultimate extinction ; but prudence has forbidden any premature and violent steps, which might endanger the peace and well-being of the community, without promoting the benefit of ~~any~~ part of it. The end is good ; and it is desirable that

that the means should be wise. Slavery in Europe has disappeared before the light of Christian civilization, and wherever that light extends the same effect will follow.

The friends of India have the gratification of knowing that she is advancing in knowledge and in freedom : they have but one further wish, that her moral improvement may correspond with her intellectual and civil advancement. This must be the result of higher principles than human wisdom can supply, and the means of promoting it will be discussed in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

RELIGION AND MORALS.

THE moral and religious picture of India is a dark one. The character of the natives has sometimes indeed been pourtrayed in an amiable and attractive light; but such representations have proceeded from persons either ignorant of the facts, or having a purpose to serve by mis-stating them. Nearly all well-informed and unprejudiced reporters agree in representing the moral state of India as most lamentable; and the few who deliver a more favourable opinion when speaking generally, on descending to particulars, admit all the facts which justify the harsher conclusion. It must not be supposed that those who speak with the greatest severity of the prevalent vices of Indian society, wish to exaggerate them, or feel any pleasure in the view which they are compelled to take. But there is neither justice nor policy—there is neither true charity nor genuine liberality in casting a cloak over that which ought to be exposed, in order that it may be amended. If we would effect a cure, we must not deny the virulence of the disease. It may be
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painful to those of kindly feelings to think harshly of their fellow-men ; it may be annoying to the hunters after popular applause, to subject themselves to the charge of illiberality ; but the lover of truth will pursue his object wherever it may lead him, and deliver unhesitatingly the result of his enquiries, though it may not be such as will be gratifying either to himself or to others.

There is no virtue in which the natives are more universally deficient than in a regard for truth. Veracity is, in fact, almost unknown. Falsehood pervades all the intercourse of private life, and is carried to such an extent in courts of law, as to render it almost impossible for the judges to exercise their duty in such a manner as to satisfy their consciences. False testimony is not the exception, but the rule ; and it is delivered, and even persevered in, with a calmness, a self-possession, and an air of sincerity which would disarm suspicion, were it not that two conflicting stories cannot both be true, and that the character of Indian witnesses is tolerably appreciated by those most accustomed to them. Not only will two sets of witnesses give directly contrary testimony, but not unfrequently will it turn out, upon investigation, that neither of them know any thing of the matter in question. Even those who have a just cause, will seek to defend it by falsehood. It must be quite unnecessary to descant
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upon the low state of moral principle that must be prevalent where such things are of frequent occurrence. No virtue is more essential to the well-being of society than a general regard to truth. When this is wanting, all rights are insecure, and courts of law may be made the instruments of the grossest injustice. The tenure of property is nearly as uncertain as it would be in the absence of all law ; the only difference being, that in the one case it is taken by force, in the other it is transferred by fraud.

From the prevalence of falsehood in legal proceedings, it will be inferred, that honesty is not in higher estimation than truth ; and according to the most accurate and intelligent observers, trick, deception, and fraud, are interwoven with almost all transactions of business. In every bargain, fraud is apprehended ; and it is to be feared that there are few in which it is not contemplated. The consequence is, that conditions and securities are multiplied without end, and the ingenuity displayed in devising precautions against fraud is only exceeded by the ingenuity exercised in evading them. If confidence is reposed, it is but too often accepted only for the purpose of abusing it. The agent or steward of a rich man endeavours to transfer as much as possible of his master's wealth to his own coffers. He again is plundered by his subordinates ; and this

this is the course of procedure down to the lowest dependent, who having none beneath him, enjoys the luxury of plundering without being plundered in return. The dearest ties of consanguinity afford no security. The brother cannot safely trust, the brother, the uncle the nephew, nor even the father the son. Trusts of the most solemn character are commonly abused; and the offices of guardian and executor converted into sources of emolument without hesitation and without shame.

Breaches of moral obligation are indeed too frequent every where: but nothing can mark more strongly the difference between Europe and India in this respect than the state of public opinion. In Europe, though falsehood and fraud exist, the imputation of either is disgraceful. The habitual liar will defend his veracity with warmth, and feels, or affects to feel, the charge of falsehood as an insult. The swindler would, if possible, pass for an honest man, and all who violate the laws of sound morality, pay to them an indirect homage, by endeavouring to assume the virtues which they have not. In India this is not the case. There is little more of decency than of morality. Men do not even pretend to truth and honesty, because the pretension is not necessary to their station in society. The virtues themselves are not respected, and therefore no one is respected

respected for possessing them, nor despised for wanting them. The wholesome check derived from public opinion can be wanting only in a very depraved state of society, and, when once destroyed, it is obvious that the scale of morality will continue to descend with fearful rapidity. In Europe, bad men are sometimes withheld solely by this check from actions injurious to society. In the better disposed it is an important auxiliary to good conduct; and with that numerous class who hover between virtue and vice, not insensible to the claims of the one, and at the same time little able to resist the temptations of the other, it throws the preponderating weight on the right side. The influence of habit, moreover, is not to be despised, and those who first adhere to truth and justice, only because it is decent, may in time become attached to the same course, because it is right. Too many, indeed, form their standard of morals exclusively from the customs of their country, and where the most important moral qualities find no echo in public sentiment, it requires little sagacity to pronounce an accurate judgment on the state of society.

While abundantly productive of the meaner vices, the Indian character is not exempt from those of a darker hue. Falsehood and dishonesty are associated with malevolence; and contention, animosity, and revenge prevail among every grade
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and condition. Men pursue each other with the most deadly enmity, and with the most determined and long-continued perseverance. No opinion was ever more unfounded than that which has been so often advanced, and so commonly received, of the mild and benevolent character of the Hindoos. Passive, indeed, they are, and frequently servile, but not mild. Where they have any thing to hope or any thing to fear, where the expression of resentment would expose them to danger or inconvenience, they can conceal it, and submit to insult and injury with an appearance of the most patient submission ; but the desire of revenge, though hidden, is active, and at the first favourable opportunity will be indulged. Nothing would be more easy than to produce numerous instances of the obstinate malignity which marks the Hindoo character, and which is confirmed and fortified by superstition. With all the delicacy which the British Government has at all times observed towards the religion of the majority, it has been found impossible to avoid occasionally interfering to suppress practices originating in vindictive feeling, and sanctioned by superstitious credulity, which threatened completely to paralyse the operation of the law. One of these was common in the province of Benares, where the Brahmins were held in the highest reverence, and their persons regarded as inviolable.

inviolable. When any process from the judicial or fiscal authorities was to be executed upon a Brahmin, he would threaten to inflict personal violence, sometimes extending to suicide on himself if the officer approached too near; or if, as frequently happened, his affection for his own person was too tender to allow him to place it in jeopardy, he would bring forward some member of his family or tribe whom he threatened to maim or put to death, if an attempt were made to serve the process. These threats were not mere words; they were often carried into execution, the victims themselves acquiescing, under a conviction, that after death they should become the tormentors of those who were the occasion of their being sacrificed. A practice, somewhat similar, was that of a person placing himself at the door of another, armed with some offensive weapon, or provided with poison, for the purpose either of recovering a debt or extorting a donation. By the established rules, the besieger was to remain fasting until his object was obtained, and the person besieged was also to abstain from nourishment until the other party was satisfied. During the siege, ingress to the house and egress from it were suspended. Neither could be attempted, except at the risk of the party, without wounding himself with the weapon, or swallowing the poison which he had provided. These two customs were found

so dangerous as to call for the interposition of the supreme authority to put them down.

Some instances, not very dissimilar, which before the Committee of the House of Commons in 1832 were mentioned with approbation, seem rather to merit the expression of a contrary sentiment. One of the chiefs of Telinga, on no greater provocation than an attempt to disarm him when entering a court of justice, plunged his weapon into his heart, and fell dead in the presence of the judge on the bench. On another occasion, when a military force endeavoured to carry into execution a judicial process in the Nellore district, a chieftain destroyed all his family as well as himself. The gentleman by whom these instances were quoted, regarded them as indicating the possession of a nice sense of honour. They rather indicate an overweening pride, and a fierce, bitter, and malignant spirit; and as these instances occurred among those whom the witness represented as the best and most estimable of the inhabitants of India, we may conceive that in those provinces where the native character is inferior, deeds of even greater ferocity are not unknown. That spirit of litigiousness which all admit to prevail in India more generally than in any other country in the world, is but a petty manifestation of that mixture of pride and malignity which, on other occasions, by a more elevated display, has succeeded

ceeded in confounding the moral sentiments of the European observer, and concealed beneath the barbarous grandeur of the act, the base and hateful character of the motive. Of all people the Hindoos are the most prone to litigation. A large number of the suits originate in malevolence or in fraud, and whatever their origin, the interests of both parties are almost invariably upheld by such a degree of mendacity as in the most corrupt parts of Europe is scarcely conceivable. Under these circumstances, it is almost impossible to keep the course of justice tolerably pure. The highest sagacity in the judges, combined with the most rigid impartiality and the most scrupulous care, can scarcely preserve courts of justice from degenerating into something very different from the name they bear. What they must have been before the establishment of the British authority, when justice was notoriously and almost avowedly bought and sold, is sufficiently clear.

✓ It is a lamentable truth, that the feelings of the Hindoo are exclusively for himself. Sensibility for others he has none. His humanity to the inferior animals has been greatly extolled by those whose observation has been partial, or who have possessed no means of observation at all. This, like many other virtues ascribed to the Hindoo character, is not merely exaggerated, but altogether unfounded in fact. Certain ani-

mals, which his unholy superstition has rendered sacred, receive from the Hindoo as much attention and respect as he would award to the highest caste of his own species. But, with these exceptions, the brute creation in India are treated with the greatest cruelty. Even the beast which an execrable religion elevates to divine honours is not exempted from the general lot. The labouring oxen are subjected to treatment which in this country would call forth the indignation and horror of the lowest and most unfeeling classes. The Hindoo has no sentiment. He acknowledges and knows nothing beyond positive obligation. He is commanded to reverence a beast, and he obeys. He is not commanded to treat with humanity the same beast labouring for his benefit, and no feeling exists to supply the deficiency of positive precept.

To his own species the Hindoo is almost invariably cold and unfeeling. Estranged from his fellow-man by the exclusive spirit of a frightful superstition, he regards human suffering with a callous insensibility which is truly horrible. Some examples related by Bishop Heber are absolutely appalling. Such instances as the following, throw more light upon the real character of the people, than all the eloquence that has been expended upon the kindness and benevolence of the Hindoos. "A traveller falls down sick in
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the streets of a village (I am mentioning a fact which happened ten days ago); nobody knows what caste he is of, therefore nobody goes near him, lest they should become polluted; he wastes to death before the eyes of a whole community, unless the jackals take courage from his helpless state to finish him a little sooner; and perhaps, as happened in the case to which I allude, the children are allowed to pelt him with stones and mud. The man of whom I am speaking was found in this state, and taken care of by a passing European; but if he had died, his skeleton would have lain in the streets till the vultures carried it away, or the magistrates ordered it to be thrown into the river."

A second anecdote rests on the same authority. "A friend of mine, some months ago, found a miserable wretch, a groom out of employ, who had crept, sick of a dysentery, into his courtyard. He had there remained in a corner, on the pavement, two days and nights. Perhaps twenty servants had been eating their meals daily within six yards of him, yet none had relieved him, none had so much as carried him into the shelter of one of the out-houses, nor had any taken the trouble to tell their master. When reproved for this, the answer was, "He was not our kinsman." "Whose business was it?" "How did we know that Sahib would like

to be troubled?" What must be the state of moral feeling where such things occur? That they do occur is unquestionable. The high character of Bishop Heber, and his truly kind and amiable disposition, exempt his narrative from the slightest suspicion of exaggeration; he evidently relates the facts reluctantly, and would, if possible, soften their hideous character. He says, "I only mention these instances, because none of those who heard them seemed to think them unusual or extraordinary; because in a Christian country I think they could not have happened; and because they naturally arise from the genius of the national religion, which, by the distinction it establishes, makes men worse than indifferent to each other."

With the knowledge of other facts, which unhappily are too well authenticated, we need not, indeed, feel surprise at these. Those who are destitute of affection for their own offspring, can scarcely be expected to evince much sensibility for strangers; and though exceptions undoubtedly occur, one general characteristic of the Hindoo is a deficiency of natural affection. Almost every where but in India parental affection is one of the most powerful impulses of human nature—sometimes so powerful as to overcome even the attachment to life itself. The differences of climate, of colour, of civilization, and of creed, seem, in general,

general, to have little effect in modifying this passion ; and whether in the regions of eternal snow, or beneath the burning rays of a tropical sun ; among the fair-haired children of the North, or the sable and woolly natives of Africa ; in the polished scenes of elegance and refinement, or in the hut where human nature exists in a condition scarcely superior to that of the beasts of the field ; under the light of revealed truth, or in the darkness of ignorance and superstition ; in every possible variety of situation and circumstance, the mother clings to her child with an intensity of affection, a devotedness of soul, and a forgetfulness of self, which no other object can call forth. In India this feeling is comparatively weak, and a very slight pretext is sufficient to dissolve the obligation when it has become inconvenient. In time of famine, the parent will sell her child without hesitation. The pressure of extreme want may suggest an excuse for this ; but there are attendant circumstances which prove that the sacrifice is not severely felt. This is attested by the following fact, related by Mr. Grant, in his valuable paper on the state of society in India :

“ In the scarcity of grain which prevailed about Calcutta in the year 1788, a gentleman then high, now still higher in office there, ordered his servants to buy any children that might be brought for
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for sale (for in times of dearth Hindoo parents frequently sell their offspring), and to tell their mothers, that when the scarcity should be over, they might come again and receive their children back. Of about twenty thus humanely preserved, most of whom were females, only three were ever inquired for by their mothers. The scarcity was neither extreme nor long. The unnatural parents cannot be supposed to have perished from want, for each received money for her child, and by the liberal contribution of the inhabitants of Calcutta, and chiefly of the Europeans, rice was distributed daily to multitudes at various stations about the city. And yet, notwithstanding this facility of obtaining food, a woman was at that time seen to throw away her infant child upon the high road." Such facts require no comment.

Infanticide was common until forbidden by British law. The horrible practice of suttee has fallen before the same benign influence. Both these customs indicate a people destitute of moral sensibility, and neither of them would have been discontinued but by the interposition of foreign authority.

The absence of the gentler feelings is not compensated by the possession of the loftier sensibilities of our nature. Patriotism is a virtue absolutely unknown. His country is nothing to the Hindoo, whose affections are centered in himself.

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The coldness and insensibility of the native character might lead to the supposition, that the vices which usually result from the excitement of passion would be of rare occurrence, but the conclusion would be erroneous. India is disgraced by the grossest impurity, which, emanating from the institutions of a false religion, spreads itself through all the ramifications of social life, poisoning the very sources of moral principle, and producing a license, both of action and speech, as odious as it is vile. The tone of conversation is represented as indescribably disgusting, and altogether without parallel in European society, however debased. Females of abandoned character are appendages to the temples of religion, and the corruption of manners is universal. It has been seen that mothers will, without reluctance, sell their children; and, to complete the frightful picture of moral deformity, it may be added, that they will sell them for the vilest purposes. The religion of the Hindoo has no connection with sound morals.

The defects of the Hindoo character are pointed out by Tamerlane in his Institutes. He says, " The inhabitants of Hindostan are equally debilitated in their corporeal and inert in their mental faculties; inexorable and perfidious to such an extreme, that only personal violence can enforce justice. Regardless of honour and indecent in their dress, they sacrifice their

their lives for trifles and are indefatigable in unworthy pursuits. Whilst improvident and imprudent, their ideas are confined and views circumscribed. When reduced to poverty, they patiently have recourse to the most menial employments, forgetting their previous circumstances, and seldom quitting the world without injuring their benefactors; but whilst the acquisition of riches tempers every atrocity, indolence pervades their most momentous transactions. The native of Hindostan has no pretension to humanity but the figure; whilst imposture, fraud, and deception, are by him considered as meritorious accomplishments." The opinion of Tamerlane upon this subject must of course be received with some caution. He was a conqueror, and the disciple of a religion in which bigotry and persecution are virtues. His own character, too, did not peculiarly qualify him to act the part of a moral censor. But after all these deductions from his credibility, considerable weight must be attached to his report, and in all its main features it is corroborated by a host of later testimonies which are perfectly unimpeachable. Bernier, who visited them above a hundred and fifty years ago, speaks of their faithless and perfidious character, and declares his belief that there does not exist a nation more avaricious and sordid. Mr. Scrafton, about the middle of the last century, says, "The Gentoos are found still
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more cruel and rapacious than their foreign masters, and what is more extraordinary, the Brahmins still exceed the rest in every abuse of power, and seem to think, if they bribe God by bestowing part of their plunder on cows and faquirs, their injustices will be pardoned." Governor Holwell, about the same time, calls them "a race of people, who, from their infancy, are utter strangers to the idea of common faith and honesty;"—"as degenerate, crafty, superstitious, litigious, and wicked a people as any in the known world, if not eminently more so." Lord Clive, who knew them well, says, "The inhabitants of this country we know by long experience have no attachment to an obligation." Governor Verelst, an able and well informed cotemporary of the latter authorities, bears ample testimony to the treachery and dishonesty of the native character. In 1772, the Governor and Council of Bengal complain of the mischievous consequences flowing from the prevalence of litigiousness, chicane, and intrigue. Lord Teignmouth affirms that "the nation is wholly void of public virtue;" that the natives "make not the least scruple of lying when falsehood is attended with advantage"—that "cunning and artifice is wisdom with them—to deceive and overreach is to acquire the character of a wise man"—that "a man must be long acquainted with them before he can believe them

them capable of that barefaced falsehood, servile adulation, and deliberate deception which they daily practise ;”—and that “ it is the business of all, from the ryot to the dewan, to conceal and deceive.” Sir John Macpherson, adverting to these statements, admits that they “ are not fictitious representations.” Sir Robert Barker says, “ it is well known that neither promises nor oaths have been able to bind this treacherous sect of people to their engagements.” Mr. Grant sums up a long and able enquiry into the native character thus : “ Upon the whole, then, we cannot avoid recognizing in the people of Hindostan, a race of men lamentably degenerate and base, retaining but a feeble sense of moral obligation, yet obstinate in their disregard of what they know to be right ; governed by malevolent and licentious passions, strongly exemplifying the effects produced upon society by great and general corruption of manners, and sunk in misery by their vices in a country peculiarly calculated by its natural advantages to promote the happiness of its inhabitants.” The general tendency of the evidence before the parliamentary committee is to the same effect. Mr. Clarke says, “ a native will, in general, give his evidence rather with reference to the consequences of what he may say to his own interests, than from any regard to truth or falsehood”—“ in order to the improvement of the native
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tive character, I think there is wanting a better moral principle in themselves individually than they are now found to possess, and a more powerful influence of moral opinion on the part of native society. At present, their morality affords little internal control over their actions; it does not furnish them with a conscientious check over their conduct, and there is no control of public opinion acting upon them externally. Injustice or misconduct which should prove successful in making the fortune of a native, would attach no disgrace to him in the estimation of his countrymen." The same gentleman states, that prosecutions for perjury are very frequent, and if the criminal "is of a character to which, from rank or caste, any degree of respectability or sanctity attaches, those qualities would not be affected by his punishment in the minds of the natives."—He believes, "that persons holding offices attached to temples, have been viewed with equal reverence and treated with equal deference in regard to their spiritual authority while under actual punishment for perjury," and their conviction has not operated as any stain upon them in native society. Mr. Oldham would not trust the natives to administer justice alone—thinks the acutest among them the most corrupt—that a native cannot trust a native, and among the people there is a decided want of regard to character. This gentleman,

gentleman, who held a judicial station in India, relates the following story :

“ A murder had taken place in the district of Moradabad. The thannadar, as is usual in those cases, proceeded to the spot to hold an inquest on the body, and to enquire for witnesses of the fact : he took the evidence of one witness, who deposed that he was present at the time the murder was committed, related circumstantially the number of sword-wounds given, the distance he stood from the deceased, &c. I mean merely to state, that the most minute particulars were given by this man as an eye-witness. The man was summoned before me as a magistrate for his evidence to be taken again. The man's name, as usual, was asked ; he gave his name correctly. His father's name was asked ; he gave that correctly. He went through the whole circumstances verbatim, as related before the thannadar ; but when I began to ask him a little more, and cross-question him a little, he lost himself quite, and seeing that I suspected there was something that there should not be, and followed it up, the man having no answer to give, at last said, ‘ The whole of the evidence I have given is by order of the zemindar. I am not the real witness, but am come to personate him by the zemindar's orders.’ ” .

The Honourable W. Leslie Melville says : “ If all the testimony delivered on the subject of India

dia agrees in any thing, it surely is in representing the low state of moral feeling exhibited in our courts of justice." Native officers and retainers, as well as suitors and witnesses, are all represented as false and corrupt. Mr. Butterworth Bayley says: "The great cause of failure in the administration of criminal, as well as of civil justice, is the habitual disregard for truth which unhappily pervades the bulk of the native community, and the little security which the obligation of an oath adds to the testimony of a witness. I do not believe that this characteristic vice of the natives of India has been fostered or encouraged by the establishment of our courts of justice as is generally imagined. The same vice has been found to prevail to at least an equal extent in Mysore, in the Mahratta country, and in other parts of India to which our authority has not extended, and where our institutions were wholly unknown. False testimony has, in certain cases, been directly encouraged and approved by the great law-giver of the Hindoos; the offence of perjury can be expiated by very simple penances, and *the inhabitants of India must undergo a great moral regeneration*, before the evil which saps the very foundation, of justice, and bars all confidence between man and man, shall be effectually remedied. My own impression is that, generally speaking, the moral sanction of an oath does not, especially

especially among the lower classes, materially add to the value of native testimony; that the only practical restraint on perjury is dread of the punishment prescribed by law for that offence, and that the fear of consequences in a future state, or the apprehended loss of character and reputation among their countrymen, has little effect in securing true and honest testimony on the part of those who may be influenced by fear, favour, or affection." Mr. Holt Mackenzie admits, that the natives regard their own countrymen with distrust. Captain Macan, speaking of the native troops, not only declares them to be, "without any exception, the most gasconading and the vainest race of men" he "had ever met;" but adds his testimony to the universal selfishness. He says, "they talk a good deal about loyalty and honour; but I think, from an intimate knowledge of the native character, they feel only for their own interest." The government has repeatedly added the seal of its confirmation to the universal tendency of individual testimony. As early as 1772, the Governor and Council of Bengal are found complaining of the "litigiousness" of the natives as productive of "endless expense and actual oppression," and expressing an anxiety "to curb and restrain trivial and groundless complaints, and to deter chicane and intrigue, which passions among these people often work to the undoing

undoing of their neighbours." And as late as 1827, the Bengal Government advert to the want of veracity in the natives as matter of notoriety. They say, "it is needless to remark how much the proceedings of all our tribunals are delayed and embarrassed by the notorious disregard for truth, so generally displayed by the natives in giving evidence, and from their want of moral principle, evils *which cannot be mitigated or remedied by any direct or immediate modification of our JUDICIAL INSTITUTIONS.*" To multiply such quotations would be easy if it were necessary; but the authorities already adduced are sufficient to attest the moral darkness which envelops India.

The fact cannot be denied, and the important questions are, Whence does it arise? and How is it to be removed? The first question is not to be answered by referring to physical circumstances. That these have some small effect in modifying character may be true; but with the page of universal history before us, we cannot attribute the great distinctions of national character to physical causes. How different the ancient Romans from the modern Italians, though placed in the same physical circumstances. Who would recognize the descendants of the conquerors of the world in the men who exist but to languish at an opera, or flutter at a masquerade? The mere difference of race will not account for this; for
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though on the old Roman stock some barbarian shoots have been engrafted, it must be remembered that the northern hordes who pressed into the fair provinces of the south, during the decline of the Roman empire, were as brave, as hardy, and as warlike, as those whose domains they invaded. That national character changes without any foreign admixture, and though the soil and climate remain unaltered, we have abundant proof, and the change does not always require any great lapse of time. Events sometimes take place, of so stirring a nature, as to perform the work of centuries in a few years. Every instance which history furnishes of national degeneracy or national advancement, is a proof of the efficiency of moral causes, and the comparative inertness of physical circumstances.

We must not, then, conclude that the vices of the Hindoo character are the result of his enervating climate. The slightest consideration, indeed, must shew us the falsehood of such a conclusion, since the variations of the climate are considerable, and those of national character very slight, those slight variations being capable of being accounted for from moral causes, and from moral causes alone. We must search for more substantial reasons for the lamentable state in which we find the people of India ; and it would not appear unreasonable to ascribe some of their vices to the
misfortune

misfortune of their civil position. A long course of bondage may be allowed to have some influence in deadening the moral sensibilities, and raising an abundant crop of all the meaner vices. The dictum of the Greek philosopher, that the hour that makes a man a slave deprives him of half his value, might have been illustrated in their history ; and, judging from their present character, we might suspect such to be the fact. Lying is especially the vice of slaves. Violence and oppression call forth deceit to counteract them. The victim of despotism feels that he has no other resource ; and he has no self-respect to restrain him from the employment of that which he regards as his only protection. Where the same practice is indulged by all, it is, of course, unaccompanied by shame in any. Infamy does not follow detection. After a time there will be no attempt at concealment, except from the common enemy ; and at last, a proficiency in falsehood will be accounted the highest proof of genius. Dishonesty is another natural consequence of political slavery, as it is the natural associate of mendacity. Where the ruler will, if possible, take all, the subject will, of course, preserve as much as he can. As the law will not protect him, he will endeavour to protect himself ; but he will not long stop here ; he will not long preserve two measures of justice—one for his ruler and one for

his fellow-subjects. He will soon learn to deal with the latter as with the former; he will come to regard society as the scene of an universal scramble, in which every one must take all he can get, and he will sedulously follow the example of his master, in drawing to himself as much treasure as possible, without regard to the means of acquisition. Malevolence and cruelty are further consequences of a state of political oppression. The brave are usually humane; but the cowardice which attends subjection disposes men to cruelty. *The spirit which dare not resist, will yet burn to revenge*; such a feeling, long indulged, will, of course, gather strength, and the desire of vengeance will become co-extensive with the belief of injury. These results will be greatly accelerated, if the rules of justice should be relaxed, not only between the state and the subject, but also between man and man. If the privilege of oppression and plunder should not be confined to the ruling authorities, but, through the corruption of courts of justice, sold to all who have the power of purchasing it, the progress of demoralization will be rapid indeed. Dishonesty will have free range, and every accession of plunder will increase the power of making fresh ones. Malevolence will possess unbounded means of gratification, and the law will be an engine of persecution as ready as it is powerful. In this
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state of things, falsehood will be at a premium, inasmuch as it will be a constant and unfailing instrument, whether of cupidity or of revenge. That the Hindoos were oppressed and plundered by their Mahomedan conquerors, is certain ; that the courts of justice, under those rulers, were corrupt, almost beyond conception, is equally so. And we might be justified in ascribing the demoralization of the people to some such process as that which has been described, were there not reason to believe that, previously to their subjection by the Moguls, they were in a state no better than that in which they were found at the breaking up of the empire of the conquerors. The question, too, occurs, How came a people, so numerous and powerful, to fall so readily into the power of strangers, possessing no extraordinary advantages for successful invasion ? It is obvious that one part of the national character must then have been precisely what it is now. There must have been the same want of public spirit and patriotic feeling ; the same absence of all regard for the common good ; the same centralisation of the entire feelings of the man in self. From despotism they might have suffered, but that despotism was a domestic one. To what cause, then, shall we attribute that prostration of mind and depravity of heart which have sunk a great people into wretchedness, and rendered them the object