

ment, "oust even the hereditary ryots from the possession of their lands, when the latter refused to accede to any terms of rent which might be demanded of them, however exorbitant." The local government had anticipated, that the reciprocal wants of the zemindars and cultivators would compel them to enter into just and equitable arrangements; but these flattering expectations were not realised, and it is almost impossible not to feel some surprise that they should have deceived the good and able men by whom they were indulged. The reciprocity, as Lord Hastings observed, is by no means clear. It indeed resembles some other projects of alleged reciprocal advantage, of which it has not unjustly been said, that the reciprocity is all on one side. The zemindar wants cultivators; but in the language of Lord Hastings, "he wants them upon his own terms, and he knows that if he can get rid of the hereditary proprietors who claim a right to terms independent of what he may vouchsafe to give, he will obtain the means of substituting men of his own; and such is the redundancy of the cultivating class, that there will never be a difficulty of procuring ryots ready to engage on terms only just sufficient to secure bare maintenance to the engager." The existence of such a state of things justified his Lordship in affirming that, "if it were the intention of our Regulations to deprive every  
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class but the large proprietors, who engaged with Government, of any share in the profits of the land, that effect has been fully accomplished in Bengal." This was not, indeed, the intention of the originators of the permanent zemindary settlement; but it has unhappily been the result of their measures.

In a very few instances some protection was afforded to the ryot. In the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, previously to the introduction of the permanent zemindary settlement, a detailed measurement of the district was made, and a record prepared, specifying the rates to which the public demand on the cultivators was limited, "the settlement being, in fact, ryotwar," and "the zemindars having only the right of collecting what was so settled." Under this system the ryotwar estate has, in many cases, become a property of considerable value; and had the same protection been extended universally, the same effect, modified by local circumstances, would have taken place. But instead of endeavouring to extend this system, the few regulations which seemed to offer some shew of security to the cultivator, were in time replaced by others. Under the Rules of 1793, the form of engagements between the cultivator and zemindar was subjected to the approbation of the collector. This check, in 1812, was dispensed with. At first the zemindars were restricted from fixing the  
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land revenue payable by the ryot for any period exceeding ten years. This prohibition was subsequently removed, and doubts having arisen as to the construction of the Regulation, another was passed, explaining that the intent of the former provision was "to declare proprietors of land (meaning the newly-created proprietors, the zemindars) competent to grant leases, even to perpetuity." It is possible that such a permission might ultimately have worked beneficially for a portion of the hapless ryots; but this chance was barred by the addition of the following very important words: "and at any rate which they may deem conducive to their interests."

The introduction of middle men into the collection of rent or revenue always tends to the injury and oppression of those on whom the burden ultimately rests. This system was acted upon to a considerable extent; and though in direct contravention of the law, was tolerated, and finally sanctioned by a provision of indemnity. The rajah of Burdwan, the greatest zemindar under the Bengal Government, his annual contribution amounting to several hundred thousand pounds sterling, distributed his charge into a number of divisions, upon each of which he assessed a fixed sum in perpetuity, always exceeding that for which he himself was liable; and upon condition of the perpetual payment of this increased reserved sum, he

he granted the hereditary collection of the land revenue in each division to a new class of sub-zemindars, whom he created for the purpose. Many of these sub-zemindars followed their master's example, by splitting their own primary divisions into secondary ones, and assessing each with a taxed sum in perpetuity, always exceeding that which they were required to pay to the head zemindar. The process of subdivision did not stop even here ; for several of these zemindars of the third class divided the portion of the collection which fell to them, upon the same principle as their superiors had done, always taking care that the amount they received was greater than that which they had to pay, and thus a fourth order of zemindars came into existence. The actual contributor to the revenue is thus removed five degrees from the Government to whom he ought to look for justice, and from whose paternal regard he might even hope for some reasonable indulgence. Between him and his final creditor stand four intermediate ones, each armed with the authority of the law ; three of them anxious but to secure their stipulated amount of profit, and the fourth only to wring from the cultivator the last anna. His situation may be readily conceived ; and it has been stated by a gentleman of the Bengal Civil Service, that " in no part of the country have the ryots been more oppressed than in



in this zemindary." The oppression was so gross as at last to call for the interposition of the European officers, to put a stop to the system of demanding from the ryots the most exorbitant rates, and ejecting them from their possessions if they refused to agree to them. That the demands of Government are sometimes light, while those made upon the cultivator are ruinously oppressive, will appear from a fact connected with this zemindary. The Rajah of Burdwan was at one period distressed for money, and sold a portion of his estates. He has since repurchased that which he parted with; and several other estates, upon which he pays yearly forty lacs of rupees, which Mr. Fleming, formerly of the Bengal Civil Service, has heard him acknowledge is *not half of what he collects*. It never could have been the intention of Government to increase the old zemindary allowance of ten or fifteen per cent. to above one hundred, yet this has been the effect of the permanent settlement upon this plan. The case of the Rajah of Burdwan is not a solitary instance. Mr. Holt Mackenzie produced before the Commons' Committee of 1832 a statement, shewing the aggregate Government demand on various estates within certain districts of Bengal, farmed by the Court of Wards, on account of minor and other disqualified zemindars, the rent paid by the farmer and the profit accruing to the

ward. The result shews a profit on the whole of rather more than a hundred per cent. If some portion of this vast overplus were appropriated to recruit the sinking revenue and the remainder permitted to remain in the pockets of the cultivators, both the state and its subjects would be greatly benefited. This, however, cannot take place, on account of the existing settlement. It must be recollected, that this income is not to be regarded as the rent of a landlord, but the profit of a collector. Never was service so magnificently requited by any Government as the collecting the revenue in India under the permanent settlement.

One estate, particularized in Mr. Mackenzie's paper, is situated in the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, where, as has been already mentioned, the settlement was made upon a detailed measurement. On this property the share of the Government is 6,625 rupees, that of the zemindar 1,976. The profit here, though very ample, falls far short of the average. Of course, there are other instances in which it is very much above the average. One of these is in the district of the Jungle Mehals, where the Government revenue is 3,654 rupees, and the zemindar's profit no less than 16,023.

That the great excess of the receipts of the zemindars over the amount of their payments to Government has been in a great degree occasioned by extortion from the cultivators, cannot admit

admit of doubt. But this, though a very influential cause, has not been the sole one. The permanent settlement was made in a state of great ignorance on the part of Government as to the real amount of the land revenue payable by the cultivators; and in consequence the zemindar's payment was in many instances fixed at a sum quite inadequate. In addition to these causes, a third may be found in the further occupation of land since the settlement. The advantages to be derived from this source were surrendered by the Government as imprudently as unreasonably; for it must be borne in mind, that the Government was the real landlord, and by this proceeding gave away a beneficial right to persons who had no lawful claim to it.

In Madras, one of the evils of the system has been in a great degree avoided, by conforming to a proposal made by Lord Teignmouth, with regard to Bengal, but which unfortunately was not there adopted. That nobleman suggested the propriety of fixing the maximum rates, payable by the cultivators to the zemindar, at those actually assessed when the permanent settlement was introduced. Even this was, perhaps, hardly going far enough, inasmuch as it gave the sanction of Government to all existing cesses, however illegal, and many such had been introduced by the encroaching avarice of the native collectors of the

revenue. But it fixed a limit, beyond which the zemindar could not legally carry his claim, and thus raised a barrier against the introduction of further abuses. Fortunately for the cultivators of Madras, a maximum of contribution was there laid down, by which the sum demandable by the zemindar was restricted to the amount of the rates levied on the cultivated land in the year preceding that of the permanent limitation of the zemindar's payment to the State. The village accounts generally afforded sufficient evidence of these rates; but where they were not ascertainable, the case was decided by reference to the rates payable for other lands of the same description and quality. The consequence was, that the cultivators in Madras were provided with means of defending their rights in the courts of law, to which they have frequently resorted with success. In Bengal, unfortunately, these rights were not thus ascertained and recognized, and the power of the zemindar was unlimited.

The zemindary system was not only continued and rendered permanent where it had previously existed, but in some instances was introduced where a different system had prevailed. In Madras, and in a great portion of the provinces of Bahar and Benares, there were associations of cultivators, holding their lands sometimes in severalty, sometimes on a joint common tenure. With regard

regard to these, two courses were open, and the respective Governments differed in their views as to the more eligible. The one was to introduce a stranger to the office of zemindar, the other to invest with it some of the inhabitants of the village. The latter plan was adopted by the Government of Bengal, the former by that of Madras, and both have been productive of inconvenience. Under the Bengal system, the office of zemindar was sometimes imposed upon an individual against his will. He was made liable for the payment of that which was due from others as well as from himself: and as no distinction was made between the ancient rights of possession, and the newly-acquired, and often reluctantly accepted ones, attached to the collection of the revenue, his ancient inheritance was liable to be brought to sale by the default of others. Sometimes the ruin produced by individual defalcation was more extensive, as when it happened that the zemindary was held in common by the cultivators; a dispute between the coparceners might throw the payment of the revenue into arrear; and in such a case, the whole of the joint property—the right in the soil, as well as the zemindary right—the rights of those who had contributed their due proportion to the revenue, as well as of those who had committed default—might be passed into new hands by virtue of a sale under the orders

orders of Government. The following case, illustrative of the consequences of this system, is given in Mr. Campbell's able paper on the subject.

“ A very extraordinary instance of this kind occurred in 1834, in the case of the ‘Tuppa of Muneer,’ a zemindary held by a community of Rajpoots, assessed with a jumma of 13,514 rupees, payable into the public treasury. Two only of this body, from some dispute with the rest, refused to pay up a small portion of this sum due from their fields, and an arrear consequently accrued to the extent of 1,014 rupees. The others offered payment of the sum due on account of their more extensive fields to the amount of the remaining balance of 12,500 rupees; but as the regulations for the permanent settlement do not provide for any summary mode of adjusting such disputes, and on any arrear accruing hold the entire zemindary responsible, prohibiting most rigidly a division so long as such arrear is due: this tender was necessarily refused by the collector, who proceeded to sell the entire zemindary for the arrear due actually by only two of the coparceners. It produced at first 99,000 rupees; but as it was discovered that the purchaser was one of the community, all of whom, though not actually such, are, in the eye of the law, considered defaulters, and therefore excluded by the Regulations from making a purchase of what the  
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code deems their own property, this first sale was cancelled, and the zemindary being put up again was bought by a low-caste stranger for 50,000 rupees. The Rajpoot zemindars upon this instituted a suit in the Provincial Court to annul the second sale, and obtained a decree declaring it illegal; but the Company's Supreme Court at Calcutta, on appeal, upheld the second sale, upon the ground of a balance having actually been due from the zemindary. To this decision the Rajpoots still refused submission; and Mr. Melville, whose duty it became to enforce it, submitted to the Bengal Government, whether its character in the province for consideration in enforcing its dues was not deeply involved on the occasion; adding, that himself as judge, and the collector, Mr. Barlow, felt reluctant to be instruments to carry into execution a measure which they conceived to be severe upon a large body of hereditary and respectable zemindars, and at variance with the mild and liberal spirit of the Government they had the honour to serve. As the best means of obviating this, he suggested that the Government should obtain, by negotiation, the surrender of the zemindary from the second purchaser, and this was at last effected by the Government paying to him no less a sum than 2,06,987 rupees, whence deducting his purchase-money of 50,000 rupees, there remained a sum of  
rupees

rupees 1,56,987. On payment of their respective proportions of this immense sum, the original Rajpoot zemindars were allowed to resume possession of their fields, and this indulgence was extended even to those who were unable to pay their proportion to this large capital, on their consenting to pay to Government interest at six per cent. on their several proportions of it, as an additional assessment on their lands for ever."

This extraordinary transaction scarcely requires comment; but it receives a very proper and spirited one from Mr. Campbell. He says: "To recover an arrear of only 1,014 rupees due actually by two persons alone, against whom, under the regulations of the permanent settlement, no means could be taken to enforce it individually, the whole property, both in the land revenue and in the land itself, of the entire community (the rest of whom had repeatedly tendered their dues), was here brought to sale by public auction. The court of highest jurisdiction in Bengal, bound apparently by the same regulations, confining responsibility to the entire community, to the exclusion altogether of individual rights, seem even to have been obliged to uphold this act of injustice, and when the Government found it impossible to overlook it, as brought to their notice by their officers, who declined to be made the instruments of such a proceeding, they were constrained



strained to put into the pocket of a speculator at auction no less a sum than 1,56,987 rupees, which immense amount, or its equivalent, being equal to twelve years' land revenue, they actually took out of the purses of their own cultivating zemindars, most of whom owed them absolutely nothing, and of whom two alone owed them only the trifling sum of 1,014 rupees, or not so much as one-hundredth part of that exacted."

If any further comment be necessary, it is furnished by the effect of the transaction upon the people, which is thus stated :

" The feelings of the people on this occasion, as represented by the officer deputed by Government to negotiate for the surrender of the zemindary by the intrusive purchaser, who did not venture to approach his new speculation, deserve notice. ' Muneer,' says he, ' may contain 8,000 or 10,000 Rajpoot youths ; but the question of sale unfortunately did not find its limits here. There were, probably, 60,000 ready to make common cause with them.' One of the coparceners, with a tone to which this officer's ears had never been accustomed, demanded, ' If Government are determined to sell our lands, why dishonour the caste by a sale to a gootum? Our chief is the Rajah of Buleah, and he is a rich man ;' and it was added, that the whole of these village zemindars ' seemed to have lost their natural civility of manner,

ner, common respect to the European officers, and proper feelings of honesty to Government, from some extraordinary and unintelligible interpretation of the Regulations which were only designed for their safety.' ”

Such are the results of legislating without a proper regard to established usages and institutions.

In Madras, the course adopted was in an equal or a greater degree at variance with the feelings of the people, and the consequences were not more happy. In the Northern Circars, indeed, there was an ancient aristocracy, to whom the people looked up as their hereditary superiors, and through whom the Supreme Government could most conveniently realise its revenue. But in the other districts to which the permanent settlement was extended, a novel and not very happy attempt was made to create an aristocracy by public auction. A cluster of villages, called a mootah or zemindary, was put up to sale, and the highest bidder became the new hereditary zemindar or moohtahdar, the terms being synonymous. The Government revenue had been previously assessed, not upon each field, nor upon each village, but upon the whole mootah or zemindary, and for this the new speculator in nobility was held accountable. There was under this system no bond of connection between the cultivators and the purchasers of the zemindary right, who were totally unconnected

nected with the land. They were monied men, desirous of elevating themselves by their wealth into the rank of Rajahs. *Parvenus* are proverbially haughty and overbearing; and it is represented, and may readily be believed, that the ryots suffered considerable annoyance from these speculators. In consequence, however, of the provision made on their behalf, they frequently succeeded in vindicating their rights, and were generally, in the course of time, emancipated altogether from the dominion of the newly-created zemindars, most of whom gradually failed, and with their families became involved in distress.

The zemindars generally appear to have been distinguished by improvidence and want of thrift. In Madras, they are represented as having mismanaged their zemindaries so completely, that in the Northern Districts only one remained in a prosperous condition, their zemindaries having been, for the most part, transferred to the Government officers as security for the payment of the revenue, and that they might be retrieved from the disorder into which they had fallen. In the Company's jaghire, in 1826, the zemindaries were reduced to 651 villages, paying a fixed jumma of 2,97,940 rupees; while lands had reverted to Government to the extent of 1,217 villages, paying a revenue of 4,88,960 rupees. In the Salem district, a similar result followed. In the Dindigul district,

district, the zemindary settlement was introduced in 1804-5 ; but in 1806-7 the lands, with scarcely any exception, reverted to the Government. In this district, however, the failure is ascribed to over-assessment. In Bengal, the sales in the years 1796 and 1797 extended to zemindaries assessed at the sum of Sicca Rupees 14,18,765 ; in 1797 and 1798, to others assessed at the still larger amount of Rupees 22,74,076 ; and in 1815 it was estimated, that “ probably one-third, or rather one-half, of the landed property in the province of Bengal may have been transferred by public sale, on account of the arrears of revenue.” Since that time the number of sales has diminished ; but in some years it is still considerable.

These sales afford some evidence that the zemindars have not been greatly benefited by the present of the right in the soil made to them by the Government. Their unthriftiness has prevented their profiting by it. But it has not been the zemindar alone who has suffered from the sale. By a very extraordinary regulation under the Bengal Presidency, the sale of a zemindary for arrears cancelled all existing engagements between the zemindar and the cultivator, and left the purchaser at liberty to demand what terms he pleased. He was required, indeed, to conform to the local rates ; but as these were unascertained, the limitation was a dead letter. By a subsequent

quent regulation, the purchaser was invested with a summary power of ejecting any of the cultivators. This power was at a later period withdrawn; but it continued for twenty-two years, and was exercised to a frightful extent. Even in the regulation which put an end to this grievance, it is laid down as "a general and fundamental principle of the revenue system" in Bengal, that the public sale of the zemindar's tenures for arrears annuls all engagements derived from him or his predecessors. This is not only a hardship upon the ryot, but operates as a direct discouragement to improved cultivation.

The permanent settlement has rendered little substantial benefit to the zemindar; it has, in a great degree, annihilated the rights of the ryots; but to one class of people its operation has been highly beneficial—it has materially promoted the interests of the followers of the law. Within two years after the permanent settlement was established in Bengal, thirty thousand suits which had arisen from the difficulties created by that settlement were depending in the district of Burdwan alone. The sale of the single Rajpoot zemindary of Muneer, already mentioned, gave rise to 1,060 law-suits. The foundations of all rights having been violently broken up, litigation in consequence multiplied and abounded. The courts were choked up with business, the amount of  
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which the most indefatigable exertions of the judges were inadequate to reduce. What is called the permanent settlement may, indeed, be regarded, in Bengal especially, as having unsettled every thing, and settled nothing but the Government assessment.

Notwithstanding these obvious evils, attempts have been made to repeat the unsuccessful experiment of a permanent settlement, by extending it to the western provinces. These were, in the first instance, frustrated by the objections of Mr. R.W. Cox and Mr. Henry St. George Tucker, who were appointed commissioners for carrying the plan into effect. It is remarkable that both these gentlemen were advocates for the system ; but on being deputed to superintend its establishment in an untried spot, they perceived that objections existed to its introduction, and these they had the manliness and candour freely to point out. But, notwithstanding their representations, the Bengal Government persisted in its determination to introduce the permanent settlement ; and the commissioners, finding their views thus at variance with those of the supreme authority, felt themselves called upon to resign. The Home Government appear to have taken a view of the subject more just, calm, and statesman-like, than that of the local Government, and, in the words of Mr. Sullivan, “ uniformly evinced, throughout the whole

whole correspondence on this grand question, fully as strong an anxiety that the rights of individuals should not be infringed, as that the interests of the State should not be compromised by a premature discussion." A termination was put to the proposed extension of the system in 1817, when the Board of Control and the Court of Directors, after ample discussion, finally agreed upon the following points :—

“ That the system of 1793, though originating in the most enlightened views and the most benevolent motives, and though having produced considerable good, has, nevertheless, been attended in the course of its operation with no small portion of evil to the people, for whose happiness it was intended.

“ That the same views and motives which dictated the original introduction of the permanent settlement twenty-five years ago, would not, *after the experience which had been had of it*, justify the immediate introduction of the same system into provinces for which a system of revenue administration is yet to be settled.

“ That the creation of an artificial class of intermediate proprietors between the Government and the cultivators of the soil, where a class of intermediate proprietors does not exist in the native institutions of the country, would be highly inexpedient.

“ That

“That no conclusive step ought to be taken towards a final settlement of the yet unsettled provinces, until it shall have been examined, and, if possible, ascertained by diligent research and comparison of collected testimonies, as well as by accurate survey of the lands to be settled, how far the principle of a system, which would bring the Government into immediate contact with the great body of the people, can be practically and usefully applied to them.”

This decision was dictated by a sound policy. The attempt to create a landed aristocracy was, from first to last, based upon erroneous views. Had it been practicable, it could not be effected without the destruction of a mass of private rights, which it was the duty of the law to protect, instead of subverting. The observations of Mr. Campbell on this point are just and convincing. “In India,” says he, “where the only aristocracy connected with the land are the mere hereditary farmers-general or contract-agents of the Government, and the soil itself is invariably occupied by a numerous class of petty proprietary cultivators, it was obviously impracticable to introduce the European theory of landlord and tenant without an infraction of individual rights. It never ought to have been, nor can it now even justly be made a question for consideration or decision, whether in India it be politic to give the preference to  
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great or to small holders of land. The law and usage of the country have immemorially and irrevocably determined the right in the soil to be vested in particular classes. Whatever may be the extent or value of such right, the smallest, no less than the greatest, tenure should be held inviolably sacred; and the rights of millions of field proprietors to hold on defined terms, directly of the State, never can be abrogated for a mere theoretical improvement in the administration of the land revenue, without an act of the most sweeping confiscation ever hazarded by a civilized government. It was clearly the duty of a just government anxiously to protect all existing rights; and, by defining its demand on the possessor of each tenure holding immediately of the State, to maintain every class in its respective situation, and to ensure the benefit of any remission or reduction in its land revenue to those who pay it, instead of allowing it to be intercepted by its intermediate revenue contractor, the zemindar."

But had there been no previous rights in the way, the attempt, suddenly to call into existence an aristocracy, whose claims were based neither on property nor ancient usage, would have failed. The plan, indeed, was no where distinguished by even the semblance of success, except in the districts where the zemindar's authority was continued in its ancient line; and in these cases that

part of the plan which subjected the zemindar's right to sale, in case of default, was productive of the most serious mischief. Some sales which took place in the Ganjam district, by which the rights of an ancient family there were transferred to some foreign purchasers, led to an actual rebellion. Troops were employed to suppress it; but ultimately Government entered into a negociation, by which the zemindary was restored to the family, and the disturbances immediately ceased. Under the native powers it was not the practice to sell the zemindar's right. Government sometimes assumed the temporary collection of the revenue, and sometimes transferred it to some other member of the zemindar's family. The zemindar himself was subject even to corporal punishment, but his right was never brought to sale. The enforcement of such a system consequently outraged the feelings of all classes where the institution was ancient; and the description of persons whom the sales frequently introduced to the exercise of the zemindary authority, was little calculated to allay the feelings of irritation excited by the forcible expulsion of an old family. The best of them were capitalists, who entered on the office of zemindar in the spirit in which they embarked in a mercantile speculation, and whose only object was, of course, to make the largest profit upon their outlay. They were often unacquainted with the habits, the feelings,

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ings, the wants, and even the language of the cultivators—were frequently non-resident—in which case their interests and those of the people were entrusted to agents no better informed than themselves. But there were purchasers who were destitute even of the recommendation of commercial respectability. It is represented, that ban-yans, money-lenders, menial servants of Europeans, vakeels, and other retainers of the courts of law, seized the opportunity of elevating themselves in society, by purchasing into this new aristocracy; and in what manner the unlimited power of a zemindar would, in such hands, be exercised, need not be pointed out. It is sufficient merely to state the fact, to shew how completely the lofty designs of Lord Cornwallis were frustrated. He never contemplated the formation of a landed aristocracy out of the very dregs and refuse of society; yet this was, in some degree, the effect of his favourite measure, and for such consumers as these have the producers of agricultural wealth been divested of their rights, and deprived for ever of the power of accumulation.

It was observed by the local Government in 1821, that, “looking to the character and conduct of many of the zemindars in Bengal, it might well be questioned whether the rent drawn by them from their zemindaries was less a tax upon the country than if the amount were collected on

the account of the Government." This is put more cautiously, and with more deference to the zemindars than the circumstances of the case warrant. The matter is too clear to admit of question. It is beyond all doubt that the revenue drawn by the zemindars on their own account is as much a tax as if it were collected for Government. It is equally certain that it is far more oppressively levied than it would be in the hands of Government. And this vast revenue is generally expended as worthily as it is obtained. It goes, according to Mr. Thackeray, almost entirely to feed the idle and unproductive—footmen, peons, dancing-girls, and Brahmins; it is wasted in silly and ostentatious display, in tasteless and debasing luxury, in superstitious benefactions, and in vice. Thus the grinding process to which the laborious cultivator is subjected, ends in ministering to the appetites of the idle and depraved.

No country under such a system can be either wealthy or prosperous, and in the provinces where it exists the permanent settlement will long continue to operate as a serious check upon the progress of improvement. In other countries, the landlord takes an interest in the improvement of his property. In India, this feeling appears to be unknown among those who have been imprudently invested with the rank and authority of landlords. Mr. Newnham, when examined before

fore the Committee of the House of Commons in 1832, was asked, " Has the zemindar any such property in land as ever induces him to invest capital in the improvement of it? Are there any instances of a zemindar building houses for the ryots, or advancing money for irrigation or fencing?" The answer was: " Many persons advocate the zemindary cause by alleging outlay of capital; but it is seldom more than a mere current loan, repayable at a very high interest, or, which is worse, the repayment in commodity at a very much lower price than the market price; but as for any permanent outlay of capital in digging wells and making tanks, I fear that there are very few instances of zemindars laying out capital in that way. The great improvements in the country take place from the junction of the ryots in different labours; at least I have seen them making bridges across rivers, sinking wells, making watercourses from tanks, or collections of water, and undertaking many important works of that kind." The same gentleman thus speaks of the condition of the ryots as affected by the system under which they live, in answer to a question relating to their means of cultivating their lands: " I fear that borrowed capital is the general character of the ryot; but where he is in full possession of his rights and privileges, and has security, there you will find *that* capital in his possession, and

and it is shewn both in his own comforts and in the goodness of his farming stock ; for instance, there is a material difference between a pair of half-starved inferior-sized bullocks, which are probably not worth eight rupees the pair, and another man ploughing with a pair of fine bullocks, for which he gives from twenty to twenty-five rupees each." Improvement cannot be effected without capital, nor can it be carried to any great extent if that capital be furnished on terms extortionate and oppressive. The zemindary settlement is, in this point of view, as objectionable as in every other. It tends to retard the increase of public wealth, no less than to destroy the individual comfort of the cultivators.

The permanent settlement extends to the provinces of Bengal, Behar, Orissa, and Benares, with the exception of Cuttack. Under the Madras presidency its general failure has considerably reduced its limits, Government having, in many cases, repurchased the tenure. In addition to the greater portion of the five Northern Circars, it is reported to extend to about a third of the Salem and Chingleput districts ; to the Pollams scattered through several provinces to the northward, westward, and southward of Madras ; to a few insulated portions of the Dindigul districts, supposed to fall short of a tenth of the whole ; and a small part of the southern division of Arcot, consisting

consisting of some of the Company's ancient lands near Cuddalore. No part of the territory subject to the Presidency of Bombay was ever under the permanent settlement.

It has been seen that the attempt to introduce this system into the Western Provinces was delayed, in the first instance, by the objections of the commissioners, Mr. H. St. George Tucker and Mr. R. W. Cox (which, however, were directed not against the principle but the time and local circumstances of its application), and that it was finally suspended by a solemn decision of the home authorities. A large portion of these provinces was brought under a form of the zemindary system somewhat resembling that of the permanent settlement, but limited to a term of years. This temporary settlement was made with a class of persons called (as in the lower provinces) proprietors. It is admitted, however, by one of the warmest advocates of the plan, that "the first settlement" was "made, in very many instances, to the exclusion of those who were supposed to be the proprietors, and the lands let to farmers." He adds, indeed, "but still, in a very great many cases, those *supposed to be* the proprietors were in possession, and paying revenue to the Government."

What degree of care was taken to ascertain the correspondence of this supposition with the fact is not stated; but the gentleman from whose evidence

dence the passage just quoted is extracted, apparently did not think it necessary that any great labour should be devoted to the enquiry, as in a subsequent part of his evidence he says, "I do not think it at all necessary to enter into a minute examination of rights and claims in every case, because, according to my experience, *that would be endless*; but you should do that only in cases where rights are set up, and where a call is made for enquiry." It would seem, indeed, that this was the system acted on; as another witness, Mr. Newnham, says, "Those who came forward as zemindars were recognized as zemindars; and in the villages in which zemindars had not been forthcoming, or withheld from engagement, agreements were made with farmers who had power of collection." And on being asked, "What inducement could any person who was a zemindar have for not coming forward?" He answers, "Because he had the responsibility of a revenue without any profit, where the assessment was too high." And it is afterwards stated, that in certain territories "it was as high as it could be with any sort of justice." Yet there were persons found where the lawful zemindar concealed himself, to render themselves accountable for this heavy assessment—calculating, of course, upon some personal advantage, which could only be realised by extracting from the ryots something beyond that  
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amount, which was as large “as it well could be with any sort of justice.” Had the permanent settlement taken place, this rapacious intruder would have become the lord of the soil. As it is, there has been quite enough of confusion and mischief, and sales have taken place which are inexplicable both in their nature and their results. It seems altogether uncertain whether or not any property was acquired under the zemindary settlement; if any, it appears equally doubtful what it is; and the rights conveyed by the sales which took place are shrouded in mystery. The following questions and answers extracted from the examination of Mr. Holt Mackenzie, 1832, are too important and instructive to admit of abridgment:

“ Q. The Committee are informed, in the districts about Bareilly, and the neighbouring districts, leases for three years were granted to persons called zemindars, and instances occurred of rent running in arrear in that short period, and of sales having taken place of some beneficial interest that the zemindar under those circumstances was supposed to possess; are you aware of it?—

A. Such sales took place extensively in many of the districts; and in all, more or less, in which the printed Regulations were in force. The tenure sold was sometimes the same with that of the Bengal zemindars. In other cases, the persons recorded as responsible for the Government reve-

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nue clearly stood forward as the mere representatives of a community. In some, though standing in that relation originally, they contrived to secure for themselves exclusively the profit arising out of the settlement with Government; and generally, though there might be some coparceners, the two or three who came forward had their names recorded by our collectors, and stood upon the Government books as if they were the only zemindars, while they were merely members of a large community, having equal rights.

“ Q. Whenever they fell in arrear, you sold them all?—A. *Nobody can tell what was sold in such cases. It is a puzzle to this day to say what was sold.*

“ Q. What state of things has been produced by those proceedings?—A. Great confusion has resulted; the purchasers generally claiming to have acquired a complete property in the villages sold, according to the Bengal rules relative to joint estates; and I am afraid that the same thing has occurred in Behar, and still more in Benares, where there are many village communities of whom the persons who appeared upon our books were the mere representatives. Mr. Duncan, indeed, prepared special rules for Benares that ought to have preserved the inferior holders; but unhappily his system was confounded very much with the Bengal system: and I believe that the courts have ruled

ruled that the sale of a village for Government arrears due by one recorded as a proprietor, absolutely conveyed to the purchaser all the rights of property in that village.

“ Q. What has been the effect of this?—A. *Infinite mischief. Greater injustice, indeed, no Government ever inflicted upon a country.*”

Such a state of things could not, of course, be permitted to continue. In the Western Provinces, the process of sale has latterly been nearly suspended. In 1821, a special commission was appointed to enquire into the sales that had taken place, and into the rights of all persons and classes in the villages sold. Subsequently, similar powers were extended to the Revenue Commissioners, who were authorized to set aside sales in all cases of hardship, giving compensation to *bonâ fide* purchasers, and to annul illegal and fraudulent sales without compensation. It was further intended to form a settlement based upon a careful census and survey; but these have proceeded slowly.

To remedy the evils arising from delay, the late Governor General recommended the renewal on a summary revision of existing engagements at an enhanced jumma, and for protracted periods. In the event of this proposal being approved, he suggested the following principles as the groundwork of proceeding—that the extended leases should not fall short of fifteen, nor exceed twenty years

years—that the detailed survey should go on during this period preparatory to a settlement on the more accurate data which it would furnish—that the arrangement should be optional, the collectors proposing it to the landholders, leaving them perfectly at liberty to adopt the alternative of abiding the result of the detailed settlement at the most early period at which it might be in the power of Government to effect it, in preference to the certainty of being subjected to one uniform demand only for a definite period.

Whether this or any other plan be adopted, two points should be carefully kept in view—to prejudice no existing right, and to create no new one. The scenes which have been acted in a part of the unsettled provinces must not be repeated, and no labour must be thought too great to ascertain the precise nature of all existing tenures.

Some popular disturbances, which took place in the Western Provinces, and especially at Bareilly, have been ascribed to the non-fulfilment of the intention of extending the permanent settlement to those provinces. Looking to the spot in which these commotions occurred, and recollecting the facts stated in the evidence of Mr. Mackenzie, some doubt will naturally arise as to the alleged cause. Mr. Trant, indeed, who assigns this cause, at the same time admits that the disturbances arose, in the first place, out of the imposition

sition of a police tax. Mr. Fortescue, who does not deny that they had some connection with the postponement of the permanent settlement, considers the wish for that settlement to have been confined to the zemindars. He believes, moreover, that there were other causes operating (as Mr. Trant admits), and inasmuch as the disturbances were connected with the non-introduction of a permanent settlement, he looks upon them to have been instigated and fomented by those who had an especial interest in the subject. This appears to be the most natural and probable solution of the matter, and being corroborated on one important point by the testimony of an adversary, it may be regarded as the true one.

In the permanently settled provinces, we have committed ourselves too far to be able to retrace our steps; but in all future proceedings sound policy seems to dictate the discouragement of the zemindary system in any shape, as far as is consistent with rights established by immemorial custom, or sanctioned by positive law. It is a bad system for the cultivator—it is equally bad for the Government. It has been suggested, that under a zemindary system the rights of the ryots might be ascertained and protected. This, however, would be to combine two systems instead of adopting one; and as one of the recommendations of the zemindary plan is its apparent simplicity

plicity and facility of application, such an appendage to it as the proposal implies, can scarcely find favour in the eyes of those who regard it as an instrument for collecting the revenue with the smallest portion of trouble. But if the rights of the ryots be admitted (and they are clearer than the rights of any other persons in India), on what principle can we justify the withdrawing from them the natural protection of Government?

The observations of Sir Thomas Munro on the question are replete with sound vigorous sense. He says, "If in place of lowering the assessment and letting landed property rise in the natural way, we want to have great landlords raised at once where none exist, and for this purpose create zemindars and turn over to each of them some hundreds of ryots, we should commit a gross injustice; because we should enable the zemindar in time to degrade the ryots from the rank of tenants in chief to that of tenants at will, and often to that of mere cultivators or labourers. We say that we leave the ryots free to act and to make their own terms with the zemindars or renters, and that if they were wronged the courts will protect them. We put them out of sight, deliver them over to a superior, and then we tell them that they are free to make their own terms, and that there are courts to secure their rights. *But with what pretence of justice can we place them*  
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*under any set of men, to make terms for their property, and to defend it against them in courts of law?* They have no superior but Government; they are tenants in chief, and ought not to be obliged to make terms except with Government. But it is said that the zemindar does not infringe their rights, because he has no authority to demand more than the dues of Government, as regulated by the usage of the country, and that if the parties be left to themselves things will find their proper level. They will find the level which they have found in Bengal and several districts under this Government, and *which the weak always find when they are left to contend with the strong.* The question is, whether we are to continue the country in its natural state, occupied by a great body of independent ryots, and to enable them, by a lighter assessment, to rise gradually to the rank of landlords, or whether we are to place the country in an artificial state, by dividing it into villages or larger districts among a new class of landholders, who will inevitably, at no distant period, by the subdivision of their new property, fall to the level of ryots; while the ryots will, at the same time, have sunk from the rank of independent tenants in chief to that of sub-tenants and cultivators. It is, whether we are to raise the landholders we have, or to create a new set, and see them fall." The actual  
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working of the system in Madras is described in another part of the minute from which the last quotation is made. “ There is no analogy whatever between the landlord of England and his tenants, and the moohtahdar or new village zemindar of this country and his ryots. In England the landlord is respected by the farmer as his superior; here a zemindar has no such respect, for the principal ryots of most villages regard him as not more than their equal, and often as their inferior. He is often the former potail, or head ryot of the village; but he is frequently some petty shopkeeper, or merchant, or some adventurer, or public servant out of employ. Which-ever of these he is, he has usually very little property. He has none for the improvement of the village; but, on the contrary, looks to the village as the means of improving his own circumstances. The ryots, by being placed under him, sink from the rank of tenants of the Government to that of tenants of an individual. They are transferred from a superior, who has no interest but in their protection and welfare, to one whose interest it is to enlarge his own property at the expense of their’s; who seeks, by every way, however unjustifiable, to get into his own hands all the best lands of the village, and whose situation affords him many facilities in depriving the ancient possessors of theirs. The ryots are jealous of a man whose

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new power and influence they have so much to fear. They frequently combine, in order to keep down the cultivation, and force him, for their own security, to give up the village. And hence it has happened, that on the one side the opposition of the ryots, and on the other the oppression of the new zemindar, have, in many instances, caused villages which were flourishing, and moderately assessed, to revert to the circar, from inability to pay their assessment." Never, indeed, were good intentions so lamentably frustrated as they have been by this system ; and to attempt to make it universal throughout our Indian possessions, might shake the security of our empire. The system is radically vicious. Where, however, it already exists we must tolerate it ; but it would be a most fatal error, as all experience shews, to endeavour to extend it. Again, quoting the words of Sir Thomas Munro, when speaking of the effects produced by the forcible introduction of this system : " Such an innovation would be much more fatal to the old rights of property than conquest by a foreign enemy ; for such a conquest, though it overthrew the Government, would leave the people in their former condition. But this internal change, the village revolution, changes every thing ; and throws both influence and property into new hands. It deranges the order of society ; it depresses one class of men for the sake of rais-

ing another ; it weakens the respect and authority of ancient offices and institutions ; and the local administration, conducted by their means, is rendered much more difficult. It is time that we should learn that neither the face of a country, its property, or its society, are things that can be suddenly improved by any contrivances of our's, though they may be greatly injured by what we mean for their good ; that we should take every country as we find it, and not rashly attempt to regulate its landed property, either in its accumulation or division ; that whether it be held by a great body of ryots, or by a few zemindars, or by a mixture of both, our business is not with its distribution, but with its protection ; and that if while we protect, we assess it moderately, and leave it to its natural course, it will, in time, flourish, and assume that form which is most suitable to the condition of the people."

The observations of the same distinguished person on the general principles which should guide those who undertake the high task of improving the condition of India, are no less just and instructive : " We are now," he says, " masters of a very extensive empire, and we should endeavour to improve and secure it by a good internal administration. Our experience is too short, to judge what rules are best calculated for the purpose. It is only within the last thirty years that we have  
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begun to acquire any practical knowledge; a longer period must probably elapse before we can ascertain what is best. *Such a period is as nothing in the existence of a people*; but we act as if this were as limited as the life of an individual. We proceed, in a country of which we know little or nothing, as if we knew every thing, and as if every thing must be done now and nothing could be done hereafter. We feel our ignorance of Indian revenue and the difficulties arising from it: and instead of seeking to remedy it, by acquiring more knowledge, we endeavour to get rid of the difficulty by precipitately making permanent settlements, which relieve us from the troublesome task of minute or accurate investigation, and which are better adapted to perpetuate our ignorance than to protect the people. We must not be led away by fanciful theories, founded on European models, which will inevitably end in disappointment. We must not too hastily declare any rights permanent, lest we give to one class what belongs to another. We must proceed patiently, and as our knowledge of the manners and customs of the people and the nature and resources of the country increase, frame gradually, from the existing institutions, such a system as may advance the prosperity of the country, and be satisfactory to the people. The knowledge most necessary for this end is that of the landed pro-

perty and its assessment ; for the land is not only the great source of the public revenue, but on its fair and moderate assessment depend the comfort and happiness of the people." In another place, Sir Thomas Munro adverts to the mistakes which have been committed, in a manner which should operate as a warning against indiscreet zeal for the future : " Our great error in this country, during a long course of years, has been too much precipitation in attempting to better the condition of the people with hardly any knowledge of the means by which it was to be accomplished, and, indeed, without seeming to think that any other than good intentions were necessary. It is a dangerous system of government, in a country of which our knowledge is very imperfect, to be constantly urged by the desire of settling every thing permanently, to do every thing in a hurry, and, in consequence, wrong ; and, *in our zeal for permanency, to put the remedy out of our reach.* The ruling vice of our government is innovation ; and its innovation has been so little guided by a knowledge of the people, that, *though made after what was thought by us to be a mature discussion, must appear to them as little better than mere caprice.*" Such observations, which would scarcely at any time be unseasonable, are peculiarly deserving of notice in an age, the ruling vice of which is that which Sir Thomas Munro ascribes to  
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to the English authority in India—innovation. The great error of concluding that laws and institutions which produce good effects in one country, will, therefore, produce good effects in all other countries, must be carefully avoided ; and if it be necessary to bear this in mind with regard to that which has been tried, though under different circumstances, the necessity is still more imperious with reference to systems altogether untried, and which have not the sanction of even a partial or local experience. If we would benefit the people of India, we must legislate for them as they are, and not as theorists conceive they ought to be. We must respect their local usages and institutions, wherever they are not productive of positive evil ; and even where they are, they must be removed with a gentle hand. The general habit of the people is submission to authority, and it will be our own fault if they learn a different lesson. If we are content to derive a moderate revenue from the land, and to abstain from all interference with existing rights, except to protect them, the people will advance in wealth and happiness, and the British dominion take root in their interests and feelings. But if fanciful schemes, concocted in the closets of speculators and sciolists, framed with an ostentatious disregard of local peculiarities, claiming an universal applicability, and, like a patent medicine, “ war-  
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ranted to keep good in any climate," are imposed upon a people little addicted to novelty, in place of the institutions to which they have been accustomed, which have grown with the growth of the nation and become part of its very essence, discontent, disgust, and confusion will be inevitable, and the final results may be such as no friend, either to India or England, can wish to contemplate. But while we discourage such a mischievous activity, we must not take refuge in indolence and supineness. It is at once our interest and our duty to settle nothing permanently till it can be settled in a manner satisfactory to the people ; but it is also our interest and our duty to spare no labour that may be necessary to enable us to acquire that minute knowledge of Indian institutions which is indispensable to a satisfactory settlement. Of two plans we must not give the preference to one solely on the ground of its involving less trouble than the other. Nothing must be left to chance or accident, nor must the preservation of any class of rights be suffered to depend upon the clamorous violence with which they may happen to be urged. The weak, as well as the strong, the silent as well as the loud, the ignorant as well as the informed, must be protected ; and as we must not be parsimonious of labour, so neither must we be impatient of the consumption of time. The work to be accomplished is not that  
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of a day or a year, and provided no time is wasted, it will, if well done, be done sufficiently early.

By an adherence to such rules, we may guard against the recurrence of evils similar to those the existence of which there is reason to lament under the permanent settlement. To correct those evils which have already arisen is a less direct and a far more difficult task. It has been justly said, that "the practical difficulty of adjusting the relation of the zemindar and the ryot, after an assignment to the former of all he can gain by the destruction of the latter, is of the most serious nature." Yet it must be remembered that the fault was with the Government and not with the people, and therefore the former is bound to do all within its power to mitigate the evils which it cannot entirely remove. Little of a general nature can be done, but something may be accomplished in detail; and this the Home Government have evinced a disposition to perform, manifesting that laudable regard to the interests of the people committed to its care, and that accurate perception of the true nature of those interests, which from the commencement of its rule have been the leading characteristics of the policy of the Company. It has hitherto been judged inexpedient to interfere, so long as the zemindar is punctual in fulfilling his engagements with the Government; but the Home Authority has directed, that  
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in the event of arrears accruing, and a sale being deemed necessary (except in cases where the sacrifice on account of purchase money would be very great) the zemindary tenure should be bought on the part of the Government, and a settlement made on the ryotwar principle. Under the Bengal presidency this instruction has not been acted upon to any extent. Under the Madras presidency, it has been already stated, that a large portion of the country, formerly settled under the zemindary tenure, has reverted to Government.

The purchase and resumption of the rights imprudently conceded to the zemindars is undoubtedly the least exceptionable method of remedying the evil of their existence ; but a serious objection lies against it, arising from the outlay of money required to carry it into effect to any considerable extent. For this reason Mr. Campbell suggests that it would be desirable, without changing the existing law rendering the zemindary tenure saleable for arrears, in practice to suspend its operation, and on an arrear, accruing, to attach and continue the attachment of the land revenue, and to introduce a ryotwar field assessment. This plan may, probably, be adopted with some benefit where the purchase of the right by Government is impracticable or inexpedient ; but as the suspension of the zemindars' right would be only temporary, it does not appear very easy to see how



how we should be legally justified in interfering between the ryots and himself, except upon the principle that extreme evils justify the application of extreme remedies, which, if acted upon, might carry us much farther than Mr. Campbell's proposal. Whenever the zemindars' right can be altogether annihilated (except in cases of ancient claim), this course will be preferable. The mischief arising from a sale to any private purchaser need not be dwelt upon. The elevation of low men to the possession of power, extending even to oppression and extortion; the consequent insecurity of all previous engagements, and other evils at once occur to the mind, and attest that the practice ought not to be continued. Two other suggestions by Mr. Campbell deserve consideration. One is, that in future, if the zemindary tenure should in any case be sold to a private purchaser, materially to modify that harsh and oppressive rule, which renders voidable all engagements between the cultivators and the former zemindar. He proposes that this should be the exception instead of the rule, and that all engagements except those which should be found to have originated in collusion or fraud, should be maintained. The justice of this proposal is too obvious to require argument to enforce it, and as it would not injuriously affect any existing rights, it is difficult to discover any valid objection to it.

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The second suggestion relates to the office of village accountant. Mr. Campbell regards it as a great error of the permanent settlement, that this office has been suffered either to fall into disuse, or to be held entirely subject to the zemindars. It was the duty of this officer, after the rates payable by the cultivators had been adjusted, to register them as the recorder of the Government, for the mutual guidance of the payers and receivers. In 1816-17, some measures were taken for the reform of the office ; but Mr. Mill represents them as not having succeeded. Mr. Campbell thinks it of the highest importance that, in the permanently settled districts, it should be efficiently restored, and that the holders of it should be emancipated from the control of the zemindars, and declared the servants of Government exclusively.

Throughout a large portion of India, the inhabitants are associated in communities constituting villages, each village having its officers of different classes, and the whole community being united by various common ties. The advantages of this institution are described by Sir Charles Metcalfe with extraordinary beauty and eloquence in the following passage from one of his able minutes :

“ The village communities are little republics, having nearly every thing that they want within themselves,

themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down, revolution succeeds to revolution, Hindoo, Patan, Mogul, Mahratta, Siek, English, are all masters in their turn ; but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves : a hostile army passes through the country : the village communities collect their cattle within their walls, and let the enemy pass unprovoked. If plunder and devastation be directed against themselves, and the force employed be irresistible, they flee to friendly villages at a distance ; but when the storm has passed over they return and resume their occupations. If a country remain for a series of years the scene of continued pillage and massacre, so that the villages cannot be inhabited, the scattered villagers nevertheless return whenever the power of peaceable possession revives. A generation may pass away ; but the succeeding generation will return. The sons will take the places of their fathers ; the same site for the village, the same positions for the houses ; the same lands will be re-occupied by the descendants of those who were driven out when the village was depopulated ; and it is not a trifling matter that will drive them out, for they will often maintain their post through times of disturbance and convulsion ; and acquire strength sufficient to resist

resist pillage and oppression with success. This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is, in a high degree, conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence. I wish, therefore, that the village constitutions may never be disturbed, and I dread every thing that has a tendency to break them up."

The political views embodied in the above extract are as sound as the language in which they are clothed is picturesque and forcible. A system which, through successive and protracted scenes of war and rapine, preserves the elements of property and civilization for the reconstruction of the social edifice in calmer times, has strong claims on the protection of an enlightened and paternal government; and it is gratifying to find such sentiments entertained by the statesmen of India. The principle of corporations is one admirably adapted to stability, and though a certain class of political reasoners may take a different view, the stability of social institutions will ever be regarded by the reflecting as an object which it is one of the first duties of a legislator to secure. A corporation or an associated community like an Indian village  
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may be dispersed by accident; but it is not thereby destroyed. When its members come together again each man knows his place, and each man falls into it as a matter of course. The effects of a convulsion thus scarcely outlast the convulsion itself; whereas a long period must elapse, and many failures probably take place, before a number of individuals accidentally thrown together in a disorderly manner, could be formed into a tolerably regulated society.

It is not surprising that the village system of India should have been regarded as furnishing facilities for the realization of the land revenue, and that it should, in consequence, have been employed as an instrument for the purpose. The experiment has been made in various parts of India.

Through a large part of the territories under the presidency of Bombay the village system prevails, and the Government settlements are made with the head man of the village, called the *potail* or *pateel*, and some well-informed reporters bear a favourable testimony as to its success. In Madras, it failed entirely. It was introduced into the provinces under that Government about the year 1808, and the plan pursued was in consideration of a stipulated sum to be paid to Government, to surrender for a term of years the collection of the revenue to the village cultivators themselves,

themselves, or to such of them as would enter into the contract, or in the event of a general refusal to the head of the village alone. As the sum payable to Government was fixed, all advantage to be derived during the term from the extension of cultivation to waste lands was transferred to the contractors. In a few instances, the greater number of the ryots in a village joined in the lease, but generally a few only became parties to it. The result is thus stated :

“ The inferior ryots were shut out from all immediate communication with the Government officers, oppressed by their more powerful brethren the renters, who in good seasons pocketed all the profits, and in bad cast upon them, by extra assessments, or saddling them with waste land, the greater burden of the leases, so that at the expiration of the ten years the village generally returned into the hands of Government in a lamentable state of impoverishment; and in some districts, particularly in Bellary, in a state, as described by Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Thackeray, of absolute bankruptcy.”

It is clear that the practical result of the village system in the Madras territories, was little else than the establishment of a zemindary system under another name; and the village system of collecting the revenue appears to have a direct tendency to degenerate into this. It appears, indeed,