

“neighbouring villages were assembled, the head assessor, by means of arbitrators from among them, easily determined all complaints of this nature.

“If entire dependence could have been placed on the judgment and impartiality of the head assessors, nothing more would have been required, in fixing the assessment, than to have adopted their estimates; but as these estimates were sometimes incorrect, and as they would have been still more so had the assessors been relieved from the fear of a future examination, the whole of the classification and assessment underwent a complete investigation, in the collector's cutchery. On this occasion, all the potails, curnums, and principal ryots of every village in the district to be settled, were assembled at the cutchery. The business was begun by fixing the sum which was to be the total revenue of the district. This was usually effected by the collector in a few days, by comparing the collections under the native princes under the Company's government from its commencement, the estimates of the ordinary and head assessors and the opinions of the most intelligent natives; and, after a due consideration of the whole, adopting such a sum as it was thought would be the fair assessment of the district in its present state, or what the inhabitants in similar circumstances, under a native government, would have regarded as somewhat below the usual standard. The amount fixed by the collector was usually from five to fifteen per cent. lower than the estimates of the assessors; for it is the nature of assessment, proceeding from single fields to whole districts, and taking each field at its supposed average produce, to make the aggregate sum greater than what can be easily

“ easily realized. After fixing a certain sum for the district,
“ it next remained to determine what share of this sum
“ was to be imposed on each village. Had the detailed as-
“ sessment been perfectly correct, it might have been done
“ at once by an uniform remission of five or ten per cent.
“ to every field; but, as this was always objected to by
“ many of the inhabitants, who thought their lands were
“ not so favourably assessed as those of their neighbours,
“ either in the same or other villages, it therefore became
“ necessary to examine again the assessment of every vil-
“ lage. Such villages as claimed more than the average
“ remission were investigated by the principal ryots of
“ other villages; and each claim was admitted, either fully,
“ or with such modification as both parties agreed upon.
“ The extra remission thus granted to one set of villages
“ was to be deducted from another; and it was effected in
“ the same manner, by employing the ryots of other vil-
“ lages. After settling what proportion of the whole re-
“ mission was to be allowed to each village, it was still
“ necessary to ascertain whether or not any alteration was
“ requisite in the classification of lands. In some vil-
“ lages, where none appeared to be necessary, and where
“ no objections were made, the classification of the head
“ assessor was confirmed, and the rent of each class, and
“ consequently of each field, determined at once, by
“ lowering the assessment by the rate of remission granted
“ to the village. In those villages where complaints were
“ made of the classification, the objections were exam-
“ ined; and, if they were allowed to be just by ryots not
“ interested in the matter, the necessary alterations were
“ made. Complaints of whole classes being rated too high
“ or too low, were much more frequent than those of par-
“ ticular fields being entered in a wrong class, because
“ each ryot, knowing the produce of his own and his
“ neighbours’

“ neighbours’ lands, took care to see, where their qualities were equal, that his own were not placed in a higher class by the assessors; but he was not so anxious about the rate at which the class was assessed, as he considered that, whatever it was, it would be as favourable to him as to others. Where some classes were rated too high or too low, it was usually owing to the potail and curnum of the village contriving to make the assessor underrate the class which contained most of their own land, and overrate some other one, composed principally of the land of the inferior ryots. But as the collector’s cutchery always inquired minutely into the assessment of the lands of the leading men in each village, and as the whole district was present at the discussion, and every man ready to prevent another from obtaining an advantage in which he did not himself share, no fraudulent assessment of any consequence could possibly be concealed.

“ The classification and assessment of the land having undergone three several investigations, by the assessor, head assessor, and collector’s cutchery, and all objections having been heard, and admitted when well founded, nothing remained but to ascertain and register the rent of every field. This was an easy operation; for as each class of land had been already rated according to its quality, it only remained to calculate the number of acres in the field by two, three, or four fanams, as the rate of the class might happen to be to which it belonged. As this was a mere arithmetical process, it was performed by persons hired for the purpose, who were paid at the rate of one and a half cantaray fanams for a hundred fields. They were superintended by two gomastahs from the cutchery: and when they had made
“ out .

“ out two copies of the register of fields, one for the collector and the other for the tehsildar, the survey of the district was closed for the time. It still, however, remained to ascertain by experiment, whether the assessment might not be too high in some cases. In the course of collecting the first year's survey rent, a list was made of such fields as were asserted by the cultivators to be overrated. Their rent was, at the end of the year, again examined, in the presence of the principal inhabitants, and either lowered, or confirmed, as circumstances appeared to require. This was the last operation of the survey; and it usually occasioned a reduction of from one-half to one and a half per cent. on the assessment. The equivalent might easily have been made up from lands which had been underrated, for the assessment was as often below as above the proper point; but it was thought better, in this case, to make no alterations, lest it should weaken the confidence with which it was wished to impress the inhabitants in the permanency of the survey rent. The final correction, abovementioned, has been made in all the districts which were settled by the survey rent in 1215; but in those districts where the survey rent was not established till 1216, and in those where it will not be introduced till 1217, the correction cannot be effected until 1217 in the one case, or till 1218 in the other. It will occasion a decrease of about ten thousand pagodas in the total assessment of the land inserted in the statement. The mode of measuring and assessing the land has been explained at so much length, that it can hardly be necessary to say more upon the subject; but should any further information be required, it will be more easily gathered from the accompanying copies
“(Nos.

“(Nos. 1. 2. 3. 4.) of instructions to surveyors and assessors, than from any description whatever.”

What remains of these interesting documents will be seen in the Appendix, being much too long for insertion here, yet much too valuable to be entirely omitted.

The above is the outline of the plan, by which the ryotwar assessment, or settlement of the *Ceded Districts* of the presidency of Fort St. George, was effected by Colonel Sir Thomas Munro. I think the document so valuable, that, however reluctant to make long extracts, I could not omit any part of it. The instructions to the inferior agents will be found in the Appendix.

It will be seen, that the data assumed for fixing the total amount of assessment, in any given district, or division, or purgunnah, as it is called in Bengal, were the collections under the native governments, under the Company's government from its commencement, the estimates of the assessors and of intelligent natives, and a comparison of the whole, attending to present cultivation; so that the duty of the assessors was chiefly the allotment of the total revenue of each village on the different fields, verifying, it must be observed, however, former assessments in the most satisfactory manner, by shewing the quantity of land cultivated and the rent paid.

In concluding this extract, it is pleasing to mark the result of the labours of this invaluable officer, and to see that his services were appreciated, and ultimately rewarded. Mr. Petrie, a member of the Madras government at the time, gives a summary view of the result of what had been effected. “He reviewed the services of Colonel Munro
“ in

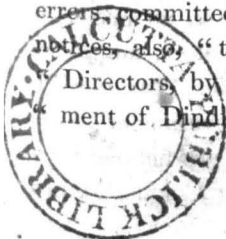
“ in the Ceded Districts, where he had raised the revenue from twelve and a half to eighteen lacs of star pagodas per annum, and the manners and habits of the people in amelioration and improvement had kept pace with the increase of the revenue. From disunited hordes of lawless plunderers and freebooters, they are now as far advanced in civilization and in submission to the laws, as any subjects under this government. The revenues are collected with facility, every one seems satisfied with his situation, and the regret of the people was universal on the departure of Colonel Manro.”

And again : “ The example, we believe, is unparalleled in the revenue annals of this presidency, of so extensive a tract of country, with a body of inhabitants little accustomed to submit to the ruling authority, reduced from confusion to order, and (in eight years) a mass of revenue, amounting to no less than 1,19,90,419 star pagodas, being regularly, and at length readily collected, with a remission on the whole of only 3,415 pagodas, being one fanam and twenty-two cash per cent.”*

In opposition to this, what weight can we give to all the arguments of the Bengal government without trial of the measure ?

The General Letter of the Bengal government, to which I have been adverting, farther admits, that there were errors committed in the settlement of Bengal ; and it notices, also, “ the warning given to them by the Court of Directors, by holding up to them the permanent settlement of Dindigul, which failed entirely, and compelled “ the

Madras General Letter,



“ the government of Madras to have recourse to village
“ leases.”

To the former (the admitted errors of the Bengal settlement) they oppose the regularity, propriety, and care of individual interests, with which the preparatory settlement of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces was made; and to the latter, the success with which the revenue was realized, even to a balance in some districts as low as nine anas and five pice per cent. The jummas thus realized were, by Regulation X of 1807, to become the permanent assessment. “ Thus,” they conclude, “ there can be little
“ error and no danger of a failure,”

But the measure of a permanent settlement, applied to the Indian possessions at all, is, in my estimation, essentially erroneous; and no regularity, propriety, or care of individual interests, can purge it of error. That the revenue, if fixed at a low rate, might doubtless be realized; in spite of great error, impropriety, or disregard of private or public interests, is sufficiently proved by the permanent settlement of Bengal: at least until the inherent tendency in a permanent settlement to diminish the government revenue, as above noticed, shall have operated sufficiently; and then will end the realization of the revenue.

The second point at issue in this letter is the Court's observation, “ that the hopes entertained, at the period
“ of the permanent settlement in Bengal, of raising a
“ revenue there from other sources, have failed.” The reply to this is: “ It is impossible to say to what extent
“ such hopes went; but, if you compare the produce of
“ the different branches of revenue stated in the margin,
“ (viz.

“ (*viz.* salt, opium, spirituous liquors, customs, stamps)
 “ you will find great increase.”

Now this does not appear to me to be any answer to the observation of the Court. All these branches of revenue (except, indeed, the stamps, which netted in 1811 about four lacs), were in existence before the permanent settlement. The hopes held out at the permanent settlement, here alluded to by the Court, must evidently refer to sources *other* than those then existing: to new sources. We do not talk of “raising a revenue” from sources in being, but of augmenting, improving, or increasing it; and it would not have been matter of *hope*, but of certainty, that as the government became more regular, as our experience increased, and good management prevailed, and moreover as conquest extended, the sources of revenue then existing would become more productive, would improve, its amount increase, even without any reference to the talismanic operation of the permanent settlement. Good management, wonderful increase of territory, great increase of trade, both among the European and native population, are fully sufficient to account for the increase in the branches of revenue alluded to; and would be so, indeed, were the increase much greater than it really is.

The letter says, “the population will keep pace with the
 “ increasing improvement of the country; consequently,
 “ a greater demand for salt, opium, spirits and drugs,
 “ customs and stamp duties, will increase: but so far
 “ from realizing the hope of profiting by any new source
 “ of revenue,” the letter under review goes on to state,
 “ But we confess that we rely more on the improvement
 “ of the present resources than on imposing new taxes,
 “ which is attended with great, and, in the present state

“of the country, insuperable difficulties.” This alludes, doubtless, to the house-tax; which occasioned considerable riots throughout the country, as well in Bengal, Behar, and Benares, as elsewhere, and was ultimately abolished.

It must be confessed, that in all this there is not much encouragement given to the Honourable Court to sanction the permanent limitation of the land-revenue; the principal and constitutional resource of the state. The stamp-duties were then a mere trifle; they were instituted in lieu of fees on law proceedings, and might perhaps be well laid out in ameliorating the administration of justice. The customs as yet are not great. In 1810-11 they did not realize above twenty-seven lacs of rupees.*

The salt monopoly is productive. In 1810 the amount of sales exceeded the amount of charges by Current Rupees 1,31,00,000, as appears in the accounts for that year laid before parliament.† Mr. Hastings is entitled to the chief merit of the formation of this source of revenue while yet in its infancy. In 1785, the sales are stated by him to amount to Sicca Rupees 53,00,000; and so rapid was the progress of its advancement, that the sum realized for that year exceeded that estimated by no less than 23,00,000: and all this without the influence of a permanent settlement. Mr. Colebrooke states the average quantity of salt sold for five years, ending with 1793, at thirty-five lacs of maunds; but

* In 1819-20 the customs and town duties in the lower and upper provinces amounted to	Sicca Rupees	65,42,953
Charges		8,97,705
Nett.		56,45,148

See printed statement, June 1822.

† In 1819-20, the amount of sales exceeded the charges, Sicca Rupees 1,11,82,222.—*Ibid.*

but he calculates the quantity consumed in Bengal and Behar alone at forty lacs of maunds, exclusive of Benares.*

The opium monopoly has been also productive. In 1810 the amount of sales exceeded that of the charges by about eighty-three lacs of current rupees, and exceeded the estimated amount, for the same year, about twenty-four lacs.† This rapid increase, I apprehend, would rather exceed the power of the permanent settlement, great as it may be. But I may remark in this place, that giving that settlement the most unlimited credit for “increasing the population of the country,” and by consequence, as the letter states, “the consumption of opium and drugs,” yet that children born of parents united since 22d March 1793, the date of the permanent settlement of Bengal, on the strength of the celebrated proclamation of that date, could not, in 1813, have been great consumers of *opium* or of drugs!

But in 1785 Mr. Hastings states the sale of opium to amount to about seventeen lacs. In 1799, six years after the permanent settlement, it fell to about eight lacs; and, on an average of four years ending with 1811, under different management, it netted about sixty lacs.‡ In fourteen years, from 1785 to 1799, it fell eight lacs. In about the same space of time since that period it has risen nearly eighty. And is all this fluctuation the effects of the permanent settlement? If so, it is but a very changeable consequence of so permanent a cause.

The letter in question goes on farther to state, that
o 2 “ although

* Husbandry of Bengal.

† In 1819-20, the excess in the amount of sales was Sicca Rupees 60,40,648.

—See printed statement, June 1822.

‡ Fifth Report.

“although the zumeendars in Bengal have derived very considerable advantages from the improvement of their estates, government has suffered no loss whatsoever:” and “for this plain reason; because, without such settlement (permanent settlement), such improvements, generally speaking, would not have taken place.”

But, I ask, is it no loss, after twenty years of the greatest exertion, the greatest and most strenuous efforts to administer the government of the country, and to preserve its tranquillity, at enormous expense, that no part of this enormous expense has been, or can be reimbursed; and that, after twenty years of this, we shall be content to receive a no greater, but rather a less return than at the commencement? Does such exertion, toil, and improvement in every other branch of administration, require no return? and is it “no loss,” that no advantage can be derived from the “considerable advantages of the zumeendars,” to those who have been the means of securing to them those considerable advantages?

Suppose no farther conquest had been effected, beyond the three provinces permanently assessed, that the revenue could not have been increased from the land, and that no new sources were available, as the government now admit, what would have been the situation of the Company’s affairs in Bengal at this moment? Here the effects of a permanent limitation of the revenue will shew themselves.

They continue: “You speak of a sacrifice in Bengal. Let us enquire what can be justly called a sacrifice? In fixing assessments, the usual process is to deduct from the gross resources about five per cent. on account of charges.”

“ charges of collection, to set apart ten per cent. for the support of the zumeendar and his family, and to consider *the remainder* as the public assessment: that is, to take the largest possible share for the state. Can any country be expected to improve under this, unless it be counteracted by an assured prospect to the land-holders of future advantages from the gradual improvement of their lands?”

This mode of making a settlement I do not clearly understand. How are the “gross resources” ascertained? Is there no enquiry into them? It is impossible that this is, or can be, the way of making a settlement. But passing over the mode of making settlements described, let us fairly examine this plausible passage. First, “the improvement of estates.” From this an English gentleman would be led to suppose, that the great landed proprietors of India laid out immense capital on the improvement of their estates. Perhaps in facilitating irrigation in the higher lands, in embanking and in draining the lower, in enclosing and manuring their fields? No such thing is known among them! Mr. Colebrooke himself, who published his *Husbandry* in 1804, shall answer for them. He says, “Reservoirs, ponds, water-courses, and dikes, are more generally in a progress of decay than of improvement.” Indeed, “that there is no capital in Bengal employed in improving agriculture.” It is quite evident that there is no such thing as improving estates; except, indeed, by the simple operation of extended cultivation, the necessary consequence of increased population, which has its origin in nature itself, and not in the permanent settlement. If, then, the zumeendars have done nothing to improve their estates, which is really the fact, and they have nevertheless derived

very considerable advantages, these advantages must be derived at the expense of government, and to which the zumeendar has no apparent right, being himself in no way instrumental in their production.

The reason assigned, which induces the engaging zumeendar to agree to give "so high and oppressive" rates, namely, "the assured prospect of future advantages from the gradual improvement of their lands," I consider as altogether fanciful. First, when we know that the assessment is fixed on the cultivated land only, and that, in Bengal and Behar, the average jumma does not exceed four to six anas (about six to nine-pence sterling) per beegah, and that nine to twelve maunds even of rice (unhusked) are not more than the usual produce of a beegah, which will yield from seven to eight maunds of clean rice, worth from eight to nine rupees (sixteen to eighteen shillings), at the very lowest price; thus (allowing one-third for the expense of cultivation) affording the cultivator a profit of twelve shillings on what cost him nine-pence: knowing this, we are not to give the zumeendar much credit for looking only to futurity to reimburse him.

Secondly, where, it may be asked, are the funds, the capital of the zumeendar, to bear his immediate losses, or to support him under such "heavy exactions?" And lastly, under such supposition, where is the capital to arise from, that shall enable him to improve his lands?

The truth is, the "heavy exactions" here mentioned are altogether fanciful: they have no existence. It may not be amiss to give here the result of the opinion of an able and industrious writer on the resources of Bengal, who

who wrote nearly forty years ago (Mr. Grant), notwithstanding the opinions which have been maintained against him. Let us see what the following table of Mr. Grant, shewing the resources of the now permanently settled territory of the Company in Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, proves with respect to "heavy exactions."

ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT of the NETT ANNUAL REVENUE, Mehal and Sayer, of the several British Provinces in Hindoostan, Dimensions 180,000 British Square Miles, as rated at different Periods, from the Original Assessment of Turrul Mull, A. D. 1582, to the present time, ending in 1784, by Mr. Grant. (Fifth Report).

PROVINCES.	Ausil Jumma Toomary, or original Rent Roll of Turrul Mull, established A. D. 1582.	Akber Jumma Toomary, or improved Crown Rent, to the death of Moomunud Shah, A. D. 1747.	Gross and Nett Revenue as found established in 1765, the period of Territorial Acquisition to the Company.			Gross and Nett Revenue actually realized to the Company in 1764, after sixteen years Financial Administration.			Total Nett Revenue estimated as collected by the zemendars, and due to the sovereign, after deducting twenty per cent. for charges.
			Gross Rent.	Charges of Management as then established.	Nett Revenue.	Gross Rent.	Charges paid from the Treasury, besides Se-bundy, &c.	Nett Rent.	
BENGAL.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.
Dewanny lands.....	1,06,93,152	1,08,65,285	2,29,21,097	3,35,822	2,25,85,275	1,37,20,683	47,75,284	89,45,399	3,09,00,000
Ceded lands		27,05,826	41,17,105	65,454	40,51,651	62,86,955	11,93,064	50,93,891	55,00,000
Salt lands		5,45,000	22,05,000	deducted.	22,05,000	54,50,000	19,50,000	35,00,000	39,00,000
Total of the Soubah	1,06,93,152	1,41,16,111	2,92,43,202	4,01,276	2,88,41,926	2,54,57,638	79,18,348	1,75,39,290	4,03,00,000
Behar, the Soubah ...	55,47,984	95,56,098	84,35,856	10,72,030	73,63,826	53,33,492	9,50,745	43,82,747	76,00,000
Orissa, Midnapore ...	9,09,934	11,43,878	14,33,657	2,75,010	11,58,647	8,73,355	2,10,000	6,63,355	14,00,000
Allahabad, Benares ...	14,07,475	25,36,837	71,26,114	22,23,373	49,02,741	51,07,955	11,07,955	40,00,000	50,00,000
Total Bengal Provinces	1,85,58,545	2,73,52,924	4,62,38,829	39,71,689	4,22,67,140	3,67,72,440	1,01,87,048	2,65,85,392	5,43,00,000
Hyderabad, the Five } Northern circars }	39,45,348	52,07,700	78,93,243	19,68,000	59,25,243	74,62,468	25,68,000	48,94,468	83,00,000
Total British Territory	2,25,03,893	3,25,60,624	5,91,32,072	59,39,689	4,81,92,383	4,42,34,908	1,27,55,048	3,14,79,860	6,26,00,000

Defalcation from what the Nett Revenues were in 1765,Rupees 1,67,12,523.

Defalcation from what they are or ought to be in 1781,Rupees 3,11,20,140.

Here then, instead of "heavy exactions," Mr. Grant, from original documents which he translated and laid before government, and on the authenticity of which he pledges his character, estimates the revenue of the Company's lower Bengal provinces, including Benares, deducting twenty per cent. for collection, at about five crores and a half of rupees. It is now, including Benares, which is forty-two lacs, about three crores. In 1813 it was Rupees 3,15,33,947 : it was in 1765, when transferred to the Company, Rs. 4,62,00,000. In 1784, after twenty years management, it fell off to Rs. 3,67,00,000, exclusive of the salt and opium revenue, shewing a defalcation of a crore of rupees; and since 1784 there appears a farther defalcation of sixty-seven lacs, exclusive of the expense of collection, which amounted, in 1811, to twenty-four lacs, including pensions and charitable allowances.

Colonel Sir T. Munro, in his report of the 15th August 1807, proposing a plan for settling the Ceded Districts on the coast, says, "if by fixing the government rent at one-third of the gross produce of the land the ryot were allowed to enjoy the remainder, and all such future increase as might arise from his industry, he would never quit his farm. If more than one-third is demanded as government rent, there can be no private landed property. It is also found by experience, that one-third of the produce is the rate of assessment at which persons who are not themselves cultivators can rent (hire) land from government without loss. The present assessment of these districts is about forty-five per cent. of the produce. To bring it to the proposed level would require a deduction of twenty-five per cent. of the produce. Thus,

" Total

" Total gross produce of lands	100
" Government's share by present assessment....	45
" Deduct twenty-five per cent. of produce or " of the assessment per cent.....	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
" Remains Government's share of produce per " cent.	33 $\frac{3}{4}$ "*

If, therefore, Sir T. Munro actually collected forty-five per cent. of the gross produce of the soil from the Ceded Districts, as above, it is absurd to talk of "heavy exactions" in Bengal, when the whole land revenue under that presidency was in 1813 only Rupees 5,94,54,352: little more, perhaps, than one rupee per annum for each individual of the population. If you take this as a basis to get at the gross produce, and add to it the two-thirds, or two rupees for the ryot's share, you will have a gross produce equal only to the value of three rupees per annum, for the subsistence for a year of each individual, exclusive of cattle. But not even in Bengal can man be supported at three rupees per annum of land produce. Twelve rupees even is too low an estimate; but at twelve rupees the gross produce would be quadrupled, and by consequence ought to give to government, at one-third assessment, four times the present land revenue, or Rupees 23,78,17,408. Mr. Colebrooke reckons the annual consumption of grain for man at nine maunds a head, besides cattle:† and Colonel Sir T. Munro, in his statistical account of the Ceded Districts, states the average expense of subsistence of one-fourth of the population at forty shillings; of one-half or two-fourths, at twenty-seven shillings; of one-quarter, at eighteen shillings; general average, twenty-eight shillings, which is equal to about fourteen rupees. But let it

not

* Fifth Report. † Husbandry.

not be forgot that one-third of the produce of the soil is the antient rate of assessment. "Of dry crops," says the Ayeen Akbary, "*one-third* of the produce was levied; but for "green crops, *ready-money*, at fixed rates, was levied." And it is remarkable, that in every essential point that able officer, of whom I have just spoken, appears to have conformed to the antient practice of the country, exercising of course, in so doing, the discretion of a man of research, experience, and sound judgment.

Moreover, as before stated, we find that in England one-third of the produce is reckoned ample to defray the expense of cultivation. If so in England, surely in India the same allowance must be equally ample. Out of this third share the cultivator and his family are of course maintained. There is a surplus of two-thirds, to be divided as rent and government dues.

In 1811 the "rental of land in England and Wales" was £29,476,852 sterling, the population 10,150,15: "nearly £3, or 30 rupees, a head. The number in a "square mile 175, of which 36 were agricultural."

Now, if there were fifty-nine millions of people under the Bengal Government, and each consumed nine maunds of grain per annum, the produce would be five hundred and thirty-one millions of maunds, worth as many rupees. The government revenue, at one-third of the produce, would be in rupees, 1,77,000,000, instead of 59,454,352, as above: exactly three times as much as it is now. None of these facts and data shew "extreme exaction."

Under the third head is considered the remarks of the Court of Directors as to the "necessity of attending, not
"only

“ only to the principles of political economy ; but to the character and manners, the habits and prejudices, of the natives.” The answer is : “ We have invariably attended to the manners, prejudices, &c. of the people ; but we cannot see how a permanent settlement can be contrary to their prejudices.”

No government on earth, most certainly, ever more anxiously wished to attend to the feelings and habits of the people than our Indian government, both at home and abroad, has invariably done. But their great anxiety to do the people good led to the greatest of errors ; and so far from the permanent settlement, as carried into effect, being conformable to the constitution of society in India, its effects have not only opposed the manners, habits, and prejudices of the natives, but have produced a total revolution in the frame of society, both political and social.

In Bengal, where shall we look for the constitution of an Indian village ? The “ brotherhood ” all independant of, but all interested about one another ; giving and receiving mutual aid, mutual kindnesses, sympathizing with, and receiving consolations from, one another. Confident and secure in their possession, on the simplest of all tenures, the easiest, perhaps, of all terms, a definite and moderate share of their labour, as a return to the state for protection. If sickness overtook one, he relied on the help of his brother : if death left a widow or an orphan, in every house had the fatherless a father, the widow a protector. The accumulated bones of generations were mingled in the same cemetery, or consumed at the same funeral pile : and the pious peasant fancied that the pure spirit of his father yet hovered around his peaceful abode.

How

How different the picture now to be seen in the lower provinces of Bengal ! The abject slavery of the cultivating classes could only spring from the necessity of absolute submission ; submission, not to the revered representative of an antient family, but to the upstart of the hour : the Bengal Baboo, the new malik, the absolute lord of the soil, who has no feelings in common with the people, whom he fancied he had purchased with his estate ; whose knowledge of the regulations told him he could, not only without violation, but with all due conformity to the words (not indeed to the intent) of them, destroy the happiness of his slave for ever, by banishing him from the village of his birth, the companions of his youth, the associates of his manhood, the support of his old age. Those ephemeral lords of English creation were not, indeed, vested with the power of life and death, not with the power of tormenting the body, but the happiness of the people was placed entirely at their mercy, and their minds were subdued. Instead of the manly spirit of former times, which a very small portion of independence will nourish, the native of Bengal knows now that even the privilege of residing in his native village he owes to his subjection alone.

May it then not be asked, whether such a state of things as this has been produced by “attending to the character, “manners, habits, and prejudices of the people of India ?

We are further told, that to the efforts made for the better administration of justice, and to the limitation established in regard to the demand of government on the lands is attributable a change in the character of the Bengalese ; from being, like the inhabitants of the upper provinces, owing to the vices of former government, more refractory

refractory subjects, they have found it more advantageous to cultivate the arts of peace.

From this we should be led to understand that it was owing to the vices of former governments that the people were refractory, but that they become quiet well-disposed people, not owing to the virtues of their present rulers, not to being relieved from the cause of their turbulence, but, forsooth, "to the better administration of justice and to "the limitation of the government demands on the lands."

But is there really such limitation? This limitation, whatever limits government may have set to the government demand, has no existence in regard to the people! The "demand on the lands," *quoad* the people, has no "limitation," but that which the rapacity of the proprietor may set to it. The demand of government from the zumeendar is indeed fixed; not so the demand of the zumeendar from the ryot; except, indeed, by the laws and regulations, which, on this point, have been accused of the very great absurdity of first granting absolute property in the soil, and then restricting the grantee in the management of his property: and this not by any specific rules, but by the general term of *the custom*. He is to levy his rents "according to the custom to the pergunnah rates;" which custom being different in every different place, was necessarily left for the owner to dictate. The *dictum*, therefore, of the zumeendar is the *custom*. The contrary cannot be established against him, were the poor man, as I have before noticed, with barely enough to exist upon, able to carry his opulent oppressor into court, to attempt so hopeless a cause.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, which is now seen and

admitted by every one, are we told in the letter under consideration, "that whatever be the character of the
 " people in the upper provinces, the universal principle
 " of self-interest must render the permanent settlement
 " more satisfactory to them than temporary assessment."

" More satisfactory " to whom ? Let us examine this, and we shall see that the "universal principle of self-interest" cannot apply to the "*people*;" were it even applicable to the comparatively few who might be parties to the permanent settlement. The *people* in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces may be estimated at twenty-three millions; nearly twenty millions of whom would have no "self-interest" in the question, because they are neither zumeendars nor "engaging cultivators:" nearly three millions more would be *interested in opposing* it. I mean the cultivating ryots, whom I estimate at 2,978,383, on the datum of allowing an average of twelve beegahs for each cultivator (the known number of beegahs in cultivation, by the report of the Board of Commissioners, being 35,740,598 beegahs), and 45,000 persons might peradventure be the number to whom "the universal principle of self-interest" in favour of the permanent settlement might be made to apply; that number being "the number of village zumeendars under engagements to government" throughout the Conquered and Ceded Provinces, as stated by the same unquestionable authority. Forty-five thousand persons, then, out of twenty-three millions, might thus possibly be supposed friendly to the permanent settlement, "from the universal principle of self-interest"; three millions would oppose it, "from the same universal principle of self-interest;" and twenty millions of "*people*" would either not care about it, or if they did, they would oppose it from the "universal principle" of dislike to all innovation,

tion, which prevails among the people of the upper provinces and of all India.

We now come to the fourth head, " Loss of revenue from the depreciation of the precious metals : " an argument of the Court of Directors against the permanent settlement.

Whatever the Bengal government may say, this is unquestionably an admissible argument against the permanent settlement ; but, before I notice the reply given to the objection of the Court, the following remarks occur to me on the point. The extraordinary waste of the precious metals in India by their universal use, not only in coin and in plate, but in cloth and in personal ornaments, reduces them more nearly to a level with the ordinary perishable articles of commerce, in India than in Europe. There is scarcely a living creature of the human species, on the whole continent of India, from the moment of its birth, that does not contribute directly to the destruction of the precious metals. A hundred millions of people may be aiding in this consumption ; and if we allow them to possess ornaments to the average value of a rupee each, the actual wastage of the metals, even by wear, will be immense. The constant conversion of their ornaments, by melting them down and making them up into other kinds or fashions (a propensity well known, and which may be established by adverting to the extraordinary number of silver and goldsmiths to be found all over the country, whose livelihood depends on this alone), adds amazingly to this source of waste. There is also the wear and tear of an immense metallic currency, the loss of money by secreting it and otherwise. When all these sources of consumption are considered, the increase of the precious metals must, I think, be very slow ; but nevertheless

nevertheless, however slow, if progressive, as an argument against the permanent settlement it is good; and those who, overlooking these sources of destruction of gold and silver, attend only to the rate of depreciation of these metals in our own country, will hold this argument as invincible against the permanent limitation of the revenue, in currency of the present or of any definite value.

The following prices of the most common necessities of life and rates of labour are taken from the Ayeen Akburee, and will afford some ground for conjecture on this subject. If it should appear that the quantity of those articles *then* procurable for a given quantity of the precious metals was nearly what is now to be procured, the apprehensions of the Honourable Court would be relieved.

Former Price			Present Calcutta Weight.		
	Md. Seer.			Md. Seer.	
Wheat	3	13	per rupee ...	2	0
Barley	5	0	per do.	3	2
Dal	2	10	per do.	1	16
Atta Flour	1	36	per do.	1	0
Ghee	0	16	per do.	0	10
Milk	1	24	per do.	0	36
Sugar-candy	0	7½	per do.	0	6
Chenee or Raw Sugar	}	Rs. A. P. 1 6 0	per maund...	Rs. A. P. 2 6 6	} per Calcutta maund.
Salt			per do.		
Dry Ginger	0	1 10	per seer	0	2 9
Huldee	0	0 9	per do.	0	1 1
Round Pepper ...	0	6½ 0	per do.	0	10 0
Mangoes, per 100.	1	0 0			
Sheep, each	1	8 0			
Geese, each	0	8 0			
Ducks, each	1	0 0			
Mutton	1	10 0	per md. ...	2	8 0

indeed tempted moneyed men to send specie to India to be put to interest; but the loss in remitting both interest and capital, and the limited extent of such speculations, will by no means preserve the equilibrium.

It appears by various statements, that from the year 1700 to 1793, the amount in value of bullion remitted by the Company alone to India, including, as I calculate, ten or eleven millions to China, was ... £42,680,859 and we are told by Mr. R. Grant, that the Americans, in ten years, from 1795 to 1805, "imported into " India in bullion," no less than 26,720,470

Making together £69,401,329

It does not appear whether Mr. Grant includes in his account the bullion carried to China by the Americans: but at all events, we have to take into the account the bullion and specie brought by the other European states, and that imported by the Company since 1793, and by the Americans since 1805, which at present I have no means of ascertaining: and then, after making the most ample allowance for the share which China has received, the importation into India Proper will remain enormous, and impress us with an idea of the extraordinary consumption of the precious metals, that has swallowed up so much without making the slightest impression on the value of the currency, which is still higher by twenty-five per cent. than in England, and, as I have shewn, has undergone but little change, in point of value, since the days of Akbar, compared, I mean, with the rates of wages, prices of grain, &c.

The,

The reply given in the letter now under consideration is: "the specie may have increased, but the population and consumable commodities have increased also, and the proportions may be still equal." It does not appear to me that this bears upon the question. Besides, the precious metals are not the only currency in India. Copper, tin, lead, even shells, the first and last in great abundance. In several districts the government rents are paid in shells alone.

"But," continue the advocates of the permanent settlement, "the effects of the deterioration of value of the precious metals might be obviated, as proposed by Mr. Colebrooke, by changing the engagements from specie into the market value of a specific quantity of corn, to rise and fall accordingly; but this is objectionable," they add, "because of the difficulty of adjusting the value."

But a settlement "for the market value of a specific quantity of corn" is, essentially, neither more nor less than fixing by limitation the government share of the crop. A zumeendarry, for example, is let for one thousand maunds of corn, or its market value in specie; or rather for the market value in specie of one thousand maunds of corn. Unless some standard has been previously fixed for ascertaining the market value, as the payer and receiver would unquestionably differ, the corn itself would become the demandable article, and thus the settlement would be virtually that which I have stated.

In India, however, when a settlement of this kind is made, agreeably to the native system, no difficulty is experienced. It is common to make such settlements;

and when they are made, the conversion into money is settled, not annually, but periodically, or rather at the will of the lessor, with reference, of necessity, to the capability of his ryots, and the produce of the soil. A field (zumeendarry, if you please) is let for so many maunds of wheat: the price (if converted into cash) at so much per maund. This rate continues, perhaps, for half a century; but if the price of grain should rise (that is, if the *difference* between a given weight of grain and a given weight of precious metal should decrease, to the depreciation of the latter) the landlord requires more metal per beegah for his land to restore the original difference, and says the conversion must now be made at one rupee four anas per maund, instead of one rupee as before. There is no *difficulty* in this; but it would not obviate the objections to a permanent settlement.

It is, thereafter, attempted to combat the suggestions of the Honourable Court of Directors, "to establish a variable land-tax, that shall enable government to participate in the growing resources of the country, as by revising the settlement at given periods, or on the accession of every new proprietor."

It must be confessed, that the pretensions of the Honourable Court "to participate in the growing resources of the country," are not very unreasonable; yet they are told, with little ceremony, in the letter to which I advert, that both the plans suggested "have unsurmountable difficulties."

Let us see the difficulties. First, it is said, in the precise language of 1790: "It would be to the advantage of the proprietors to deteriorate their estates during the latter

“latter years of the assessment, in order to get them valued low at the succeeding settlement.” But this appears to me an assumption altogether gratuitous, and not very liberal. It, in fact, implies not only universal fraud on the part of the zumeendars, but relentless oppression on the part of government. But admitting, for the sake of illustration, the truth of the assumption, may it not be asked how the zumeendars are to effect this deterioration of their estates? They cannot legally remove the cultivators. The land in India requires, at least receives, with little exception, no manure, that by withholding it the crops should fail. The land is annually under some crop; and are the *people* to cut the throats of their cattle, to cease from cultivating their fields, and to starve, “during the latter years of the assessment,” that the *zumeendars* may procure “a low valuation at the succeeding settlement?” Are the zumeendars to give up the *certainty* of their rents “for the latter years” of their leases, for the *chance* of being required to pay a *little advance* (though but a fair value) for their estates, for the next lease, which they may not live to enjoy? This is neither probable, nor is it conformable to the genius of the people, were it practicable, and the success certain, to act with so much regard to futurity.

In a subsequent paragraph, the district of Goruckpore is given as an example of this deterioration of estates. There was, in 1813, a balance “in the latter years of the assessment of 6,02,869 rupees; owing chiefly to the landholders, who are most part village zumeendars, throwing their lands out of cultivation to obtain a light assessment.” But was the collector of Goruckpore at this time mindful of his duty, and a competent person? for in 1815 (but two years afterwards) we find that the

Governor-General states the balance due by this district at only upwards of "two lacs;" and this is considered great, "owing to the incomplete state of the new settlement.*"

To the next proposition, of revising the settlement on the accession of every new proprietor, "the unsurmountable difficulty" is *joint tenancy*. "It would be unfair," they say, "to revise the settlement at the death of one of the tenants; and this would hold *ad infinitum*." But we may ask, why unfair? The revisal might occur more frequently, but there would be nothing unfair in it; and a revisal does not necessarily imply an additional impost. Or if this were objectionable, why not make the revisal to take place on the demise of the last of every *series* of co-partners, and then the argument is reversed? It would fall to be made at longer intervals, and would be advantageous, instead of being unfair to such estates.

"But," it is added, "exclusively of this, estates would be of little value when exposed to sale for arrears of rent, if the jumma were to remain fixed only during the life of the former proprietor." But why *former proprietor*? It is the incumbent proprietor's demise that is supposed to give occasion to revisal of the settlement; and the "incumbent proprietor," at a government sale for arrears, would be the purchaser.

"It is," they continue, "the *permanency of the settlement alone*, that renders the lands substantial security for the public demand." Now this is plainly an error, and an error but too well calculated to mislead. It is not

* Governor-General's Revenue Minute, 21 Sept. 1815.

the *permanency* of the settlement, but the actual value of the property, the difference between the jumma, or government demand, and the receipts from the ryots, that makes an "estate valuable when exposed to sale for "arrears of rent;" and which alone affords any security whatever to government. It is only when the thing *fixed* is good, is valuable, that *permanency* of possession is advantageous. It is no advantage to be saddled for ever with a valueless commodity of any kind! Government can have no security for their revenue, but that which a moderate assessment gives them, leaving those who are assessed, and those who cultivate, a valuable consideration for the parts they take, the labour they bestow, in realizing the dues of the state. Who would give any thing for a rack-rented estate, however permanent the tenure might be?

The fact is as clear and as obvious as noon day, that, settle the country as you please, there is no security for the revenue but that of the industry of the cultivators of the land whence the revenue is derived: and the more middle-men between them and the government, the less sure the security becomes, because the channels of embezzlement are multiplied.

A zumeendar is a *drone*: an unproductive animal, of the worst kind, too, that must have his drones also about him; all a burden upon the industry of the cultivators. Government employ and pay these drones as agents to collect the revenue, merely to save their European servants the trouble: and, however paradoxical it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that government is, in fact, security for the zumeendars, instead of the zumeendars being security for the government revenue; for if the zumeendar mismanage

mismanage his estate, government must pay the defalcation, that is, suffer the loss.

The Honourable Court suggested, " that a variable settlement induced government to look more to the cultivation of the lands: and doing so, if they dug canals for irrigation and made roads, it would be difficult to deny their right to indemnification for the expense of such." The answer to this is remarkable. " If," say the Bengal government, " a variable land tax cannot be established without discouragement to agriculture, it would be preferable to limit such improvements to works that are indispensable than to check agriculture." This hypothetical reply is, in fact, a postulate of the question at issue; otherwise it, at best, amounts to this: " it is better to make only such improvements as may encourage agriculture, than to make such improvements as will check it." The court maintain, that a variable land tax may be established, and would not check, but improve agriculture. Government assume, that a variable land tax would discourage agriculture; and *therefore*, say they, it is better for your Honourable Court not to persist in your plan of digging canals, and other projected or contemplated improvements.

Another argument in support of the permanent settlement, which is expected, seemingly, to have great weight, is given us. " The great difficulty, it is stated, of administering the government of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, is the refractory spirit of the zumeendars, their resisting government and harbouring robbers. " These zumeendars are bound, under the penalty of confiscation of their estates, not to harbour such; but " if they have no permanent interest in the estate, the
" penalty

"penalty is nugatory." But why *permanent* interest? If the zumeendar had, indeed, *no* interest in his estate, the penalty would truly be nugatory. But whether "permanent" or not, if he had *an* interest, the penalty would not be nugatory. May we *not*, however, be permitted to remark here, how much the premises differ from the conclusion of this paragraph? The zumeendars are stated to be ungovernable, refractory, so independent even as to resist government; *therefore*, we, this government, though resisted by them, recommend that they shall be made still more independent, by confirming them in their estates for ever!

It must be admitted, however, that the penalty of confiscation, above specified, suspended over the heads of refractory and government-resisting zumeendars, is indeed nugatory, and must be, on whatever condition their tenure may be held. But, on the other hand, it is pleasing to think that, at the time I am writing, and in spite of the obstinacy of the Honourable Court, that resisted the irresistible arguments for the permanent settlement, the Ceded and Conquered Provinces are administered with as great ease as the more favoured permanently settled districts of Bengal, and that the zumeendars are as good and peaceable subjects as any in the Honourable Company's dominions. It will be remembered, moreover, as before noticed, that the revenue is realized with little balance; and whether we look at the files of the courts, or the calendar of crimes, the comparison will fall greatly in favour of the subjects of the provinces that are not permanently settled.

The permanent settlement, we are told, would improve the police, in proportion to the stake held by each zumeendar,

dar; "which might be extended to the support of government against external and internal enemies."

God forbid that the government should ever be obliged to trust to such support against enemies of either description. But if such a case of necessity did occur, I doubt not that the zumeendars of the Upper Provinces would prove equally loyal with those of the lower; and, as I believe, that if they have any wish, it is not for a change of governors, but for their own independence of all government, I am persuaded, if they had the means, they would support our government against any other power that should pretend to the privilege of ruling over them in our stead.

Another reason advanced in favour of the permanent settlement in this letter also, *viz.* "that variable settlements keep alive a spirit of intrigue and corruption, both among the native and European servants of government," has been already noticed, in reply to the same stated before by Mr. Colebrooke.

In a subsequent despatch, of date 2d October 1813, we are told by the government of Bengal, "that they do not dispute Colonel Munro's opinions on matters that have come under his own observation at Fort St. George respecting ryotwaree settlements, but do not think them applicable to Bengal;" and they place the opinions of Sir E. Colebrooke, Mr. Rocke, Mr. Lumsden, and Mr. Deane, in opposition to Colonel Munro; adding, "but the great extent of the collectorships, and the paucity of revenue officers, render it absolutely impossible in Bengal."

Now

Now this is nothing more than adding the opinions of the members of government, or the majority of them who wrote the despatch, to those of Sir E. Colebrooke, Mr. Roche, Mr. Lumsden, and Mr. Deane, upon a point and subject of which they, none of them, have had any experience, against the opinion of Colonel Munro and his colleagues on the coast, who have had very great experience of the measure in question; to whom we may add the opinion of Colonel Wilks, who speaks of the permanent settlement of Bengal thus: "With unfeigned deference to the great men who applaud the *permanent* and *unalterable* landed assessment of Bengal, I must still be permitted to doubt the expediency of the irrevocable pledge. It is not intended to discuss whether those provinces (Bengal) have flourished in *consequence* of the present system, or in *spite* of it. I admit, any thing was better than our incessant fluctuation; but there is a wide difference betwixt capricious innovation and such an irrevocable law. To terminate abuses by shutting out improvement, to prohibit the possibility of increasing the land-tax, to render probable, nay certain, its decrease, this is the system which has succeeded to former errors."*

Objections to the ryotwar settlement have been made, "that they require a personal acquaintance with every cultivator and an estimate of produce every year."† The ryotwar settlement is a settlement of every *field* with its proprietor, which may be made every twenty years instead of annually. But why a mode of collecting the revenue that answers well (if the ryotwar do so) at Madras should fail in Bengal; why there should be larger districts, and

* Wilks' Mysore.

† Lord Hastings' Minute, 21st September 1813.

PRESENT SYSTEM.

er revenue officers in Bengal, than at Madras, I see no reason. None of these are substantial objections to the continuance of periodical settlements.

Nor, indeed, after having gone through and now noticed all the reasons for the introduction of the permanent settlement in the Upper Provinces, urged in the minute and despatches to which I have adverted, can I fix upon one that is at all satisfactory, *without first assuming that the permanent settlement is essential to the tranquillity and the prosperity of the country and to the security of the public revenue.* And this is contrary to all experience; for the country is tranquil, the country is highly prosperous, the revenue has increased nearly a crore of rûpees since the permanent settlement of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces was urged upon the Court of Directors by the Bengal government; and it is secured in the best of all possible ways, by the free, unrestrained, and protected industry of the people.

Finally, the permanent settlement, as carried into effect by us in Bengal, I have shewn if not contrary to "the law, of England, is at least contrary to the law and constitution of India." It is contrary to the custom and universal practice of that country; consequently contrary to the manners, habits, and prejudices of the people. It is not, in my humble opinion, calculated in the slightest degree to ameliorate the condition of our native subjects, but, on the contrary, it has proved itself to be highly instrumental in their debasement; and by its necessary tendency to throw and to keep the great mass of the respectable yeomanry of the country at an immeasurable distance from us, it will prove itself to be no less instrumental in perpetuating that debasement, which a closer intercourse, the

the necessary consequence of occasional agricultural and official dealings, would, in God's good time, probably have removed.

The permanent settlement has lost to government, in fact, all knowledge of the country and of its resources. There are revenue officers in Bengal, I doubt not, that cannot even tell you the number of villages in their districts, far less give the slightest information as to the state of cultivation, of population, description of people, their employment, trades, manufactures, stock, as cattle, ploughs, horses, sheep, the improbability, or otherwise, of the country.

The permanent settlement has not tended, in any degree, to accelerate the improvement of the country, either in cultivation or in commerce; but, on the contrary, it must tend to check both, inasmuch as it must take away from government, if not the obligation, certainly the means of making any great or expensive improvements: leaving them no prospect of advantage that would even prove a bare reimbursement for so doing, and throwing such task of amelioration upon the short-sighted and careless India land-holder, who will assuredly neglect it.

The permanent settlement has all these, and innumerable other disadvantages, referable to the people of India and the improvement of the country; whilst, with respect to the interests of the British nation, it must be attended with every *baneful*, and not one beneficial effect. I may conclude this part of the subject by referring the reader for information to the opinion of Lord Teignmouth on the subject, as expressed in his minute of the 8th December 1789.*

Let

* See Fifth Report.

Let us, in conclusion, inquire, with reference to the permanent settlement of the Lower Provinces, admitting it to be held as valued, how far any, and what relief can be granted by government, under that settlement, to the cultivating ryots? The permanent settlement was formed with a condition, reserving to government the power of preserving the *rights* of the cultivators. "The Governor-General in Council will, whenever he may deem it proper, enact such regulations as he may think necessary for the protection and welfare of the dependant talookdars, ryots, and other cultivators of the soil; and no zumeendar, independent talookdar, or other actual proprietor of land, shall be entitled, on this account, to make any objection to the discharge of the fixed assessment which they have agreed to pay."*

This is a very broad clause, and if fully acted upon, government would doubtless be at liberty to introduce any regulations which the government might deem necessary to effect this "protection of the cultivators of the soil." If the zumeendars did not choose to comply with these regulations, their tenures might be of course set aside; for it was on this condition that they were granted and accepted.

The right of the cultivator is possession of his field, at the rate, per beegah, at which it was assessed, at or prior to the permanent settlement. It never was contemplated by the grantor, that the zumeendar should be at liberty either to eject or to raise the rate of rent on the cultivator *ad libitum*. Lord Cornwallis says:—

"Mr. Shore

* Governor-General in Council, 1st May 1793.

“ Mr. Shore observes, that this interference (on the
 “ part of government in effecting an adjustment of
 “ the demands of the zumeendars upon the ryots) is in-
 “ consistent without proprietary right; for it is saying to
 “ him that he shall not raise the rents of his estate, and
 “ that if the land is the zumeendar’s, it will only be par-
 “ tially his property whilst we prescribe the quantum he
 “ is to collect, or the mode of adjustment between the par-
 “ ties. If Mr. Shore means, that after having declared
 “ the zumeendar proprietor of the soil, in order to be
 “ consistent, we have no right to prevent his imposing
 “ new abwabs, or taxes, on the lands in cultivation, I
 “ must differ with him in opinion; unless we suppose the
 “ ryots to be absolute slaves of the zumeendars. Every
 “ beegah of land possessed by them must have been cul-
 “ tivated under an express, or implied agreement, that a
 “ certain sum should be paid for each beegah of produce
 “ and no more. Every abwab, or tax, imposed by the
 “ zumeendar, over and above that sum, is not only a
 “ breach of that agreement, *but a direct violation of the*
 “ *established laws of the country.* I do not hesitate to give
 “ it as my opinion, that the zumeendars, neither now nor
 “ ever, could possess a right to impose new taxes, or ab-
 “ wabs, on the ryots; and that government has an un-
 “ doubted right to abolish any such, and to *establish such*
 “ *regulations as may prevent the practice of like abuse in*
 “ *future.* Neither is the privilege which the ryots in
 “ many parts of Bengal enjoy, of holding possession of
 “ the spots of land they cultivate so long as they pay the
 “ revenue assessed upon them, by any means incompa-
 “ tible with the proprietary right of the zumeendars.
 “ Whoever cultivates the land, the zumeendar *can receive*
 “ *no more than the established rent.* To permit him to
 “ dispossess one cultivator, for the sole purpose of giving
 “ the

“ the land to another, would be vesting him with a power
 “ to commit a wanton act of oppression. Neither is pro-
 “ hibiting the landholder to impose new abwabs, or
 “ taxes, on the lands in cultivation, tantamount to saying
 “ to him that he shall not raise the rents of his estate, &c.
 “ *No zumeendar claims a right to impose* new taxes on the
 “ lands in cultivation, although it is obvious that they
 “ have clandestinely levied such. The rents of an estate
 “ can only be raised by inducing the ryots to cultivate
 “ the more valuable articles of produce, and to clear the
 “ extensive tracts of waste-land which are to be found in
 “ almost every zumeendary in Bengal,”* &c. &c.

The above is a pretty full account of the conditions, relative to the rights of the cultivator, on which the proprietary title of the zumeendars was granted by his lordship: from which the power of government to protect the ryots in their rights is sufficiently evident, at least by law. How different the fact is! What a different situation the poor ryot is now in, from that contemplated for him by the good, the benevolent, but in this case, short-sighted Cornwallis! How far it would be practicable, peremptorily to enforce this right of interference here reserved, is a point worthy of the most serious consideration: but, to my humble comprehension, it does appear that his lordship's ideas of proprietary right, and of restrictions to limit the exercise of such right, are not a little confused.

Be that, however, as it may, it seems abundantly certain, that the Marquess Cornwallis did never intend to convey by the permanent settlement many powers now
 assumed

* See Lord Cornwallis's Minute, 3d Feb. 1790.

assumed by the Bengal zumeendars, highly obnoxious, and no less oppressive to the people; and it does, therefore, seem to be the sacred duty of that government, to inquire into, and to afford the people such relief and protection against such usurped powers, as may be practicable.

The utmost extent of right of a zumeendar, as conferred by Lord Cornwallis, when analyzed, is nothing more than that of collecting the revenue from the ryots, *at the established rates*, on the land then in cultivation. If he reclaim waste land, he may not levy on it even what rates he chooses, though he may let it to whom he pleases. The ryot, by established usage, for example, paid a rent equal to half the produce. If the zumeendar can induce him to cultivate a valuable crop, by aid or otherwise, the zumeendar's right to half gives him thus an additional profit. If he dig tanks or wells, or throw up embankments, and thus assist the cultivators to improve their lands, the returns will be great; the zumeendar's share will increase; the government demand is limited, and does not extend perhaps beyond a tenth or twentieth of the produce; the difference is the right of the zumeendar. But here, again, the zumeendar's profit from increase of, or more valuable kind of produce, is restricted to farms paying in *kind*. Where the rent is a money-rent, the zumeendar has no immediate interest in the nature of the crop. This is all the right which the permanent settlement appears to have conveyed to the zumeendars: beyond this they have absolutely no right whatever. We call this a proprietary right; and so it is, because it is a right proper to the individual, which he may exercise or dispose of; but it is different from that of an English proprietor of land, and ought not to be confounded with it.

The application of the same technical terms to rights, interests, and immunities, which are similar, but not the same, has thrown obscurity over this, and over every subject that has been discussed relative to India.

Should the Bengal government be disposed to adopt measures for extending to the cultivators in the permanently-settled districts, the benefits which that permanent settlement contemplated for them, the means must be immediately adopted. It is late, but not yet too late. These means are, to institute one or more commissions in each of the provinces of Bengal and Behar. These must be composed of men of talent and undoubted qualifications for that duty, in whatever line or branch of the Company's service they may be found; and they must be sought for and obtained immediately, because there is no room for delay: every day that the investigation is put off incurring the loss of oral evidence, and other information, as yet to be obtained from living witnesses. The several commissions will be furnished with instructions and powers to call for and collect evidence of all kinds, to shew what the rates of land-rent in the different pergunnahs, zumeendaries, and villages, were at the period of the settlement which was afterwards declared permanent (that is, between the years 1789 and 1793), and to ascertain in what mode these rates were paid—whether in produce, as reaped; in any given species of produce, as in grain (rice, wheat, barley, the different kinds of pulse, &c.), or in any specific kind of grain, or in money, or in grain convertible into money at a given quantity per rupee; and, in short, every information necessary to exhibit the payments, services, immunities, received and rendered by the cultivators to and from the zumeendars, including pasturage, fisheries, wood and water, fruit-trees,

&c.

&c. Connected with this indispensably will fall to be ascertained the price of the grain and other produce at that time, including even some species of manufactures, as cloth of all kinds, which it is usual for zumeendars to receive in lieu of money, at a valuation agreed upon at the time between the parties: as also the value of cattle, ghee (the produce of the dairy), oil, &c.; for without the general prices of produce, the rents of the zumeendar, paid partly in kind, cannot be estimated.

The sources whence this information is to be attained will be various. In many pergunnahs the putwarees' accounts may be forthcoming; many of the cultivators of the more respectable class, especially the remnants of the hereditary agricultural ryots, will be able to produce their books and other written documents. Old ousted canoon-goes, putwarees, and public functionaries, will be found either able to produce or to procure written evidence, and to give oral testimony as to facts, which will either be sufficient to convince, or to lead to other sources where information may be obtained, to satisfy the commission in doubtful cases. At all events, to the extent of inducing the present owners to produce conflicting testimony, in all cases in which relief to the ryots may be contemplated to an extent unjust or injurious to the owner: by means of which conflicting evidence an approach to the truth may be attained.

There is also the records of the different collectorships, and especially of the old suddur serichtah office and of the old revenue or dewannee department, all of which ought to be examined by the commissions, assisted by an establishment of expert natives conversant with revenue records and accounts to be employed for the purpose.

To guide the commissioners and to correct erroneous evidence, there is the general jumma of the pergunnah, of the zumeendaree, of the village, to which the rents paid by the ryots must necessarily have had some relation. In short, there are yet extant the means of attaining the information here pointed out: and there must necessarily be so, because the period of thirty years is not sufficient to obliterate the sources both of living testimony and documentary evidence, which judicious investigation would be able still to bring to bear upon a point of infinite interest, not only to government, but to the whole body of the people, whose aid in facilitating the investigation would accordingly be at command.

The information required is not of a rare or abstruse nature, known only to the wise and the learned native. The agricultural economy of a village is the constant and daily subject of conversation and of discussion among all. All are engaged in it, either as principals or as assistants; and it would be idle to suppose that so great a change in their condition, as that of unlimited increase of rent exacted by the zumeendar, should so soon be forgotten.

It would be difficult to enumerate the beneficial effects of such an investigation, judiciously and ably conducted. The first object, however, in view, was the relief of the cultivating ryots from the oppression of undue exactions and disproportioned land rents; and this object would unquestionably be attained. As a reasonable consequence, we might expect from the establishment of moderate, even very low rates of rent, a great extension of cultivation; for the cultivation or waste of many a field must in India, as elsewhere, depend on the rate of rent demanded for it. The little theatre of each individual's exertions

exertions would become enlarged, because the rent, now exacted from him for one acre, would then give him two, which he is now able to cultivate, but afraid to engage for: and here the zumeendar would also derive advantage, and the aggregate wealth of the country be augmented.

The general cultivation being thus increased and the rents low, the cultivation of export produce may be immediately extended: an object of the most vital importance both to India and to England; but more important, perhaps, to England than even to India.

It is matter of infinite wonder, that a country like India, producing with less labour than in any other quarter of the world almost every thing in nature and in great abundance, should at this moment be in a state in which it is incapable of exporting a ton of its produce, either raw or manufactured, except the single article of indigo, to any part of the world, with a profit to the exporter; though the cost of conveyance may scarce exceed a shilling, and sometimes not a sixpence, per hundred miles. Even to England, the whole freight does not average more than four shillings and sixpence per hundred weight. At the time I am writing, although the interest of money in Calcutta is lower than in London, even less than three per cent., indicating thereby a superabundance hitherto unknown, no man can invest capital in any kind in India produce, for exportation to any part of the world, to return even a small profit.

Now it is sufficiently obvious, that unless India can be brought to export to England more than she does, she cannot increase her imports from England. It is thus that the manufactures of England are excluded from "one

"hundred millions of customers," as the free-trade parliamentary petitioners of former days humbly set forth, and not so much by the effects of restrictive laws, as is now made manifest to them. I say, therefore, that England is no less interested than India in promoting the agricultural prosperity of her Asiatic dominions; and that to create a market for British manufactures in Asia, the very first step to be taken is to create a surplus exportable produce there to pay for them.

Not a forced exportation, such as took place in the article of cotton a few years ago, which drained India, raised the price there to more than double what it was ever known before, and which has yet not subsided, but a regular, increased, and increasing supply, to meet the augmented and augmenting foreign demand, and to enter the markets of Europe and elsewhere, so as to compete not merely with the produce of other countries, when those countries labour under the extraordinary embarrassments of war or of crooked policy, but in ordinary times, on ordinary occasions, and under their wisest regulations.

To say that India is incapable of this, would be to suppose that the most productive soil in the universe, abounding with a population of free men, fond of agricultural pursuits, is nevertheless incapable of being brought to yield a produce equal to that of those countries which are less luxuriant, thinly-peopled, or depend for their cultivation on careless and compulsory labour. But this cannot be; and we may therefore rest assured of the most extensive capability of India.

But to avail ourselves of this capability, India must not be left, as she has been, almost to nature; for nature deals

not in exports. The local governments of India are deeply responsible to their superiors at home, and to their country, for what they may do or omit in this respect. They have every encouragement which the prevailing taste of their countrymen for improvement can secure to them, and they have both the power and the means, in India, to do what certainly "eye hath not seen," but even what it is not easy to conceive, for the mutual benefit of both countries.

Wise regulations, having for their object the encouragement of the agricultural classes, as well, however, as the security of the capitalist, whether native or European, who may advance his funds, are the very first object. The Indian cultivator is poor; and to extend his cultivation he must borrow, or take "advances," to render his crop at a price fixed on before it is reaped. The regulations of government give the person whose money is advanced no power over the crop: the temptation is therefore so great, and the opportunity so enticing, that were that class of persons not the most virtuous of the people, there would be no possibility of dealing with them at all; and even with all their honesty, it is only in indigo, now, where the chance of high profit is so great, that any capitalist can prudently venture to engage in the cultivation of exportable produce. Sugar, at present, cannot be ventured upon, because the certainty of loss by advances, would do more than balance the gain. But were it practicable, by an equitable law, to diminish the risk in aiding the cultivator, which the capitalist would then gladly incur, I have no doubt, in spite of the protecting duties at home, sugar to any extent might be exported with a profit. I mention this point, and that particular article of produce, merely as an illustration.

Then we come to the improvements in the interior of the country which might be made. These consist of public works, such as roads of communication, canals with the same view, and for the additional purpose of irrigation. There is nothing that tends so much and so rapidly to the improvement of a country, as facility of communication. By effecting this, you bring virtually, at least, the various parts and provinces nearer to one another; the whole becomes more compact, more vigorous; the circulation, before languid and sickly, now becomes rapid and healthy. You can exchange commodities in an *hour*, which before required a *week*. The expense will be a *farthing*; it was before a *pound*. Thus every thing is brought every where at the cheapest possible rate, and may consequently be exported with an advantage which at present cannot be obtained.

Notwithstanding the innumerable water-tracks which pervade the lower portions of the Bengal province, there is no part of India where communication by means of good roads or navigable canals is so much wanted. There are few nullahs navigable even for the lightest craft, except in the rains, and no roads; so that it is only whilst the country is inundated that any thing like free intercourse prevails between one quarter and another. Every place is consequently left almost entirely to its own resources for four-fifths of the year, like a beleaguered city suffering every privation, whilst a general superabundance reigns perhaps throughout the country.

Then, again, canals for irrigation. In Bengal irrigation is scarcely known; yet there cannot be a doubt of the incalculable advantage to agriculture which it would produce. The soil of the lower parts of Bengal is not

refreshed in the moderate degree congenial to cultivation. It is either inundated, or parched almost to absolute sterility, like the effects of intoxication on the human frame; for having been the more drunk it becomes the more dry. And the soil is of that nature, that as soon as the moisture is evaporated, which a few days after the waters subside are sufficient to accomplish, the face of the earth becomes so indurated, that it resembles a surface of rock intersected by fissures, its miniature ravines, which no tender plant can perforate. It requires no more to convince one of the advantage which the command of refreshing moisture would give to the cultivator of such a soil. The more elevated parts of the province of Bengal, and all the other parts of the Company's dominions, are equally in want of the means of easy irrigation. At the same time, it must be confessed that the inhabitants stand no less in need of some stimulus, to induce them to use the means now within the scope of their exertion; for the Bengalese most fully verify the observation, that wherever nature has been found to do most for man, there man has ever been found to do least for himself.

The Bengal husbandman awaits the vernal showers before he can deposit the seed of some of his most valuable crops. But the vernal showers are sometimes very scanty; sometimes they do not come at all, and often so late that the periodical inundation finds his crop on foot, and levels it to the ground, to rise no more. An artificial sprinkling of water, two or three times repeated, would have secured his seed-time and his harvest, and a certain, perhaps superabundant crop; for nature rejects not the aid of man, but delights in it, and assuredly rewards his labour.

It is difficult to estimate with any precision the value of irrigation in a tropical climate. Even in Spain, Italy, and the southern parts of Europe, access to water for irrigation raises the value of land to three, nay four times that which the same land would fetch without water for irrigation. It enables the husbandman to keep the ground constantly under crop, without impoverishment or diminution of produce. Whoever will take the trouble of perusing Mr. Arthur Young's Tour, will at once be satisfied of the importance of the aid which government ought, and undoubtedly will give, in facilitating this all-powerful process of the practice of agriculture. I say the aid which government "ought to give," because in India, among the natives, there are neither the energy to undertake, nor the means to accomplish improvements, on a scale so extensive as that contemplated here.

If government should think fit to admit participation in attempting such undertakings, it is not to be doubted that the co-operation of individuals might be obtained among the wealthy and enterprising European population. In our own country, many highly valuable public works have been executed by private associations; and there is at least one advantage attending this mode of proceeding, which is by no means unimportant, the ultimate expense of the work is exceedingly reduced, and the public may consequently be accommodated with its use on proportionately easy terms.

In all countries government pay more for work than individuals do; and I believe India is no exception. Instead of diligence and economy, neglect and peculation more frequently prevail in the execution of government works in all quarters of the world. The expense is in-

creased beyond the most ample estimate; delay and disappointment necessarily follow, till the patrons and warmest supporters of the work are disgusted. The consequence is, that no man loves to be deceived, whether intentionally or otherwise; the most patriotic governments and individuals get tired of proposing and supporting schemes, however valuable they may seem, which are nevertheless in the end so likely to "let them in" for a share of the well-merited obloquy attached to the execution of them.

The Bengal government has lately appropriated a large fund, from the town duties of the several cities and towns, for the internal improvement of the adjacent country. But until some better plan be devised than has hitherto prevailed in the *Moufussil* for controlling the disbursement of public improvement—funds, I will venture to say that the amount, whatever it may be, will be spent to very little purpose. Great virtue is required of those who have the expenditure of such money. But virtue alone, even virtue, will not do here. Science and judgment, and practical abilities, are indispensable in those who have the direction of permanent public works.

With every disposition to praise this premature benevolence, I think government "have begun at the wrong end." Who can approve entirely of voting away money without any specific object, without even having a competent body qualified to direct the liberality of the state to the object in view? The first thing to be done on an occasion of this kind, is to fix upon one or more individuals, men of science, and possessed of that species of practical knowledge which will enable them to appropriate the funds in the best possible mode, to the substantial improvement of the agriculture and commerce of the coun-