perform, in addition to the ill effect of exposure to the climate of the hotter parts of India for many months, if not years, before they are called to the conflict. If the European troops latest from England are made to replace those who have been longest in the country, whilst the latter proceed to the frontier, the field-force will contain none but seasoned men; but in that case, their freshness and energy will have been considerably impaired. From five to eight years are in all cases a sufficient seasoning for European troops in India. After that period, the effects of climate become speedily apparent on the constitutions of men possessing so little power or motive for restraint as common soldiers; they are no longer capable of enduring the fatigues and privations of protracted warfare; and one, or at most, two active campaigns, would be sufficient to exhaust their strength. We too easily allow ourselves to be deceived on this point, by the imposing accounts which are so often given of our Indian wars; and we fancy that, because our countrymen cheerfully undergo the labours of a campaign or two, they would be a match for any troops that could make their appearance upon the same theatre. These campaigns, however, have generally been fought within a short distance of our resources, and with all the conveniences and accommodations at hand,

which old and undisturbed establishments can command, in a country entirely at the disposal of the service. In the few instances in which this has not been the case, we uniformly observe sickness to prevail amongst the European troops to an alarming extent; whilst the natives, if they suffer less from that cause, (which, however, is not always the fact,) suffer more from disaffection and desertion. So much, indeed, are the sepoys accustomed to make war within the boundaries of Hindostan alone, and in the comparatively easy mode alluded to, that they soon become disgusted with any service that threatens either to abridge their comforts, or to prolong their absence from their native plains. Of the three distinct armies which are at the disposal of the Indian Government, those of Madras and Bombay are generally considered to be better adapted for hard service than the Bengal troops; but as this is supposed to proceed entirely from the great attention which is paid to their equipment, and to the regular supply of every thing conducive to their comfort, when on foreign service, whilst the Bengal troops are in a great measure left to their own resources, it seems to follow, not only that the former are more expensive to the state, but that it will be difficult to bring large bodies of them to act with Bengal sepoys with reciprocal confidence and cordiality,

without putting the latter upon an equality with them, in respect to pay, and all other advantages. Here, then, is another point to be attended to in conducting the defence of the country; and in order to secure an army which may act with union and effect, an equalization, in the particulars just referred to, of the troops of the three Presidencies, should immediately be adopted, upon the scale afforded by the most liberal of the whole.

But this is not all; in an army for the defence of India, assembled in the Punjab, comprising a considerable force of European as well as native troops, the former, though a great proportion of them would probably be over-seasoned, if brought up by easy marches, would benefit by the change of climate; whilst upon the latter, the cold and fatigue would have a directly contrary effect; and if harassed by active operations, especially night attacks, accompanied by that uncertainty of supplies which is likely to occur on such occasions, their number would shortly be diminished both by sickness and desertion, and a depression of spirits peculiar to the Hindoos, and resembling the *maladie du pays*, would unfit those who yet stood to their colours for any but the most ordinary camp duties. Under these circumstances, the Commander-in-Chief could never place entire reliance on the apparent strength of his army, as shown in figured

statements; for although the natives would probably improve, if stationed nearer their own country, the Europeans would fall off in proportion to their exposure to the relaxing climate of Hindostan. Neither would the customs and institutions of the service be favourable to the views of the Commander; and there is reason to believe, that the peculiarities which appear to adapt an Indian army to the performance of the duties which are now entrusted to it, would, in some measure, incapacitate it for a conflict,* in comparison of

The following description of the Russian soldiers will be read with deep interest by military men in India, as exhibiting the picture of an army admirably adapted for distant and arduous enterprises, even in a tropical climate:—"The Russian soldiers, unexcited by any spirituous liquors, with which the troops of other nations are often treated, previous to engaging in battle, make the sign of the cross, and, immovably fixing their eyes on their leader, follow him in the most profound silence—unanimous in their impetuosity, constant and imperturbable in danger—qualities which in military nations are the exclusive patrimony of perfect discipline. Frugal and patient under privations, as they are submissive, they spend the whole day in battle, and at night a ration of bread or biscuit, and a draught of water from the nearest brook, suffice to allay their hunger and thirst, whilst the bare ground for a bed, and their knapsack for a pillow, relieve their fatigue."—*Narrative of Don Juan Van Halen*, &c.

For a description of the Cossacks, too long to insert here, see Sir W. Scott's Life of Napoleon, vol. 5, p. 363.

which any service it has yet seen may be denominated mere "playing at soldiers."

The strength of the Company's army, includ-

The account of the Russian army, given by Sir Walter Scott, is also subjoined, as peculiarly interesting at the present moment:—"In the mode of disciplining their forces, the Russians proceeded on the system most approved in Europe. Their infantry was confessedly excellent, composed of men in the prime of life, and carefully selected as best qualified for military service. Their artillery was of the first description, so far as the men, guns and carriages, and appointments were concerned; but the rank of General of Artillery had not the predominant weight in the Russian army, which ought to be possessed by those particularly dedicated to the direction of that arm, by which, according to Napoleon, modern battles must be usually decided. The direction of their guns was too often entrusted to general officers of the line. The service of cavalry is less natural to the Russians than that of the infantry; but their horse regiments are nevertheless excellently trained, and have uniformly behaved well. But the Cossacks are a species of force belonging to Russia exclusively. The natives of the Don and the Volga hold their lands by military service, and enjoy certain immunities and prescriptions; in consequence of which, each individual is obliged to serve four years in the Russian armies. They are trained from early childhood to the use of the lance and sword, and familiarized to the management of a horse peculiar to the country, far from handsome in appearance, but tractable, hardy, swift, and sure-footed, beyond any breed perhaps in the world. At home, and with his family and children, the Cossack is kind, gentle, generous, and simple; but when in arms, and in a

ing the regiments of His Majesty's service usually stationed upon the continent of India, is about two hundred thousand upon the war establishment, exclusive of irregular corps of cavalry and infantry.

foreign country, he resumes the predatory, and sometimes the ferocious habits of his ancestors, the roving Scythians. As the Cossacks receive no pay, plunder is generally their object; and as prisoners were esteemed a useless incumbrance, they granted no quarter, until Alexander promised a ducat for every Frenchman whom they brought in alive. In the actual field of battle their mode of attack is singular. Instead of acting in line, a body of Cossacks about to charge, disperse at the word of command, very much in the manner of a fan suddenly flung open, and joining in a loud yell, or *hourra*, rush, each acting individually, upon the object of attack, whether infantry, cavalry, or artillery, to all of which they have been, in their wild way of fighting, formidable assailants. But it is as light cavalry that the Cossacks are, perhaps, unrivalled. They and their horses have been known to march one hundred miles in twenty-four hours without halting. They plunge into woods, swim rivers, thread passes, cross deep morasses, and penetrate through deserts of snow, without undergoing material loss, or suffering from fatigue. No Russian army, with a large body of Cossacks in front, can be liable to surprise; nor, on the other hand, can an enemy, surrounded by them, ever be confident against it. In covering the retreat of their own army, their velocity, activity, and courage, render pursuit by the enemy's cavalry peculiarly dangerous; and in pursuing a flying enemy, these qualities are still more redoubtable."—*Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, vol. 5, p. 362, &c.

of which the latter are generally employed as guards and police in aid of the civil magistrates. In speaking of the defence of India, it is not unfrequently supposed that the whole of this force would be marshalled to oppose the invader on his crossing the Indus; but a very slight glance at the map will be sufficient to explain the absurdity of this expectation. The distance from Madras to the centre of the Punjab, is as great as that from Moscow to Paris; and from Calcutta to the same point, it is farther than from Madrid to Vienna. With such immense tracts of country in the rear of our army, tracts which are inhabited by various nations, differing as much from each other as the Portuguese from the Poles, it would be madness to attempt to concentrate more than a small proportion of the whole force upon a spot so far removed from the heart of our provinces. In point of fact, the greatest number of troops assembled for any one purpose in India, or upon any line of operations, has never been as much as fifty thousand. The regular forces at Seringapatam, though consisting of detachments from all the Presidencies, were less than forty thousand. The army before Burtpore, in 1825, did not amount to thirty thousand; and the whole of the regular Bengal forces assembled by Lord Hastings, either against the Nepaulese, or in his more extensive

operations against the Pindarries and Mahrattas, did not much exceed forty thousand. The Bengal troops *employed* on the latter occasion were about fifty-five thousand, including irregular levies of all descriptions; these, however, were acting on a widely extended circle of concentric operations, and the army of occupation of each district contiguous to the seat of war, did not advance much beyond its accustomed boundary. On a straight line of operation towards the Indus, the case would be very different, and whole districts would be entirely denuded of troops. It is evident, then, that in the event of an invasion by a large army, the protecting force must either consist in a great measure of new levies, in addition to the present army of occupation, or new levies must be distributed about the provinces, in order to admit of the troops now stationed there being disposable. If we estimate the invading force at only fifty thousand men, it would require an equal force to defend the frontier, together with a strong reserve to form a rallying point, keep up the communication, and garrison the fortified places. The whole would not fall short of a hundred thousand men; and allowing only one fourth part of the number to be Europeans, we should have seventy-five thousand natives, either to be brought to the scene of action by long and

toilsome marches from the remotest provinces, and through climates differing amongst each other as much as Spain and Italy do from Holland and Germany—or this portion of the army would be principally composed of new levies, drawn from the vicinity of the upper provinces, where the people, from circumstances which will be explained hereafter, are by no means well affected to the present government. Supposing, therefore, the Europeans to suffer nothing, either from the sudden change of climate, if arriving direct from England, or from being over-seasoned by the effects of a protracted residence in India, still, as they would have to bear the brunt of the attack against an army flushed with conquest, inured to fatigues, and allured by the hopes of plunder, their situation would be a very arduous one; for it is unreasonable to expect that our native troops, got together by either of the modes above described, would be a match for their opponents in the field, allowing three-fourths of the latter to be Persians, Affgans, or Tartars, disciplined in the Russian manner, or rather, intermixed in the same ranks with the Russian soldiers. Amidst the manifest disadvantages under which an army so circumstanced would labour, it would require the most consummate skill, on the part of the British commander, to conduct the most ordinary operations,

even in the Punjab, where the face of the country is such as to afford positions favourable for defensive operations; but should the seat of war be transferred to Upper Hindostan, the whole tract lying between the Setledge and the richest part of the Bengal provinces, is so totally destitute of natural strength, that he would be unable to avoid coming to a general engagement in any other manner than by taking post under the walls of Delhi or Agra, and allowing the enemy to levy contributions on all the open country. The officers of the Company's service, it is true, have a perfect knowledge of the country, and are, perhaps, more accustomed to the management of large masses, than officers of corresponding rank in most other services; but on ground so perfectly level as that upon which they would have to manœuvre, those qualifications would be of very little assistance against an active and enterprising opponent, who, if inferior to themselves in those respects, would probably excel them in general military combination. But even on this point a good deal of exaggeration has been indulged in; and although the English would appear, if we judge from the accounts of battles gained and operations undertaken, to have waged war on a large scale in India, yet, as has been before remarked, their armies have always been comparatively small;

and they have been indebted for their triumphs to their skill and discipline having been so vastly superior to their opponents, and not to their numbers. There is no doubt, that the masses which they are in the habit of directing—though, agreeably to the usual proportion in Indian armies, not more than one-tenth consist of fighting-men, the rest being composed of baggage-servants and camp-followers,—have the effect of giving them the military *coup-d'œil*, and of training them to those habits of self-possession and command, which qualify them for entering upon a wider sphere of action, with less preparation than officers accustomed to the command of but very limited numbers; but this circumstance, though undoubtedly it renders the approach of more active warfare less formidable than it otherwise might appear, does not entirely supersede the necessity for considerable experience in actual operations with opponents more entitled to respect than those with whom they have hitherto been in the habit of coping.

As it is highly probable, then, that war, under a new aspect, will ere long approach our Indian possessions, and that the collision of England and Russia on the plains of Hindostan may be considered inevitable, to attempt to avert the storm by intriguing in the Court of Persia, is merely to

prescribe for symptoms, instead of grappling with the disease itself. In place of employing every effort to conciliate the Persians, and to persuade them to adopt improvements in war and government, alike unsuited to the genius of the nation, and to the inclination of the leading families, we should turn our attention exclusively to our Indian empire, and take advantage of our unlimited influence and authority, to strengthen it, by infusing a feeling of love and respect for the British name, and a firm reliance on the mildness and the justice of its sway. A foreign government, ruling over such extensive realms as those now under the dominion of the Company, must have much more to apprehend from internal discontent, than from external force; and, in point of fact, we find that, since the Mussulman conquest, the invasion of Hindostan has not unfrequently been effected, by armies of comparatively inconsiderable strength, under a promise or expectation of support from the various tribes with which it is peopled,—tribes which all writers concur in describing as ever ready to rise in favour of the most formidable candidate for sovereign power. Baber states his army, enumerated too with apparent accuracy, to have amounted, great and small, good and bad, servants and no servants, to only twelve thousand men.—Memoirs, p. 293; and again, p. 310, "When

I invaded the country for the fifth time, overthrew Sultan Ibrahim, and subdued the empire of Hindostan, I had a larger army than I had ever before brought into it. My servants, the merchants, and their servants, and the followers of all descriptions that were in camp along with me, were numbered, and amounted to twelve thousand men." Nadir Shah, invited into Hindostan by some discontented nobles, defeated the imperial army with his advanced-guard alone; and when Ahmed Shah, better known by the name of Abdallah, was repulsed in his first attack upon Hindostan, the circumstance was attributed to his having neglected to secure the co-operation of any of the powerful tribes. The Tartars and Persians, then in the service of the Mogul, were a sufficient match for his army: on his second advance, however, being assured of the assistance of Gazi-ud-dein, at the head of the Tartar interest, he conquered Delhi without any difficulty; and in his subsequent expeditions always maintained the ascendency thus acquired. It is impossible, indeed, to peruse the history of the events just referred to, without being struck with the apparent ease with which Hindostan may be invaded either from Cabul or Candahar. The nearest road from Herat to Cabul and Attoc, through Huzarah and the hills, though difficult, and at some seasons almost im-

passable, is only a month's journey in fair weather; whilst the route by Candahar is described as straight and level, practicable without risk or trouble even in the winter, and requiring about forty or fifty days' march. If, however, Cabul be avoided, and the advance conducted through Candahar to Derah-Gazee-Khan, on the Indus, (the point at which the Affgans crossed that river, in their march to Cashmere, in 1813,) it would require only fifty or sixty days' march to bring an army from the centre of Khorasan to the rear of the Punjab, upon the very borders of the British territory.*

Under the bare possibility of such an event occurring, it would be interesting to ascertain the actual state of our frontier provinces in respect to

* It may be important to remark, that by whatever route the invasion of India by the Russians be accomplished, they will march with the stream of national antipathies in their favour—the Usbecs have a rooted hatred against the Persians, and rival the latter in their hostile feelings towards the Affgans; whilst the Affgans cherish as much resentment against the Seiks for their uninterrupted encroachments, as the Seiks do against the English, for protecting the apostate chiefs on the left bank of the Setledge. Should the invaders cross the Indus at Derah-Gazee-Khan, they might conciliate Runjeet Sing, the present ruler of the Punjab, and induce him to co-operate in an attack upon the Company's territories.

military preparation and local resources. Into this subject, however, it is not the intention of these pages to enter very deeply at present; but it may not be without its use to remark, that such is the security or supineness of the Indian Government, that, during the late siege of Burtpore, when the battering guns were fast becoming unserviceable from incessant firing, the nearest depôt, which was that of Agra, (from its situation and strength one of the most important stations in Upper India,) was incompetent to the supply of the requisite number to replace them. If the assault had failed, the army must have suspended its operations till both artillery and ammunition could have been procured from Allahabad, a distance of at least thirty days' march. This, too, it must be observed, was not in a part of the country where such an occurrence as a siege was unlooked for, but where the feeling of jealousy, which our failure in 1805 had occasioned, rendered the last twenty years little more than a season of preparation. In answer to this, it is asserted by the advocates of procrastination, that no serious intention to invade our north-western provinces could be manifested by the Russian Court, without affording us ample time for every species of preparation for defence.' But, in addition to the example just given, it should be remembered, that

the war with Ava, though for years considered unavoidable, yet found the Indian Government almost entirely unprepared; so much so, indeed, that it cannot be denied, that if the Burmese general, Maha Bundoolah, had boldly pushed forward, after the decisive affair at Ramoo, he would have met with little or no opposition in his advance upon Chittagong and Dacca, and might even have insulted the very suburbs of Calcutta. The north-western frontier, indeed, has been attended to more than any other, as the course of events has naturally led to that result; but it is doubtful whether, at the present moment, the whole country above Allahabad contain the necessary equipments for an army of fifty thousand men. Neither is it certain that the whole of the Company's provinces could furnish a remount* of suit-

* In Bengal, the government stud may be calculated to contain about six or seven thousand brood-mares—the upper, or northern division, however, has not yet been productive; and the whole taken together have not hitherto been adequate to the supply of horses for the horse-artillery and dragoons, without taking the native cavalry into the account. The dispersion of the Pindarries transferred a number of mares to the Company's provinces; but breeding was not much attended to until of late years, when entire horses being imported from Europe, Government formed the northern division of the stud out of those materials. It requires, however, the greatest vigilance, on the part of the inspectors, to prevent the admission of undersized or defective

dairy; and the breed of ponies called Tattoos, for general purposes. Extensive requisitions could only be complied with at the expense of the growing harvest, or of a serious interruption of the ordinary occupation of the inhabitants. Our army would be under the necessity of carrying its supplies of all kinds in its train, or otherwise it would prove as great a scourge to our own territories as the most rapacious invader; and in the event of a reverse, instead of falling back upon its resources, it would have to continue its retreat through an exhausted, and probably an exasperated population.

When hostilities commenced with Ava, the greater part of the expedition to Rangoon and Arracan was supplied from the Madras Presidency; Bengal was exempted from any considerable demands either for men, or for cattle and stores; and yet, although the declaration of war was issued in February 1824, supplies for the advance of a force through Cachar to Ava, had not been collected in September of the same year; and when that expedition was given up, and a much smaller one, under General Morrison, ordered to proceed, by Chittagong to Arracan, it was not till January 1825, that the troops were able to advance, and that with only a portion of their stores and cattle. Now, if this was the case with an army

of six or seven thousand, marching in the neighbourhood of our capital, and through some of the most rich and densely populous of our provinces, with the streams of the great rivers favourable for the transport of supplies of all kinds; what are we to expect when all these conditions are reversed? when supplies have to mount the long and often difficult course of the Ganges and Jumna against a powerful current; where the country is comparatively wild and unproductive; where the inhabitants are, from recent conquest and other causes, by no means well affected to the Government; and when they will be called upon for supplies, not for a mere detachment, but for an army perhaps a hundred thousand strong?

In speaking of supplies being sent to the Upper Provinces, it should be mentioned, that although the Company's territory, on the Bengal establishment, is remarkably deficient in good roads fit for military purposes,—the great rivers, in fact, affording a comparatively economical means of communication from Calcutta to Furrackabad and Delhi, —there is no public establishment of boats or river craft for the conveyance of stores. When supplies of any kind are required in the field stations, boats are hired by the army commissariat, ostensibly at a small expense, but in reality at a very great one; for such is the defective state of those

which alone are procurable for the public service, and so badly are they navigated, that the accidents which occur in the loss of men, as well as stores, would form a very serious addition to the general rate of transport. The actual cost, also, is materially enhanced by the slow mode of travelling, and the difficulty of conducting a fleet of boats to such immense distances by means of the track-rope. From forty to sixty are as many as can be taken by one opportunity, according to the system now in force; and these, conveying altogether not more than twelve hundred tons upon an average, are three months in reaching Allahabad, and from thence two to Agra, and one to Futtighur; from either of which points, it would require a march of thirty days to reach the banks of the Setledge. When, indeed, we consider the difficulty of collecting transport, the slow rate of travelling against the strong current of the Ganges, and the limited supply either of stores or men which each fleet can convey, it is perhaps not too much to assert, that supposing the Russians to have secured, by treaty or otherwise, a free passage through Persia, they could at any time collect an army of fifty or a hundred thousand men upon the banks of the Indus, as soon as, and perhaps sooner, than the Indian Government could complete the necessary arrangements for opposing

them with effect. Startling as this opinion may appear, it is only necessary to consult the map, and to bear in mind the ease with which Russia can accumulate troops of all descriptions in her south-eastern frontier, to demonstrate its possible correctness. If Russia were, immediately after declaring war, to direct her attention to this point, her army in Georgia would have been on its march long ere intelligence from Europe could reach Bengal. From the banks of the Kur (though it is probable the Russian boundary has already been pushed two hundred miles more to the south) to Herat, is about eleven hundred miles, or one hundred and ten days' march; and from Herat to the Indus at Cabul, or at Derah-Gazee-Khan, as has been already stated, is about fifty days' march, making upon the whole one hundred and sixty marches. Now, if we may believe the published Army Lists, in the whole of the territory above Allahabad, including Oude, Rohilcund, and Rajhpootanah, there are not more than* forty-five

* To these may be added such troops as the Bombay Presidency could spare: but, in this case, the march from Mhow, Guzerat, and Cutch, to Moultan, or to Loodianah, on the Setledge, would be somewhat greater than from Allahabad to the last mentioned place; with the disadvantage of having a country but partially known, and certainly but badly supplied with necessaries of all kinds for troops to

thousand regular troops, including the regiments of His Majesty's service; and of these only about twenty thousand are nearer the frontier than twenty marches. But as no advance into the Punjab could prudently be attempted with less than thirty thousand men, it would be necessary to draw troops from stations as distant as Allahabad, which is at least fifty days' march from the frontier. So far, however, there appears to be a great difference in favour of the Indian army reaching the point of rendezvous before the assailants; but we are not to overlook the important consideration, that of all the troops thus collected together, only about seven thousand five hundred are Europeans. To provide the necessary escorts and communications, and to raise the European force to the number of twenty thousand—which may be looked upon as the smallest proportion, if the invaders should cross the Indus with fifty thousand men—troops would have to march from all parts of our provinces, from a distance of twelve and fifteen hundred miles, proceeding either

pass through. A division from Bombay, however, would be of the greatest service in threatening the right flank of the invading army, and in operating upon his communications, in the event of his pushing on to Delhi; though the moral effect, upon the natives, of his gaining possession of that capital, would render it a matter of the utmost consequence to oppose him, before he could advance so far.

by the course of the rivers, or across a country but very indifferently provided either with roads or with the requisite supplies for such a force; and it would be necessary to send to Ceylon, the Mauritius, and even the Cape of Good Hope, for regiments of His Majesty's service to supply the place of those sent to the frontier.

Upon the whole, then, if we attend to the events now passing in Persia, and consider the great probability that Russia will ere long establish a permanent influence in that kingdom, too much attention cannot be paid to the political strength of our Indian provinces; and whatever may be the assistance which we can expect from the spirit or patriotism of the inhabitants, no time should be lost in providing those safeguards, which, as the conquerors of that extensive region, we are bound, as well in justice, as from a regard to our own welfare, to afford. But in order to estimate the degree of attachment which the Indian Government can claim, it will now be necessary to take a view of the condition of the people submitted to its sway.

Since the foregoing pages were written, advice has been received that, in consequence, no doubt, of the diversion which the increasing importance of the affairs of Greece has operated in favour of

Persia, Russia has made peace with that power. The conditions are severe; and while they secure to Russia at all times an easy access to Tabriz and Teheran, they put her in possession of a sum of money not only sufficient to defray the expense of the late war, but to provide means of future aggression, whenever it may suit her to renew hostilities. The war, indeed, may be considered to have set at rest the question, as to the practicability of transporting a large army from Russia to the heart of Persia: not only has the feeble barrier of the Araxes been passed, but the disposition of the inhabitants of the contiguous provinces to assist an invader, ascertained beyond all doubt. With little or no apparent effort on the part of Russia, a large and well-equipped army was assembled to the south of the Caucasus, and put in motion upon the capital of Persia, without the latter being able to offer any effectual resistance, or, indeed, possessing any other means of saving her hoarded treasures, than the immediate sacrifice of a considerable portion of them, at the discretion of the conqueror. Such, too, is acknowledged to be the state of anarchy and disorder in which the greater part of Persia is plunged, that the Shah is fearful of removing the remains of his treasure to a more distant asylum; whilst, therefore, his known avarice

is a sufficient guarantee against profusion, the immense hoardings, which, according to a late writer, will amount to nearly thirty millions sterling, when the present demand has been satisfied,* will still be within the reach of Russia on any future occasion. On the other hand, the Shah's advanced age and growing infirmities render it not improbable that Russia may very shortly be appealed to, to settle the claims of rival candidates for the throne; in which case the devotion of Jehangir Khan, the present governor of Ardebil, to the cause of Russia, will no doubt meet with its reward, in the recognition of his relationship to the legitimate royal stock of Persia, for the assertion of which, his father was cruelly put to death by the present Shah. The present Prince Royal, Abbas Mirza, has rendered himself unpopular in the north-western provinces, by his arbitrary conduct during the progress of hostilities; and has lost the confidence of the nation, no less by the manner in which he forced the kingdom into a war, than by the rash and inconsiderate manner in which he opposed the advance of the enemy's force. Little doubt, therefore, need be entertained that in the event of peace with Constantinople again setting the southern division of the Russian forces at liberty,

* See Lieut. Alexander's Travels.

the late designs upon Persia will be resumed, and ample advantage taken of the information now acquired respecting the deficiencies, moral and physical, under which that unfortunate country appears destined to labour.

But whatever may be the future views of our great Northern rival, the respite which has thus been afforded to the Indian Government is most valuable. Had the Russians continued to advance, the alarm which had begun to pervade our frontier provinces would have so greatly encreased, as, in some measure, to have impaired the character of any measure which might be adopted for improving the condition of the inhabitants of that part of our territory, by giving it the appearance of being rather extorted by our fears than conceded by our justice. Now, however, all immediate danger being removed, and the recurrence, though still within the bounds of probability, not impossibly distant in point of time, no such motives can be inferred. Indeed the only apprehension now is, that the improvidence of the Governors will lead them to neglect the solemn warning which they have received, and induce them again to consider the governed as safe from attack,* and as firm in their allegiance, as if no

* Symptoms of this have already appeared in the orders issued respecting the reduction of the army:—from ten to

such danger had ever offered itself, or as if they had not just reason to complain of the general impoverishment to which they are reduced.

twenty men per company in the infantry, and the same in the cavalry, have been reduced, and some companies of artillery have been dismounted and the horses sold. The impolicy of this proceeding, respecting the cavalry and artillery in particular, must be manifest from what has been observed with regard to the scarcity of horses in India; and the demand being so greatly reduced, there will be little or no encouragement for breeding; and, in addition to the time required for properly breaking horses for the public service, Government will not be able to procure them in the event of a sudden call. Advantage should be taken of a period of peace to prepare ourselves in every point for future wars; and if retrenchment in expenditure must be made, it should only be in those departments which admit of being easily restored to their original strength in time of need.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE OF HINDOSTAN.

"Verum illi (nostri majores) delubra deorum pietate, domos suas gloriâ decorabant; neque victis quidquam, præter injuriæ licentiam, eripiebant. At hi contrâ, ignavissimi homines per summum scelus, omnia ea sociis adimere, quæ fortissimi viri victores hostibus reliquerunt: proinde quasi injuriam facere, id demum esset imperio uti."

In the last chapter, it has been shown that the defence of India against the attacks of a really formidable power would require not only a more efficient army than that which is now distributed throughout its provinces, but that even the best organized force would find it difficult to subsist itself in any part of the country without being as detrimental to its prosperity as if it were on hostile ground. With the exception of a few tribes, not very respectable as to numbers, we have perhaps little to apprehend from the open assistance which the people of the country might be

disposed to afford the common enemy; but even their lukewarmness, their indifference to the fate of the present Government, would be pregnant with the most disastrous consequences. If, indeed, it be doubted whether any country can be conquered when its inhabitants resolve to be free, it must follow that no foreign occupant can successfully defend it, unless the inhabitants range themselves unequivocally on his side. It is, therefore, of the first importance, to endeavour to ascertain the actual condition of the people, and what is their attachment to the soil they cultivate, and to the government under which they live.

The habits of the Mohammedan conquerors of Hindostan leading them to indulge in pomp and sensuality, the love of ease and pleasure soon influenced their demeanour towards the vanquished; and if the feelings as well as the interests of the Hindoos were generally disregarded, they at least derived some consolation from seeing their fellow-countrymen occasionally raised to high dignity and power, both in the civil and military departments of the state. It is true that this was too frequently the consequence of forced alliance and polluted blood; but the patient idolater, as soon as the sense of personal degradation was overcome, did not disdain to profit himself and his kindred by the influence thus obtained. On the other

hand, if wealth to an enormous amount was wrested from them, often under circumstances of the greatest cruelty, still that wealth was dissipated as freely as it was obtained, and the greater part of it flowed back in refreshing streams upon the industry of the country. It may be remarked, too, that the Mohammedans, though differing as much as Christians do, in religion, from the Hindoos, were yet of the same flesh and blood; in the great family of nature they were kindred; and the same sun that shed its genial influence upon the one, cheered and animated the other. But with the English every thing is different: the climate of India is looked upon as foreign and ungenial; to them the country is forbidden ground; they are only allowed to reside in it as sojourners anxious to regain their native homes; and whilst their exactions surpass those of all former rulers, they individually support a smaller expenditure than the natives can be induced to believe is consistent with the stations they hold, and the wealth appropriated to their support. With every allowance for variation of national character, their expenditure in India is, generally speaking, on the lowest scale of decent subsistence, according to their several ranks; their surplus income is remitted to Europe, and they, as well as their employers, appear to look upon

Hindostan as a patrimony granted to them for the support of their families on the other side of the globe. Almost the whole of what is wrung from the people, ostensibly in requital for the protection afforded them by the Government, instead of being laid out in *bona fide* state expenditure, for the advantage of the country, is devoted to the payment of the interest of debts contracted by the Company in their character of merchants, and in the past or present support of foreign establishments, such as Prince of Wales's Island, Bencoolen, and St. Helena, maintained avowedly for commercial purposes. Add to this the depression of the higher classes, (which was the unexpected consequence of the territorial system of revenue,) and their exclusion from places of trust and emolument,—the little employment given to the natives in general, in consequence of the economical scale of our Indian establishments —and the small number of our troops compared with the countless multitudes of an armed force constituted according to Asiatic notions of parade and splendour; and we may easily comprehend how infinitely more severely our Christian rule must bear upon the condition and prosperity of the people, than that of any previous conqueror. It is to this account that we should have to place the apathy of the inhabitants in the event of any

serious danger threatening the Anglo-Indian Government:—the impoverishment of the country might not be revenged upon us in deeds of insurrection and blood, but theirs would be the *vox silentio, tenuis*, which, though not heard in the whirlwind or in the earthquake, would speak dismay and ruin to the hearts of their oppressors; and the reckless indifference with which they would behold the struggle, even if they abstained from open hostility, would be decisive of the fate of their present rulers; for no army ever yet withstood the energies of a powerful invading foe, if unsupported by the sympathy of the country which it was endeavouring to defend.

From what has been before remarked respecting the territorial acquisitions of the Company, it will readily be conceived that nothing could have been less calculated to encourage the expectation of any improvement in the condition of the people, than the principle of actual pecuniary profit upon which those acquisitions were made. Without pausing to reflect that the several powers then holding possessions in India, if not in open rebellion against their legitimate sovereign, were certainly foreigners and intruders on the soil, whole tracts and provinces were accepted as gifts, or conquered by force of arms, as if the aboriginal inhabitants were not more worthy of consideration

than the trees and other productions to be found on the surface. According to the barbarous computation of oriental despots, countries were only valuable in proportion to the direct land revenue they yielded; the happiness of the inhabitants never entered into the calculation; and the slow and often interrupted progress of arts and commerce afforded no other available source of income. The occurrence of wars and revolutions rarely permitted any hope of improvement in the amount; and as amidst the scenes of pillage that took place under a system of graduated plunder, from the prince down to the smallest functionary, every thing was destroyed or dissipated that came within the reach of man,—the land, which appeared to be the only indestructible element of production, came to be considered as the sole property of the ruler. It was of this principle, which in itself exhibited the very essence of anarchy, ignorance, and misrule, that a Christian establishment, emanating from a community in which civilization and refinement were supposed to have attained their highest point, were not ashamed to avail themselves. Following the worthy prototypes which the history of Asiatic barbarism and tyranny afforded them, the India Company declared that the farmer's dues were in effect those of the state; and subsequently, when, under the reforms

introduced by Lord Cornwallis, they ostensibly bestowed proprietary rights upon the zemindars, they first appropriated to the state the whole produce of the soil, after paying the expenses of cultivation, and one-tenth of the rental to the newly created landholder. In addition, however, to Asiatic principles and precedents, and to the learning and research bestowed by Patton* to prove that the sovereign was sole proprietor, or, which amounts to the same thing, the *sole disposer* of landed property, arguments were not long undiscovered, whereby to confer on this principle the sanction of more competent authority; and Blackstone is quoted by one of the writers in support of the Company's prerogative to prove, that if a "subject in England has only the usufruct and not the absolute property in the soil—or, as Sir Edward Coke expresses it, he has *dominium utile*, but not *dominium directum*—a ryot in India may rest contented with an usufructuary right." But, besides that this principle in the law of England—resting as it does upon the doctrine of escheats, by which the sovereign of the state succeeds to all inheritance to which no other title can be found, and by which lands, like all other property, revert to and vest in the King, who in the eye of the law is the universal lord and original proprietor of all

Principle of Asiatic Monarchies.

the land in his kingdom—is declared by Blackstone (2.50) to be, "in reality, a mere fiction;" it forms part only of that constitution by which the King is solemnly sworn to govern his people according to the statutes in Parliament agreed on; if, therefore, the ryot of India is bound to rest contented with the same title to his ground that a subject of England possesses, to make the analogy complete, a free constitution should be given, and the quota of land-tax to be paid should be settled by his representatives in Parliament assembled.

Nothing, in truth, could have been more idle than the whole controversy concerning the right of property in the soil of India: the natives, whose very subsistence depended upon the issue, were unable to take any part in the discussion; and it is quite evident that the will of Government, which was alone commensurate with its power, was the only rule by which it was determined. Arguing from a state of things which had been produced by ages of plunder and desolation, the East India Company saw that the only rational mode of restoring the prosperity of the country, would interfere with the pecuniary aid which their commercial embarrassments rendered necessary, besides compelling them to abstain from all attempts to increase their rents until

order was restored, and with it the peaceful and industrious habits of the community. Their interest as traders was, in fact, incompatible with the real interest of territorial rulers, supposed to have a sympathy with the prosperity of the country. The financial difficulties in which the Company's Government had involved themselves, did not allow them the necessary leisure to take a just and magnanimous view of the great and interesting question which the wonderful course of events had submitted to their decision; and, unhappily, the great Council of the nation, and the ever-watchful eye of the British public, were too distant to admit of effectual interference to save the inhabitants of India from the continuance of a system, which, even under the more lenient sway of Mohammedan rulers, had plunged the greater part of them in hopeless poverty.

When, however, the India Company and their Government ordained a permanent settlement of the land revenue in 1793, there is no doubt that it was their intention to renounce all claim to the proprietorship of the land in favour of the zemindars; but in omitting exactly to define, in the first instance, the relative situation of zemindar and ryot, the door appears to have been left open to so many alterations and interferences on the part of Government, as in a great measure to have re-

duced the proprietary right to a mere name. The interests of the ryots being in direct opposition to those of the landholders, the latter were soon found complaining that, unless they were armed with power, as prompt to enforce payment from their renters, as Government had authorised the use of in regard to its own claims, it was impossible for them to discharge their engagements with punctuality. Notwithstanding this appeal, however, Government appear to have been sceptical as to the ill effects of the system, until its interests* were likely to be affected, by the farther progress of the evils complained of, exposing portions of the land sold to the hazard of a reduction in the rates of assessment. It then interfered for the protection of the zemindars; and a regulation was enacted, "for better enabling individuals to recover arrears of rent or revenue due to them," [the opening of the preamble to which is to the

Much the same reasons were given by Timur for protecting his subjects from ruin; "for the ruin of the subject causeth the diminution of the Imperial treasures:" a passage upon which Mr. Patton (Principles of Asiatic Monarchies) makes the following observation:—"This intimate connexion between the interest of the Sovereign and the prosperity of the husbandman (the immediate tenant of Government), is the surest pledge of his security." Such were the opponents of the permanent settlement in Bengal!

lowing effect:—"Government not admitting of any delay in the payment of the public revenue receivable from the proprietors and farmers of land, justice requires that they should have the means of levying their rents and revenues with equal punctuality, and that the persons by whom they may be payable, whether under farmers, dependant talookdars, ryots, or others, should be enabled, in like manner, to realize the rents and revenue from which their engagements with the proprietors or farmers are to be made."] By this regulation, the delays which a defaulter was enabled to oppose to the distrainer in enforcing payment of arrears of rent or revenue, as far as the amount was realizable from his crops or his personal property, were avoided, and the distrainer allowed, under specified conditions, to put up the property of the defaulter for sale, and to cause it to be sold, to make good the deficiency; and, in some cases, to confine the defaulter until he discharged the claim against him, together with interest, at twelve per cent. Thus the protection afforded to the cultivators by the permanent settlement was in effect withdrawn, and the landholders had it again in their power to practise all those oppressions and arbitrary exactions, which it had been the object of that settlement to abolish for ever. "It became the interest of the zemin-

dar," as is observed by Mr. Thackery on another occasion, "not to assist, but to ruin the ryot, that he might eject him from his right of occupancy, and put in some one else on a raised rent;"—and such was his power in this respect, that the cultivators, unable to bear up against their renewed oppressions, were frequently induced to abscond, in order to avoid imprisonment, in addition to the forfeiture of their whole property. It was from the operation of these two causes—the efforts of the landholders, on the one hand, to retain their station, and, if possible, to raise their share of the rents; and of the ryots, on the other, to secure a fair remuneration for their labour,—that justified the following appalling picture, drawn by the Collector of Midnapore, in February 1802. "They (the zemindars) all say, that such a harsh and oppressive system was never before resorted to in this country; that the custom of imprisoning landholders for arrears of revenue was, in comparison, mild and indulgent to them; that though it was no doubt the intention of Government to confer an important benefit on them by abolishing this custom, it has been found, by melancholy experience, that the system of sales and attachments, which has been substituted for it, has, in the course of a few years, reduced most of the great zemindars in Bengal to distress and beggary, and

duced a greater change in the landed property Bengal than has perhaps ever happened in the same space of time in any age or country, by the mere effect of internal regulations." Estates were everywhere sold for default of revenue; and the purchasers, who supplanted the first proprietors, being in their turn unable to support themselves under such a system, the land was sold and re-sold, until it at length fell into the possession of a set of men who were content to act merely as the receivers of the land-tax, without having any farther interest in their estates, or incurring any risk but that of losing their office. This was, in fact, the natural result of the anomalous position in which the zemindar was placed in respect to Government and to the ryots; responsible to the former for the whole amount assessed on his estate, and necessarily at the mercy of the latter, when the least delay in realizing that amount occasioned a sale of his property to make good the defalcation, he was gradually deprived of every thing he possessed, besides the tenth share of the rents, which formed his commission for collecting the whole. No individual thus circumstanced could be supposed to have the power, even if he had the will, to attend to the comforts and prosperity of his tenants; and whilst, for want of capital, no attempt could be made by the latter to

improve their condition, without overwhelming them with debt, no subsequent effort could release them; because every advantage which was gained excited the covetousness of their landlord, and induced him to make use of all the means in his power to dispossess them, and procure a higher rent from their successor. This consideration operated as a complete bar to improvement; and, in fact, the only reasonable prospect which offered itself to such of the landholders as still possessed sufficient capital, was to turn their attention to the cultivation of such waste land as lay within the boundary of their estates, and the produce of which, agreeably to the spirit of the act of permanent settlement, was not liable to farther taxation.

In a climate like that of India, where vegetation is so rapid, and where inundations are so frequent, ground very soon runs to waste and becomes overgrown with brushwood. Colebrooke estimates the proportion of land tilled in Bengal and Behar at only one-third of the whole surface; and gives it as his opinion, in an extreme case, that a period of thirty years scarcely covers the barren sand with soil—when inundations have been caused, as sometimes occurs, by rivers breaking through their banks or changing their course. It requires, indeed, at all times, a considerable

expense of money and labour to clear wastes that are overgrown with jungle; in most cases, two or three years must elapse before it is discovered how much of the ground, so cleared, will yield a sufficient remuneration; and if to these considerations be added the ill effects of poverty and ignorance, in persevering upon an exaggerated estimate of profit, some idea may be formed of the difficulty of reclaiming land under similar circumstances, and of the degree of encouragement which it would be desirable to hold out for such employment of capital. Instances, indeed, have not been wanting, of individuals having entirely ruined themselves, after a perseverance of upwards of twenty years, in their endeavour to reclaim waste lands in different parts of India. Fortunately, such instances are rare, but they serve to show the difficulty attending improvements of this nature. The Indian Government, however, still adhering to the principle, that all profits derived from the land are in effect those of the state, have not only allowed themselves to be prevailed upon, in consequence of this very partial improvement of the condition of the landholders, to withhold the benefits of a permanent settlement from the ceded and conquered provinces, although under the most solemn engagements to grant them, but they have endeavoured, and are still endeavour-

ing, by a sort of *quo warranto* process, to assert their right to share in the augmentation of income, which some zemindars have procured at so much expense and hazard to themselves individually. In regard to the north-western provinces, in particular, nothing can be at once so unjust and so impolitic as such conduct. The whole population of that part of the country, which is most exposed to foreign aggression—a race of men well known to be more robust and more prone to military habits than in any other part of India—instead of being attached to the Government, by being attached to the soil, which they ought to protect, are kept in an unsettled and discontented condition; ready to believe that nothing but a change of masters can free them from the state of impoverishment in which they are plunged;—whilst the great landholders are deterred from attending to the happiness and prosperity of their tenantry, by the apprehension that Government will step in and appropriate all the profits, as they are thought to be doing in the rest of their dominions.

The effect of these circumstances in discouraging agriculture, it is unnecessary to insist upon; but the injury thus inflicted upon the country is greatly enhanced by the change which a few years have wrought in its commercial prospects. When British influence was first established in Bengal,

the country was literally crowded with manufacturers and artisans of all descriptions. The various officers, both of the Mogul court and the subordinate principalities and governments, with their numerous retainers, occasioned an immense consumption of every article which luxury could desire, or the ingenuity of the country produce; and some of these, on account of their beauty and costliness, formed the basis of a considerable export trade. But on the substitution of a comparatively economical European Government, the demand for productions of this nature almost entirely ceased; the industry of the country everywhere met with a sensible check; and the finishing blow was put to many of those manufactures, for which India had been so long celebrated, by the fabrics of Europe being made to rival them in delicacy of workmanship, and even to surpass them in cheapness. Nothing was then reserved for the industry of the natives but such articles as were too coarse or too valueless to excite competition; and the great increase of the import trade soon converted India almost exclusively into a market for raw produce. This great revolution in the commercial interests of the country was calculated to arouse all the vigilance, and call for all the forbearance, of a Government which had the welfare of its subjects at heart. The great

change which had taken place in the condition of the people, who, from being composed of a mass of manufacturing classes, sufficient to furnish ample employment for the agricultural class, became suddenly transformed into a nation of cultivators, called imperiously for the fostering hand of Government to increase and improve the produce of the soil, by the adoption of every expedient which industry, skill, and capital could apply to it, and to create such other employment as the nature, wants, and habits of the people would admit. In all countries where the great bulk of the inhabitants gain their subsistence by cultivating the soil, the natural increase of population will soon exceed the demand for employment, and the wages of labour will be gradually reduced to the lowest possible rate. Nothing can avert or even retard the general distress and misery consequent upon this state of things, but the extension and improvement of agriculture, the encouragement of industry to furnish employment to the surplus population, and the diffusion of education and intelligence; by the operation of which new wants and new tastes will be engendered sufficient to impart a stimulus to the industry and ingenuity of all classes. The Indian Government, however, as we have seen, acted upon diametrically opposite principles. When the amount of the land-

tax had been fixed in perpetuity at a rate which there was every reason to suppose would drain the surplus earnings of the whole agricultural community into the coffers of the state, a permanent settlement with the ceded and conquered provinces, though distinctly promised under the governments of Lord Wellesley and Lord Minto, is withheld from time to time, in the hope of gradually enticing the landholders to make such improvement, as may afford an opportunity of approximating to the maximum assessment which the produce of the soil will admit; because, in a few instances, the landholders of Bengal and Behar have been able to accumulate more wealth than could reasonably have been anticipated. Nor is this indecent appetence of revenue confined to the regulations enacted of late years,—regulations which appear to be passed for no other purpose than to be subjects of perpetual discussion and illusive amendment—but it is made to apply retrospectively even to rights and privileges which existed before the acquisition of the Dewanny, and which had been recognised by every successive government; for the tenures by which certain lands have been held rent-free from time immemorial have come at length to be questioned, and many of them have lately been resumed, whilst others are, at this moment, under sequestration.

When the English first appeared upon the plains of India, there were so many native princes and chieftains in the exercise of sovereign power, and these personages were so easily induced to alienate their rights for the sake of immediate advantage, that it is probable the custom of granting lands rent-free continued even after the Company had unequivocally assumed political rule. It was necessary, therefore, to inquire into and put a stop to an abuse which threatened to make such serious inroads upon the fiscal jurisdiction of the state; and accordingly, as far back as 1783, a regulation was passed, that all rent-free land, in whatever quantity, unless held under the sanction of a grant from the Governor and Council, or unless possession thereof had been obtained antecedent to the Dewanny grant, were resumable. To this regulation no reasonable objection could be made; though such is reported to have been the number of claims for land which then called for confirmation, that it is supposed a very great portion of them was left unadjusted by the Committee empowered to carry the above resolution into effect.

These lands are chiefly of four descriptions, the Devutter and Pirutter, granted for the endow-

* See Mr. Grant's Analysis of the Finances of Bengal, Fifth Report. Appendix, p. 290 and 318.

ment of Hindoo and Mohammedan temples, respectively; Bramutter, lands appropriated for the maintenance of Bramins; and Mohutran, or honorary grants to individuals. The two latter descriptions may be sold, or otherwise disposed of; but the two first are for ever devoted to the purposes for which they were originally granted; and an order of Government, on the occasion referred to, prohibited the granting of land for religious or charitable purposes in future without the express sanction of the state, though existing proprietors were confirmed in their possessions. Affairs remained in this situation for many years, but at length an order was issued, decreeing that rent-free lands should be resumed, unless the proprietors of them could produce their sunnuds, or grants, for the inspection of the Collector of the district; when those found to bear unequivocal marks of validity were to be confirmed, and the others rescinded. As, however, much of the land

[1] By a subsequent regulation, rent-free land, not exceeding ten biggahs in extent (about 3 acres), are exempted from the operation of this decree, upon proof being produced of such lands having been in the possession of the family now holding them for a certain specified period. There is little doubt, however, that the revenue records which were deposited in the Khalsah when the permanent settlement was made, do actually contain the registry of most of the rent-free estates which are now about to be resumed.

in question had been granted many years, and in some cases centuries, before the establishment of the Company's Government, it was scarcely probable that sunnuds and titles could have been preserved, amidst the scenes of violence and commotion which had so frequently occurred; neither public nor private registers could be supposed to have survived the general wreck; though the known habits of the people were perfectly consistent with the belief that such property continued to descend in the families to which it had been originally given.

To these evils arising out of the extreme uncertainty of their rights, where every privilege is assumed to be held by sufferance, liable to the revision or resumption of Government, without even the form of open investigation, must be added the imposition of stamp-duties, bearing with peculiar severity upon the under tenants and cultivators, and which were a direct consequence of the act of permanent settlement.

The natives of India, but particularly the inhabitants of what are termed the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency, cherish a very general and sincere veneration for the character of Lord Cornwallis; and with reason look upon him as the champion of their rights, and the founder of the few privileges which still remain to them. His

professed desire to make their protection depend solely upon the laws, and not upon the individual character of their rulers; and his consequent separation of the financial from the judicial functions, and making public officers in the former department responsible for their conduct to the courts established in the principal cities and districts; his regulating courts of appeal and last resort; his abolition of judges' fees, as well as all other charges which set a price upon justice, and made it difficult of access in proportion to the poverty and helplessness of the suitor; his recommending and laying the foundation of a code of laws, laying down rules for the conduct of all, and specifying the mode of attaining speedy redress for every injury; and the care he took to explain the grounds of every regulation he enacted, and to appeal to the good sense of the people upon all subjects affecting their rights, persons, or property,—called for, and still command, their fervent admiration, and justly entitled that distinguished nobleman to the gratitude, not only of India, but of all mankind. Accustomed, as the natives of India are, to look up to their rulers with a deference and respect little short of adoration, they hailed with heartfelt gratitude these manifestations of a kind and beneficent mind; but in proportion to the sincerity of this feeling, is the dis-

may with which they have witnessed the almost total abrogation of measures, the reasons of which had been so fully and satisfactorily laid open to their understanding, and a system infinitely more severe and inflexible than any they had before seen, substituted in its place. Innumerable are the traditions current throughout the provinces, concerning the love of justice, and the strictly impartial mind, for which Lord Cornwallis was celebrated; they consider his regulations as having established and conveyed to them benefits till then unknown, or only existing in their legendary abstractions of what a perfect ruler should be. His equal administration of justice, by rules which professed to disregard the persons and qualities of men, and to be free from the influence of the Government itself, gained all their confidence; and if the land-tax appeared to be so great, as to leave the ostensible proprietor an inadequate share of the rents of his estate, still the amount taken was "fixed, and for ever," and admitted of relative diminution, by the effect of increased industry. This certainty of exemption from future demands, notwithstanding the disadvantage under which they laboured, in being in a great measure excluded from taking any part in the government of their country, and in being debarred from receiving assistance and instruction

from the settlement of intelligent Europeans amongst them, still offered considerable inducement to them to improve their property by cultivating the more valuable articles of produce, and by clearing waste or uncultivated lands:—like the lever of Archimedes, industry only required ground to stand upon, to enable it to move the universe; and that ground they beheld in the security to persons and property, which it was his Lordship's anxious wish to establish.

It is singular, however, that although Lord Cornwallis successfully combated the reasons for delaying, for ten years, the final announcement of a permanent settlement, which Mr. Shore had adduced, he never appears to have entertained a doubt as to the prior right of the zemindars to the property of the soil. "Mr. Shore has most ably, and, in my opinion,"* observes his Lordship, "most successfully argued in favour of the rights of the zemindars to the property of the soil." But if the value of permanency is to be withdrawn from the settlement now in agitation, of what avail will the power of his arguments be to the zemindars, for whose rights he has contended? They are now to have their property in farm for a lease of ten years, provided they will pay as

* Fifth Report, Appendix, p. 473.

good a rent for it; and this property is then to be again assessed, at whatever rent the Government of this country may at that time think proper to impose. In any part of the world, where the value of property is known, would not such a concession of a right of property in the soil be called a cruel mockery?" The interest of the zemindar was, in point of fact, too intimately blended with the proprietary right to be easily separated; but nothing is more clear, throughout the whole controversy, than that the position which he occupied constituted a disturbing cause by which the plumb-line of justice, in making the proprietary recognition, was warped from the perpendicular, and the entire calculation affected with error accordingly. The ryot was the real proprietor—he paid the rent of the land to the zemindar as an agent of Government only. The zemindar was a civil officer of police, as well as revenue; he was bound to make good his stipulated payment of revenue, under penalty of suffering an equivalent loss of property, or of being deprived of the whole; it was his duty to preserve the peace of the country, and his services were required for the defence of the state, against rebellion or invasion, according to his means of furnishing that assistance. From all these duties, however, excepting the collection of the rents, our

system of government relieved him; and, in principle, he had no farther right than that which the justice of Lord Cornwallis conceded to those who were likely to suffer from the resumption of the Sayer. "As to the question of right," * observes his Lordship, "I cannot conceive that any Government in their senses would ever have delegated an authorised right to any of their subjects to impose arbitrary taxes on the internal commerce of the country. It certainly has been an abuse that has crept in, either through the negligence of the Mogul governors, who were careless and ignorant of all matters of trade; or, what is more probable, connivance of the Mussulman aumil; who tolerated the extortion of the zemindar, that he might again plunder him in his turn. But be that as it may, the right has been too long established, or tolerated, to allow a just Government to take it away without indemnifying the proprietor for the loss; and I never heard that, in the most free state, if an individual possessed a right that was incompatible with the public welfare, the legislature made any scruple of taking it from him, provided they gave him a fair equivalent. The case of the late Duke of Athol, who, a few years ago, parted very unwillingly with the sovereignty of the Isle of Man, appears to me to be exactly in point." The

* Fifth Report, Appendix, p. 475.

situation of the zemindars bore a still greater resemblance to the case here brought forward by his Lordship; the extent and condition of their tenure varied from those of a jagheerdar, or feudal chieftain, to those of a Government agent for the collection of the rents, invested with authority over the ryots, to enforce the cultivation of the lands, and to yield them, at the same time, his protection. In all cases, and under whatever designation, the collection of the revenue, and the appropriation of a part of it for defraying the local expenses, was the principal stipulation; and the amount which remained after these payments, over and above the remuneration allowed by the state, was paid into the treasury, either in the form of an offering, or present, on renewal of the jagheerdar's commission every three years, or of tribute, or simply in the form of land revenue. If this view had been adopted by the Indian Government at the time of making the permanent settlement, and if the zemindars had been compelled to grant pottahs to all the farmers or under tenants, and ryots, who could command sufficient capital to enable them to keep their lands in cultivation, the otherwise insurmountable difficulties arising out of a vain endeavour to reconcile the existence of proprietary rights, with a denial of that control which a landholder everywhere

possesses over his tenants, would have been in the first instance avoided; and the zemindar would have fallen into his natural and correct position, of assistant to the collector of the district, in remitting through him the net land revenue to Government, after paying the authorised local expenses.

In addition, however, to the various arguments by which the question of the permanent settlement, and the persons with whom that settlement was to be made, had, not undesignedly, been perplexed, two other considerations were not without their influence upon the minds of the Court of Directors and the principal members of the Indian Government. The first was the actual necessity for realizing quickly and certainly the greatest possible revenue from India, in consequence of the commercial embarrassments into which the Company had fallen; and the Court of Directors were only too happy to close with a plan which yielded even more than they had calculated upon, without feeling disposed to attend to the developement of any other system, the operation of which might not turn out so speedily advantageous to their interests. The other, a consideration which may be supposed to have had much weight with the Indian Government, and to have induced them to recognise the zemindars as proprietors of the soil,