

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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FREQUENT intercourse with men possessing great experience in the administration of Indian affairs induced me to give my earnest attention to the investigation of the subject, and has eventually led me to lay the result of my inquiries before the public. My principal authorities have been :—

Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons, in 1848, on the Growth of Cotton in India.

Report of Expenditure on Public Works for 10 years, printed by order of the House of Commons, in 1851.

Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Territories in June, 1852.

Report of the Bombay Cotton Committee, in 1847.

Letters on the Cotton and Commerce of Western India, reprinted from the "Times."

Files of the "Friend of India," for 1850-51-52.

Files of the "Bombay Times."

Reports, Books, and Pamphlets on Scinde.

Mill and Wilson's History of India.

Briggs' Land-Tax in India.

Kaye's Afghanistan.

Campbell's Modern India.

Chapman's Cotton and Commerce of India.

Royle's Culture of Cotton in India.

Shore's Indian Notes.

Grant's Bombay Cotton and Indian Railways.

Lecture on Cotton, delivered at the Society of Arts, before H.R.H. Prince Albert, by the President of the Chamber of Commerce at Manchester.

Letters on the Renewal of the East India Company's Charter, by  
Lieut.-General Briggs, published in the "Indian News."  
Remarks on the Affairs of India, by J. Sullivan, Esq.  
Debates in the Court of Proprietors in 1848-49.  
Sundry Pamphlets: and various authorities referred to in the text.

Besides the above, I have been indebted to Indian friends for an immense deal of information, advice, and active assistance, without which I could not have composed this work.

I am prepared to see a portion of the English press contrast my warmth of expression in the following pages, with the cooler tone of certain petitioners from a particular Presidency. However, any one, who attentively considers the grievances I have pointed out, will see that a body of merchants residing in the capital of a Presidency, were not the men who suffered most from them, and did not even feel some of them at all. Moreover, during nearly three years that I have been occupied with the subject, I have seen no prospect <sup>of</sup> support until quite lately, but on the contrary, a very clear prospect of great political parties uniting to oppose any reform in our Indian administration. Under such circumstances, although it might have shown more philosophy to describe the abuses of the present system and its national danger with indifference, it was perhaps natural for a man who loved his country, to feel and speak more warmly.

8, ST. ALBAN'S PLACE,  
*January 31, 1853.*

## CONTENTS.

### INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

	Page
REASONS FOR WRITING—EFFECT PRODUCED ON THE PUBLIC BY OFFICIAL SECRESY AND MISREPRESENTATION . . . . .	1

### CHAPTER II.

THE THEORY IN CANNON ROW . . . . .	7
------------------------------------	---

### CHAPTER III.

THE PRACTICE IN LEADENHALL STREET . . . . .	12
---	----

### CHAPTER IV.

THE RYOTWAR SYSTEM . . . . .	21
------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER V.

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM . . . . .	36
-------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER VI.

FINANCE AND PUBLIC WORKS . . . . .	49
------------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER VII.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM . . . . .	102
--------------------------------	-----

### CHAPTER VIII.

THE SYSTEM OF PARLIAMENTARY LEGISLATION FOR INDIA . . . . .	123
---	-----

APPENDIX . . . . .	139
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# INDIA.

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## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

### REASONS FOR WRITING.—EFFECTS PRODUCED BY OFFICIAL SECRECY AND MISREPRESENTATION.

DID the public ever hear of a landlord neglecting his estate, and consigning it to rack-renting, poverty, crime, and anarchy, and ended by ruining himself? Did the public know that its neglect of India has had the same effects, and is likely to have the same fatal end?

I am sure few people are aware of the real nature of our Indian Administration; and it is high time that somebody should let the country know the truth about it; although I should never have ventured to attempt such a task, if my entreaties could have prevailed on men of ability and experience to tell the public as much as they told me. This is the reason, and the only one, for my writing; that I could not oblige other men to speak out with that uncompromising plainness of tone which this crisis of the Charter requires; and though the case will lose much from my manner of telling it, I hope the public will recollect that a man may be a stupid witness, whose evidence is nevertheless material to the trial of a cause; and I hope that to the readers of this pamphlet, the importance of its facts will compensate for its defects of style.

I have omitted many details, and some entire subjects; for a



mere abstract of the reforms needed in India, from a single Indian journal, for the last two years, would alone fill one or two volumes; and the journals do not contain everything; therefore I have been forced to limit my choice of materials, and confine myself to illustrating one single point, viz.: the necessity of making the Home Government of India trustworthy and responsible.

It is the fashion with those who criticise this Home Government, to add, in the very same breath with which they point out its abuses, a set of routine compliments to its motives. As I have not complied with this fashion,—as I have, on the contrary, expressed, without reserve, my unfavourable opinion of the Home Government,—I must explain to the reader that it is no want of charity which impelled me to do this. Charity is a discriminating virtue: not one which treats the good and the bad alike: the charity that allowed a robber and murderer to escape, would be a disservice to the honest portion of society who suffered from his crimes: and it is not charity that allows a body of public men to wear a mask which enables them to perpetuate the crimes of millions of our fellow-men: it is not charity that allows these men to wear a mask. Charity would strip off the drapery of the rotten system of the Home Government, and show the private suits do putrefy the public good. I have done this from pity for the natives of India, and why is it that the public have known so little, and been so deceived so much, about the Home Government? There are two reasons for it, which are, a system of secrecy, and a system of mystification. The first of these, the system of secrecy, is alone sufficient to account for what Lord William Bentinck characterised as “the shameful apathy and indifference of Great Britain to the concerns of India.” It did not occur to his Lordship that it was hardly fair to accuse the public of “shameful apathy and indifference,” when the truth could not reach them. Yet how stands the case? I am one of the public; I was indifferent while I knew little of the subject; but now let the

reader look at my seventh or eighth chapters, and say whether they betoken "shameful apathy and indifference?" And my case is that of every one of the public; they cannot, without the accident of private information, get at the truth; without knowing it, how can they be otherwise than indifferent? and while those who can, will not speak out, is it the indifference of the public which is "shameful," or the system of secrecy which keeps the truth from them?

The state of British opinion on Indian affairs was admirably described by an article in the "Times" of Dec. 4, 1851, as being one of listless "security," *confounding the absence of anxiety with freedom from danger*, and this is entirely due to the suppression of information by the authorities. Now as the system of secrecy has been denied it is worth remarking that it has been affirmed by a late member of the Bombay Government, in the evidence of last session; by a late high functionary of the Madras Government, in an article of the "Calcutta Review," quoted in my chapter on Public Works; by a member of the Bengal Government in a Report quoted in the same chapter; by other official men, by the native petitioners of Madras and Bombay, and by "the Friend of India;" which permits the Company's Government whenever it can, and is often easy to be a Government paper, for which reason I will give some extracts from it on this point.

May 21, 1851, the "Friend" answered the above-mentioned denial that information was withheld from the public; by printing a letter, refusing such information, even for a period anterior to the year 1820, signed by the very same functionary, who assured the House of Commons a few days afterwards, that the system of secrecy was quite a mistake;—and the "Friend" added, "the Government of India is a government of secrecy in a stronger sense than any other Government now in existence. The first principle at the India House is to conceal everything—everything past, present, or future—from the public; that it has the power of withholding."

July 17, 1851, the "Friend" says, "it is the perpetual aim of the Court of Directors to throw a veil of profound secrecy around

all their counsels and measures;" adding, that any disclosure by any of the functionaries of the State is "severely resented and condemned in no measured terms," and giving a description of the consequences for which my own experience has furnished an exact parallel: "the whole public service in India trembles at the idea of being detected in conveying any intelligence to the press, however interesting to the public, and however beneficial to the public service. We have scores of letters from officers of high official distinction, who have given us valuable and important facts, but always with the strictest injunction that their names might in no case be permitted to transpire."

Sept. 30, 1852, the "Friend" says, that "the great principle of mystery which pervades all the thoughts, feelings, and actions of public men in India, has its origin in Leadenhall Street." It adds, "Everything of which a public servant may become cognisant through his official position, however trivial or insignificant, is a *secret*:" and again: "The extraordinary anxiety which the Court manifests to keep every public transaction, and every official document as under a seal of confession, and its determination to visit with condign punishment any allusion which may be made to them, indicates no desire to promote the interests of the community, and is simply an exhibition of that morbid fondness for secrecy which belongs to all corporations."

And this is the real state of the case; "those whose deeds are evil shun the light;" the Government of India is a government of secrecy in a stronger sense than any other Government now in existence; the footprint on the sand was not more alarming to Robinson Crusoe than a trace of inquiry into the mysteries of their administration is to the Authorities of India; and of course while a despotic Government maintains this "system of secrecy," its servants who can, will not speak out, and as an inevitable consequence, the public, who cannot get at the truth, become "apathetic and indifferent to the concerns of India."

And this is not all: besides the system of secrecy, there is a system of mystification, of eternally deceiving the public, by flattering pictures of the condition of the natives; which is of as old a date as that irresponsible government which I denounce

as the bane of India. The historian Mill continually adverts to this practice. He remarks, that it is always the interest of the Minister of the day "to prevent inspection; to lull suspicion asleep; to ward off inquiry; to inspire a blind confidence; to praise incessantly the management of affairs in India; and by the irresistible force of his influence, make other men praise it:" and he adds, that by the interest of the minister, "complaint is extinguished, and the voice of praise raised in its stead"—and all parties in turn get committed to this system by the changes of ministry. On one occasion, after noticing a rebuke administered to the Indian Authorities by the House of Commons for this system of deception, the historian says they only followed the beaten common track of misrepresentation which the instruments of Government are seldom without a motive to tread; and farther on, "nothing is more remarkable than the propensity of all sorts of persons connected with the Indian Government, to infer from anything and everything, the *flourishing state of the country*." On another occasion, he notices "the unintermitting concert of praises, sung from year to year, upon the Indian Government, and upon the increasing happiness of the Indian people, while they were all the while sinking into deeper poverty and wretchedness." Elsewhere he points out the ease with which the results of Indian administration can be misrepresented in this country, and warns the public that they are by no means sufficiently on their guard against the deception.

Now I have endeavoured to show in my eighth chapter, what were the effects of this deception, in the passing of the last three Charters; and in my sixth and seventh chapters, to show the way in which it is going on now; and when I consider that it is employed to resist the strongest conceivable claims on our justice; to say nothing of our humanity; and to perpetuate the "nightmare oppression lying heavy on many million hearts" in India; this system of mystification appears to me perfectly shocking!—it seems to call for a judgment on the nation that employs it. It is written: "The Lord shall root out all deceitful lips; and the tongue that speaketh proud things;

"Which have said, With our tongue will we prevail: we are they that ought to speak, who is lord over us?"

"Now for the comfortless trouble's sake of the needy; and because of the deep sighing of the poor;

"I will up, saith the Lord, and will help every one from him that swelleth against him . . ."

Aye, reader! there are many signs and warnings in India at this moment, and if the present system is allowed to go on, it will soon expose our empire to a greater peril than it has ever yet encountered.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE THEORY IN CANNON ROW.

On the 2nd of April, in the year 1852, the Prime Minister told the House of Lords, that "in the Board of Control, practically speaking, the whole administration of the affairs of India rests." This was the truth; and a truth whose incalculably important consequences are not appreciated by the people of this country. However, those who have an interest in keeping things as they are, and preventing any change in the actual system of Government, were exceedingly disconcerted by Lord Derby's plain speaking, and have been labouring ever since to persuade the public not to believe the truths disclosed by him. For this purpose the old fable of a double Government and a balance of power, has been repeated to the world by every channel of publicity which official influence could command; and it has been asserted with the utmost confidence, that the control of the finances and the management of administrative details is in the hands of the Court of Directors. Let us see then whether there is anything to corroborate Lord Derby's statement?

The Chairman of the Court of Directors stated in his place in Parliament, on the 19th of April, 1852, that all letters and despatches come to the Directors, and that when they have come to a resolution on the business in hand, they send their despatch to the Board of Control, "who either approve or disapprove of it;" but that the Directors have a right to call upon the Board to give their reasons for their alterations of it, if the Board think it their duty to insist upon them. We learn from this, that the Board of Control can "disapprove and alter" the government of the Court of Directors: but it appears to me, that if the Board has the

power to alter the spirit and letter of the Directors' despatches, and uses such a power, the Directors are no more independent of the President of the Board of Control, than the Clerks of the Foreign, Colonial, and War Offices, are independent of the Secretaries for those departments; and that the Directors must perform much the same functions as the head clerks of Government offices. Moreover, the statement of the Chairman, that all letters and despatches come to the Directors, is inconsistent with the following evidence from still better authority. In the Committee on Official Salaries, which sat last year, the President of the Board of Control was asked—"Do you correspond with the Governor-general of India, and other high functionaries, the Governors of Madras and Bombay, directly, without the intervention of the Chairman of the India House?" Answer—"Of course I do, privately." Here then I submit are strong grounds for presuming that Lord Derby told the simple truth when he informed the House of Lords, that "in the Board of Control, practically speaking, the whole administration of the affairs of India rests."

But, besides this presumptive evidence, the letter, of the law clearly gives the Board the power of conducting the whole administration, by investing it with "full power and authority to superintend, direct, and control all acts, operations, and concerns of the said Company, which in any wise relate to or concern the Government, or revenues, of the said territories . . . ;" again, by prohibiting the Directors "from issuing any orders, instructions, despatches, official letters, or communications whatever, relating to India, or to the Government thereof, until the same shall have been sanctioned by the Board . . . ;" and further, by compelling the Directors either to prepare instructions and orders, upon any subject whatever, at fourteen days' notice from the Board, or else to transmit the orders of the Board on the subject to India; which gives the power of initiative to the Board whenever it likes to use it. Moreover, it was distinctly admitted by the creators of the Board, that they had transferred to it the whole power of administration. Mr. Pitt said: "There was no one step that could have been taken previous to the passing of the



Act of 1784, by the Court of Directors, that the Board of Control had not now a right to take by virtue of the power and authority vested in it by that Act." Mr. Dundas said: "Without the whole powers of Government the Board of Control would be a nugatory institution." Lord Grenville, one of its first members, said: "The whole authority of the Government was actually committed to the Board; and the carrying on the Government in the name of the Company was only what the Company had done themselves, in the case of Indian princes whose rule they had superseded." Finally, a former President of the Board of Control said, in 1833, "In that Board for the last fifty years has the real effective Government of India resided." I think this is sufficient evidence that Lord Derby's statement in the House of Lords was not a misrepresentation, and that the real state of the case was correctly defined by the historian Mill, who says:—"The real, sole governing power in India is the Board of Control; and it only makes use of the Court of Directors as an instrument, as a subordinate office for the management of details, and the preparation of business for the cognizance of the superior power."

If this definition be correct, it is evident that the power of the Directors must depend entirely upon the degree to which the Board allows them to manage the business of detail, and such a power manifestly corresponds to that of the head clerks in Government offices. In fact, the only distinction I can perceive between the functions of Directors and those of Government clerks, is in the privilege of the former to protest in writing against the measures of the Board; but if it be true, as I have heard and believe, that the Directors' protests are treated with very little ceremony, and habitually disregarded by the Board; and because these protests cannot exercise the slightest influence on the Parliament or the public, from whom they are concealed, I do not see that such a distinction makes any real difference between the power of the Directors and that of the head clerks of the Treasury, or Colonial Office. But the reader may say, supposing that the Directors are no more than clerks of the Board of Control, what is the harm of it? The harm is this: it may happen, as it does at this moment, that a President and two



Secretaries who are new to the affairs of India, and have none of them ever set foot in the country, are invested with the secret, irresponsible despotism over an empire as large as the whole of Europe, comprised of different nations who are frequently high-spirited and warlike races, and containing within it such an abundance of inflammable materials as to have induced the writers and statesmen who have had most experience, and are the highest authorities on the subject, to declare unanimously, that without a knowledge of the institutions, habits, feelings, and prejudices of the natives of India, their European masters are always liable to make mistakes which may produce a conflagration, and place the empire in peril. For instance, let it be supposed that an ignorant President of the Board of Control decides on some measure which is a climax of iniquity and impolicy; a Director, saturated with information on the subject, writes a protest against it, clearly exposing by the light of his experience the characteristic bearings of the question, and exhibiting the series of evils which must ensue from the adoption of the Board's measure; of course, if the President were responsible to Parliament, he would be forced to think twice before he acted in defiance of such a protest as this; but as it is, considering the Director as no better than a clerk, he tosses the protest into a wilderness of records, and pursues his plan without modification;—let it be supposed that an Affghan war is the consequence, the conclusions of the Director are verified to the letter, until, after the sacrifice of a British army and a frightful waste of human life and treasure, it turns out that the Board's measure has been as impolitic as it was iniquitous, and has converted a host of neighbouring nations who were previously disposed to be friends into implacable enemies, while it has robbed one or more generations of our native fellow-subjects of the local expenditure and attention to their social progress which was due to them from British justice, and has saddled themselves and their posterity with a crushing burthen of debt.

When all this is the natural consequence of investing an ignorant Minister with the secret irresponsible despotism over a vast empire, can the reader ask what is the harm of a system which exposes us every day to a recurrence of dangers, similar in

kind to the above, while they may be next time infinitely greater in degree? Surely, if Lord Derby's statement was correct that "in the Board of Control, practically speaking, the whole administration of the affairs of India rests," and if the Board must exercise "*the whole powers of government*," it will be prudent to provide for the responsibility of this depository of supreme power, especially when it is remembered that this important post of the Presidency of the Board of Control is always looked upon as a subordinate place in the Ministry, because its salary is rather less than that of the other members of the Cabinet. But besides the proofs already furnished of the truth of Lord Derby's description, it has been entirely confirmed since by the evidence of Lord Ellenborough. His Lordship said that, "the President of the Board of Control can now overrule the Directors;" that, "they can do no more than express an opinion;" and that "they have in fact, no authority." He said that, with a Court of Directors at one end of the system, and a President of the Board of Control, with a large body of intelligent clerks, at the other, he could not say how the government was conducted; but added, "I know that when I was at the Board of Control, I conducted the government; there is no doubt about that." So then the power is in the hands of the President of the Board of Control; and if he does not know how to use it, he may ask his ignorant secretaries and intelligent clerks; and we shall see presently what these gentlemen make of the irresponsible despotism of India.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE PRACTICE IN LEADENHALL STREET.

THE body in which supreme power originally resided, and which still gives its name to the Government, is the East India Company; that is, the Court of Proprietors. As the description of this body given by Lord Derby in his speech of April 2nd, was very clear and correct, I will again quote his words. "With that Act of 1833, the Court of Proprietors ceased to have any control or interest whatever in the affairs of India. The whole business of the Court of Proprietors at this moment consists in receiving the dividends upon their stock, and in electing the members of the Court of Directors. Further than that they have no function whatever to perform. It is true they may meet and discuss together, but with regard to the legislation of India, any decision or vote of the whole Court of Proprietors need not exercise the slightest influence over the conduct of the government." As this statement was literally true, and the Court of Proprietors has long been notoriously and entirely subservient to the Court of Directors, I will at once pass on to the description of this Corporation. The Court of Directors consists of twenty-four members, whose qualification is the possession of 1000*l.* stock; but as one-fourth of this body go out of office every four years, and must remain out for twelve months, the permanent number of Directors is really thirty, of whom twenty-four form the Court, while six remain a year out of office until it is their turn to be re-elected. This re-election is a matter of course, because since the Directors prefer to hold their places for life, and always support their former colleagues on a re-election, the entirely subservient constituency go on electing

them for life, and in many instances long after they are unfit to attend to the affairs of India. This Court has, with a few reservations the nominal and generally the substantial power of making the Home appointments in the Indian Civil Service. The composition of this Corporation is at present exceedingly defective, for although there are some warm and enlightened friends of India among the Directors, such men are always of necessity a very small minority in the Court. The reasons for this are firstly, that the disgusting incidents of a canvass for the Direction which costs about 4000*l.*, and often extends over a period of seven years, deter almost all the distinguished servants of Government, who return from India, from being candidates for the office, although frequently in the prime of their faculties, and capable of doing many years' hard work in this country; secondly the value of the patronage draws many men into the Direction who are from various causes unfit for its duties, such as bankers, merchants, and directors of companies, whose business in Indian government is simply the distribution of patronage to the interest of their private banks and companies; and thirdly the system of re-election retains in office worn-out old men who are incapable of managing, and some even of understanding the business they are supposed to manage. The Court consists annually three Committees consisting of the Chairman, Lord of the Court. The Chairs of the three Committees, which are finance and home; 3, revenue, justice, and the law. I shall be as well to explain here what the Court does by the Court.

It must be remembered that England and India, as large as the whole of Europe, and containing different races, and containing provinces as large as kingdoms, and as densely peopled: for instance, the Bengal Presidency, is larger than that of the population of the Agra Presidency larger than that of Britain, and so on; and as the business of this Empire is down to minute details to the Home Government

should escape its supervision, it is difficult to give the reader an idea of the vast mass of correspondence which comes home to England from India. When the reader considers, that many despatches are accompanied by such a mass of documents as "cannot be even examined without considerable labour and time—that they amount to 2, 3, 4, 5, and occasionally 20,000 pages," he may conceive the tons of papers which the Home Government is supposed to go through. In Lord Broughton's evidence before the Official Salaries' Committee, he stated that with one single despatch 45,000 pages of "collections" were sent. The first great evil of this system is, that the administration of India is clogged and impeded in a most mischievous degree,—in a degree which reduces to despair the most zealous and able of Company's servants, and after all a good deal of business is unavoidably slurred over, and either pretended to be done, or not done at all.

I saw the same thing happen in France during the reign of late King Louis Philippe. The abuse of centralisation had thrown the mass of administrative details to Paris, and of course the business of the country was ruinously delayed, and either left in a state of confusion.

While the Prefects would not take any responsibility, they were likely to be completely reversed by a central government of irresponsible clerks!) which could nullify half of their decisions half so easily. The central government by its bureaucratic system for governing in details, left the local administration without an administration or with a very inefficient one. This was one main cause of the revolution of 1848. St. Simon points out in his memoirs that the failure of Louis XIV. for governing in details, was one of the main causes of the ruin of France under his reign. One of the duties of the present Ruler of France has been to restore the power and responsibility of the local administration to the Prefects, with real power and proportionate responsibility, and to reduce the Paris bureaucracy of its authority.

It is now most urgently required in our Indian

administration, for the second great evil of referring such a mass of details to the Home Government is that it throws the real power into the hands of an irresponsible Bureaucracy. This is the class which Burke denounced as "the creatures of the desk, and the creatures of favour," and which he described in the following passage:—"The tribe of vulgar politicians are the lowest of our species. There is no trade so vile and mechanical as government in their hands. Virtue is not their habit. They are out of themselves in any course of conduct recommended only by conscience and glory. A large, liberal, and prospective view of the interest of States, passes with them for romance; and the principles that recommend it, for the wanderings of a disordered imagination. The calculators compute them out of their senses. The jesters and buffoons shame them out of everything great and elevated. Littleness in object and in means, to them appears soundness and sobriety." Now, on examining into the details of the measures pursued in India, we shall find that they bear the stamp of the "vulgar politicians" described by Burke. The reader will not wonder at the extraordinary mal-administration described in the following chapters, if he bears in mind that "the creatures of the desk and the creatures of favour" are really governing India, and the Home Government is at best a Bureaucracy.

But such is the fact: from the sheer physical impossibility of an Indian Minister or Director examining the business referred from India, even if they were disposed to do so, it is necessary to maintain a large establishment to do the work for them, with departments at the India Office, the Board of Control, corresponding to the departments of the Home Government abroad, and entailing an expense of 160,000 on the people of India, while the result of the system is that the real work of preparing the despatches into the hands of the clerks at the India House, and that of altering the despatches in the hands of the clerks at the Board of Control.

The reader will see this from the mode of transacting the business. When a despatch arrives from India, it is in the first instance to the Examiner's department

belongs, after which the Chairs confer with the official in charge of that department, and settle with him the tenor of a reply, and transmit a draft of this reply to the Indian Minister, in what is technically called "P.C.," that is to say, "previous communication." Now it is evident that, partly from the annual rotation in the functions of the Directors, and every fourth year in the men themselves, and principally from the mass of the business, the Chairs must, in this preliminary stage of "P.C.," depend mainly on the clerks who are permanently in office, for information, advice, and assistance. Nay, such is this dependence, that even in a discussion in the Court of Proprietors, after previous notice, it is pitiable to see the Chairman referring to a Secretary who sits by his side, and keeps on whispering, and prompting, and stopping him, as if he were a mere puppet; and probably the Minister at the other end of the system is in the same predicament. However, in this stage of "P.C." if there is difference of opinion on the draft, it is discussed, and almost invariably settled in friendly communication between the Minister and the Chair; finally, the draft is returned by the Minister, adopted or altered; and then it is submitted to the Committee of Directors superintending the department to which it belongs, with all the papers bearing on the case, to be considered, discussed, and adopted or altered; and afterwards it is submitted to the same process in the aggregate Court, and then goes, at last, as an official communication, to the Minister.

Mr. Melville and Shepherd are delighted with the result of the system of "previous communication;" in bringing about agreement between the Minister and the Chairs,—in saving business, and saving time.\* No doubt it does all this, as it do it? by stripping the Directors' Committees of importance and usefulness! for when once the draft is submitted, it chance have the dissentient members of any Committee assisting the Minister, the Chairs, their majority in the Court, and the Bureaucracy?—All they can do is to whisper to their friends in private, and to record a protest, of no earthly use, except to show that it is in vain for



them to prove to demonstration that the Government is going wrong, when once the irresponsible bureaucracy has decided its course.

I ask if this is not an intolerable abuse? Is it not evident that this "previous communication" system is reversing the first intention, and the whole scope and purpose of the Directors' official existence? Is it not plain that if the opinion of the Directors is to be of any use to the Minister at all, it should go to him, not *after* his mind is made up by the opinion of "intelligent clerks," not *after* he has decided on the matter in hand, but *before*? Does it not stand to reason that if it be worth while for Indian business to go through a Committee and an aggregate Court of Directors, who are presumed to sift it thoroughly, and express a deliberate opinion upon it, all this should be done before the first communication goes to the Minister, and not after "intelligent clerks" on both sides have superficially examined and decided the question? It is not that the Council Board should govern: the Indian Minister must of course govern; *as he now*; and as every Minister ought to do in his department; he should receive his advisers' deliberate counsel before he makes up his mind, and not after; he should be bound, *as he is now*, to state his reasons in writing, if he disapproved of the recommendation by them, to make his personal responsibility apparent in case of his ultimately adhering to his own. Coadjutors of this sort would be some check upon the Minister, particularly if they were the efficient and adopted body that they ought to be; at least they would be of value to the Council to him, for the only real check that can be imposed upon him is parliamentary responsibility, for which I have proposed a very simple plan in my eighth chapter. As it is now, the Council of Directors are a mere cloak for the "irresponsible decision" of the Minister; and they are a source of injury to the Government of India, and a danger to England, by the grasping spirit of the majority of its members for patronage.

Before I touch on this point I must remark, that in the face of it something wrong in a system by which, as it is, "the Directors are paid in patronage"—that "their



only 300*l.* a-year, because they are paid in patronage." We ought to cut down a mischievous bureaucracy, and save enough by the reduction to give the Directors competent salaries, like all other public servants, and so get rid of the very improper phrase now employed, that "the Directors are paid in patronage!" Why, in this matter-of-fact country, such language naturally puts it into the heads of Directors that their patronage may be used in a way that will pay them—pay well too!—and it is notorious that the managers of banks and companies who take so much trouble to get into the Direction, are "wise in their generation." Under the present system there are two fatal consequences of the Directors being "paid in patronage:"—1st, it enslaves the Directors to the Indian Minister, by their fear that if they oppose him he may use his parliamentary omnipotence to strip them of their patronage; 2ndly, it gives the majority of the court an insatiable spirit of grasping; of grasping territory, and grasping the valuable Indian appointments for their European nominees, in spite of the emphatic condemnation of this system by our latest Indian statesmen, which passion of the Directors is doing incalculable mischief in India, and makes our Government hated by the educated classes of the natives.

And after all, when we consider the whole system of a Board of Directors and a Court of Directors,—when we remember that our only possible reason for keeping up this cumbrous and costly double government is to provide a Council for the Minister, to prevent the patronage, surely we may attain both in a simpler and better way, by allowing all England to share for patronage which all England is entitled to share, by providing a real working Council for the Minister.

I conclude this part of my subject by a notice of the value and mode of distributing the patronage. When the appointments for the year is ascertained, the whole are put into twenty-eight equal parts, of which two are allotted to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, two to the President of the Council, and one to each of the Directors. Taking the seventeen years since the Charter of 1833, there have been put about 28 writers, and as many assistant surgeons,

and chaplains or other officers, independent of from 250 to 300 cadets annually, affording to each Director a patronage which, if sold at the rate of a cadetship actually proved to be purchased in 1849 at 1050*l.*, and a writership at 3000*l.*, the annual value of a single share of patronage would not fall short of 14,000*l.* or 15,000*l.*, and that of the Chairs and the Indian Minister from 28,000*l.* to 30,000*l.* per annum. Besides his patronage as above the President of the Board of Control directs the expenditure to any extent of "secret service" money, which is accounted for on the books, and has on some years 100,000*l.* in one year. How differently do we manage the money and our own! The Secretaries are only permitted to disburse as much as they are obliged at the end of it to swear that it was absolutely necessary for the public service.

Here then is the great bribe of patronage, value of nearly 400,000*l.* per annum, distributed year after year, among the upper classes of India, which hardly any respectable Englishman is indirectly interested! This is indeed heavy scale against justice to India; for it would be to the light of day to pretend not to see the power of the influence of this patronage in recruiting the present system of Government, and suppressing its abuses.

However, though I will not attempt to deny that the abuses of the present Government, especially of the Directors, would gradually and greatly reduce this patronage as a rule, all the men of ripe Indian experience, who have been in the interior, and known the natives well, and seen the force on which our empire rests, all these are as strongly of the grasping system as I am, and as much convinced of the iniquity and impolicy, and to give them a preponderance in the Indian Ministers' Council, would at once begin to cut down the patronage; still, I shall endeavour to show that the abuses best serve our private interests are directly contrary to the national interest—"that private suits do putrefy



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RYOTWAR SYSTEM.

THE reader must not suppose, as we too practical Englishmen are apt to do, that the theory on which men act is of little consequence provided they mean to do their duty. While our neighbours the French, have shown too little attention to facts forming theories, we frequently run into the other extreme, and pay too little attention to theory; which is sometimes as fatal an error. We shall see the importance of acting on a correct theory if we reflect that, crime is the act itself, and not the intention; and that to make the crime consist in the intention is that pestilent heresy which the Jesuits denounced in the "Lettres Provinciales;" and which I can say from personal observation, that the same doctrine of making the crime consist in the intention are still dominant in large portions of continental society; utterly destroying all notions of right and wrong; and leaving them only a few principles. To show the importance of an error in this respect, I have been admitted by one of the historians who sympathized deeply with the afflictions of his fellow-creatures, that the crusaders who followed Simon de Montfort, were precisely worse than other men; only they had a mistaken idea of their duties; and the massacre of the Albigenes was the consequence. I have said this much about the duty of forming correct theories, because while the conclusions of this and my sixth chapter may be that we have for many years allowed a bureaucratic Government to act on vicious principles of taxation in India, principles which our common sense at once repudiates when we think of applying them to ourselves, and which have caused extreme injury to our native fellow-subjects, it really seems to

weak set-off against all the people of India have suffered, to say that our intentions were good.

I have now to show the consequences to Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, of the Government's adopting a wrong theory with regard to its proprietary right to the land in India; and to examine whether there is any justification for the assertion of this theory to the present day.

As the true theory has long since been proved and acted upon successfully in the North-west Provinces, and has been entirely confirmed since by our experience of the Punjaub, and our observation of the practice in native states, I shall refer the reader to a work on "Modern India," by Mr. Campbell, giving a very clear and graphic description of his experience of the working of this theory in the above province.

I will now state the wrong theory of the land-tax, quoting one or two modern authorities for it, and point out the mischief it has done in Madras and Bombay, reserving a notice of Bengal for another chapter. The first great authority who asserted that the soil of land in India belonged to the Government, was, I am inclined to say, that amiable man Lord Cornwallis. Forty years afterwards Mr. Mill repeated this doctrine to the Commons' Committee of 1831, adding that "a country, wherein *the whole rent* is taken, is in a most happy condition, seeing that such a system is for all the wants of the Government, and the people can be untaxed." When pressed as to the means of raising the Indian land revenue, so that no more than the *rent* could be taken, he admitted that this would be a task for any European collector; with an imperfect knowledge of the natives, their language, and circumstances; with a half-paid and corrupt servants; with perhaps 10,000 square miles of country to look after, and 150,000 tenants to settle with; but he had no doubt *means would be found of raising the demand to the rent*, "and then the prosperity of the country would be as fully secured as it can be," (poor country!)—adding: "if the land-tax were limited *to the rent only*, the revenue system of India is the best in the world"—soon as that point is attained when *the rent of land*

will be adequate to all the exigencies of the Government, the other taxes may be abolished, and India be *wholly untaxed*." Mr. Mangles, a Director, and of that New Zealand Company of which we have heard lately, reiterated the above doctrine. The Committee of 1848, assuring them that the system in India to that which constituted the world, was perfectly legitimate, and the best system of taxation in the world, sufficed, the people were *wholly untaxed*. So this Committee that the land revenue system was a system and of great advantage to the country, inasmuch as it goes into the pockets of individuals in this country, goes into the coffers of the State, and the country is *pr* *from taxation*."

Now, as "I will show that the Government never had the right to touch the "rent" in India, than they have, we should like to know how gentlemen in the House of Commons would like it themselves, if a Government, backed by a overwhelming army, undertook to *wholly untax* the people of this country, by simply taking the rent of land?

It might be urged, as in the case of the massacre of the Albigenses, that men were no worse perhaps than their contemporaries, if their error was one of mere theory; but when we show that the fatal consequences of applying the ryotwar system were distinctly proved *before* it was definitely adopted by the Indian Government; that after the long practice of the system in one Presidency had shown its dreadful effects in the capital of the people, it was deliberately applied to the other Presidency; that to this day its evils are not redressed, the true theory has long been established by history. It was adopted with success in some of our own provinces, then that the Bureaucracy have been guilty of a degree of injustice towards the natives of India which would make it a matter for us to prorogue their irresponsible despotism for twenty years.

However, the theory having once been adopted that

the Government, the great bait of the ryotwar settlement with individual cultivators, was what "discovery of concealed cultivation;" and consequently, for of course it began with raising the value of the property of the landlords, though as a result it opened the door to the golden rule of the capitalists of the country, the ryotwar system, by swamping the whole population with debt. There was another mistake made in the ryotwar settlements, which was to suppose that those who were designated "ryots" belonged to the class of the fact is, that the word in its primitive sense only applied to the proprietor of five thousand acres, as to the tenant of one. In the districts of Madras, where this system was first applied, the Government officers adopted the system of preceding native Governments, which were levied five to fifty per cent of the gross produce; but these had not been paid under the native or village system, and it did not occur to the English collectors that the people *could not possibly* pay such rates, at least not without being ruined as we ruined them unless there had been something more than met the eye in the system, which made the real very different from the seeming, and made the *nominal* taxation often more than double the actual amount! The truth was that under the native system the land was held in hereditary tenure, not then understood by the English, and this system prevailed all over India, and is at this day in vogue in the native States, as well as in our north-western Punjab, and in short wherever we have not destroyed it. It was this: the whole landed property of a village was divided into a certain number of shares, which were again subdivided in families, but were always kept distinct for municipal purposes, and the owners of these shares were the real landed proprietors in the village, the only ones responsible for the Government tax, the rest of the inhabitants were tenants-at-will, &c., under them. And these



shareholders had been able to bear the high assessments of the Moguls by bringing more and more of the waste lands under tillage, and actually cultivating so much more land than that which paid the tax, that it frequently left the nominal assessment of fifty per cent less than one-half that amount on the whole of the cultivated land.

Now, although the introducers of ryotwar settlements were ignorant of the above facts, they ought to have known, that the native Governments which immediately preceded us, that such men as Hyder Ali, had taken all the revenue the people could pay; short of paying their capital; therefore, when they found that, after measuring and classing every field, and assessing the individual cultivators of it at forty-five or fifty per cent of the gross produce, it produced a great increase of revenue, they ought to have felt that there must be some mistake in their principle. Instead of this, the great triumph of ryotwar collectors in many years was, to find out what they called "concealment of cultivation."

Nevertheless, when this system was established, its operation in ruining the cultivators was so rapid, that years before it was definitely adopted by the Home Government, its most ardent advocates had discovered its evils, not from theory, but from practice. Colonel Read, its originator, had declared that it involved the necessity of ousting all between the landlord and the cultivator." Colonel Monro had declared that if the assessments were reduced from twenty-five to thirty series, the land would go out of cultivation. Finally, the Madras Board of Revenue had recorded the following strong opinion in favour of ryotwar settlements:—"Ignorant of the true resources of the newly acquired countries, as of the precise nature of the soil and tenures, we find a small band of foreign conquerors obtaining possession of a vast extent of territory, various nations differing from each other in language, customs, and habits, than they attempt what would be termed a colossal task, or rather a visionary project, even in the most advanced countries of Europe, of which every statistical information is possessed, and of which the Government and people



to fix a land-rent—not on each province, district, or country, nor on each estate or farm, but on *every separate field* in their dominions. In pursuit of this supposed improvement, we find them unintentionally dissolving the ancient tie which united the republic of each Hindoo village, and, by a kind of agrarian law, newly assessing and parcelling out the lands which from time immemorial had belonged to the village community collectively, not only among the individual members of the privileged order, but even among the inferior tenantry; we observe them ignorantly denying, and by their denial abolishing *private property in the land*; professing to limit their demand on each field, and, in fact, establishing for such limit an unattainable maximum, *assessing the ryot at discretion*; and, like the Mussulman Government which preceded them [Hyder Ali,], binding the cultivator by force to the soil; compelling him to till land acknowledged to be over-assessed; dragging him back if he absconded; deferring their demand upon him until his crop came to maturity; then taking from him all that could be obtained, and leaving to him nothing but his bullocks and seed-grain; nay, perhaps, obliged to supply them with these, in order to enable him to resume his melancholy task of toiling for others.”

was a literally true description of the practice of this theory; and it was *after* having officially received all the objections, and variations, that, in 1812, the Home Government adopted this system of assessing “every separate field” in the Presidency “at an unattainable maximum,” and imposed it upon the individual cultivators. The ruinous results of such a system may be conceived, and one of them was that the revenue began at length to decrease till it fell *ably below what it was* when Colonel Monro produced his reductions; and this, I believe, more than anything else convinced the Home Government of the absolute necessity of making some change in such a system—and, accordingly, Sir Thomas Monro was allowed to carry out, as he did in Madras, in 1827, the reductions of from twenty to thirty per cent. in the assessment which he had introduced so many years before. I say the reader may

conceive what the people of Madras must have suffered during this interval! and he will perhaps remember "the unintermitting concert of praises sung from year to year upon the Indian Government, and the increasing happiness of the Indian people, all the while they were sinking into deeper poverty and wretchedness."

As the same mystification goes on at this day, I should think with greater intensity than ever, and it will go on as long as the existing system of Home Government is tolerated, I will now quote some extracts from Mr. Campbell's book, to show the present operation of the ryotwar system in Madras:—"I must therefore describe a ryotwar settlement, or rather absence of settlement it exists at Madras. For the distinguishing feature of the system is simply that no settlement is concluded and no revenue is made the most of from year to year, without assessment . . . ." "The assessment is rather fieldwar than ryotwar. The Government deals directly, not only with each ryot, but with each field. Instead of assessing each village, it assesses each of ground. A field is not, in India, a large piece of land fenced and hedged, but a minute portion, suited to the minute tenant, divided from the rest by a little gathering together of the soil about six inches high. Fencing is not common, and in a plain containing thousands of such fields side by side, it is supposed that boundaries are only permanent when they belong to different owners on the spot, with different interests. Moreover instead of assessing at a fixed sum for a series of years there is fixed on each *field* a maximum rent to be paid in different seasons and good crops: and it is undertaken, not as a concession or indulgence, but as an essential part of the system," "the rent shall be annually reduced when necessary. "To effect the commutation of the share of grain into money rates, as was surveyed according to the native mode of measurement, there were no maps."

No! and it has been recently stated publicly, by a member of the Madras Government, that not a single village in the Presidency possesses a scientific or accurate survey. At the most, either no survey has ever been made, or it is

have been hastily and carelessly done, and to have been *extensively tampered with afterwards*.

But to return to Mr. Campbell, "for the management of the village, the headman and accountant are made altogether Government servants, paid by Government;" and "for the prevention of fraud on the part of these functionaries, reliance is placed on *informers*. Fifty per cent. of the assessment is allowed as a reward to any informer of concealed cultivation, &c., and it is stated that there are in almost every village dismissed accountants desirous of being re-employed, and unemployed servants who wish to bring themselves to notice, whose services as *informers* can be relied on." Before the rains the native collector makes "a *ryotwar* preparatory to settlement. But this is by no means decided then. When the crops are nearly ripe, the collector goes into the district to look at them, and make his annual settlement. The village accountant makes out a statement, giving the cultivation of each *ryot*, his crops and circumstances, number of his cattle, sheep, and children. . . . At this time, *ryots* who think they should not pay full rent, apply for reduction. These cases are settled, and *then only* does the collector make the annual settlement, grant formal leases, and take formal payments for the crop, which by this time is *past*, and generally . . . The settlement is not made up till *after* the crop is ripe, and generally does not reach the collector's office till *after* most money has already got there, and after making all the *ryots* and reductions of the season from the standard assessment. Yet this settlement is appealed to by the Bureaucracy as proof of the regularity with which the assessment is made in the *ryotwar* districts!—Mr. Campbell goes on: "That the *ryotwar* system in Madras is most unfavourable all men are to admit. The Madras men to whom I have talked admit that at the present moment the state of things is unsatisfactory—that the people are wretchedly poor, the value—that the difficulty is to get people to cultivate on any terms—and that the cultivation is kept up by Government advances, &c. &c. And, indeed, no one with experience of these matters can wonder that it should

be so. The idea of the British Government undertaking to perform the duties of immediate landlord throughout a great country, discarding all the assistance of the system which we found, the self-contained communities, and dealing singly with each wretched cultivator, is, to one who knows the trouble and difficulty of managing in this way but two or three villages, quite absurd. All experience, as well as all reason, is against it. Any indigo planter who has a village or two could tell the weary work, the coaxing and bargaining, and the management, the favourable leases given to some cultivators, the bad debts left by others, the thousand and one details of managing a village on this system; and the idea of one man so managing a couple of thousand villages is perfectly monstrous. . . . Only imagine one collector dealing directly with 150,000 tenants, not one of whom has a lease, but each pays *according as he cultivates and gets a crop, and, with reference to his cattle, sheep, and children*, and each of whom gets a reduction if he can make out a sufficiently good case. . . . It is generally agreed that the abuses of the whole system, and especially that of remission, is something frightful; and that the opportunities of extortion, peculation, chicanery, and intrigue of all kinds are unbounded; while the reliance of the Madras collector on *informers* by no means mends the matter."

This, reader, is the "*excellent revenue system! of great advantage to India, inasmuch as what goes into the pockets of individual in this country goes there into the coffers of the State, and the country is pro tanto exempt from taxation!*" Now from such excellent revenue systems, may the Lord deliver us! I have said that the true theory was established at last; but it was not a new theory—correct views had been held by individuals even before Lord Cornwallis's "Perpetual Settlement," and had been proclaimed by authority before the adoption of the ryotwar system in Madras. But it was reserved for one eminent man to collect into a focus all the scattered proofs which existed of the real nature of the Indian land-tax, and to establish the true theory on a basis which has never since been shaken, by a book published in 1830. This author, Lieut.-General Briggs, after having been the confidential assistant of Mr. Elphinstone, in all the difficulties of the second

Mahratta war, was employed at its close to settle large districts of the Peishwa's country, which gave him an unusual insight into the details of native administration; he afterwards enjoyed opportunities of extending and maturing his observations as resident at various native courts, and during a mission to Persia, and he brought to his task not merely the resources of a first-rate Oriental scholar, but the experience of a practised administrator and the caution of a diplomatist. The method pursued in his work was to travel bit by bit, over the whole surface of India, illustrating the true theory by an immense mass of historical testimony, native and European; which no writer has ever attempted to answer. I have not space to go into the details of this work, but the sum of its proofs was as follows:—1st. That the integrity of private property in land had been recognised in every village in India. 2nd. That Government had no right whatever to the land, but only to a share in its produce, that is to a tax, which did not affect the proprietary rights any more than the land-tax affects our rights in England. 3rd. That the Government share or tax was *so defined and limited* both by Hindoo and Mahommedan law, that Government had no title or precedent (except revolutionary ones) for taxing the people at discretion, and no more right to claim the property of the land and take its "rent," than a tithe-owner has to claim another man's estate because it pays him tithe. 4th. That the native institutions themselves, afforded a broad basis for our administration, and the only one on which we could establish a durable empire. A series of articles by the same author, adding new proofs of the correctness of the above views, have recently been published in the "Indian News" journal, Nos. 227 to 233.

The above work produced a strong impression on the mind of one of the most illustrious politicians of that day, Lord Wm. Bentinck, who at length saw, happily for some of the natives, that the land in India was held on exactly the same conditions as those in which a man possesses a house, or a horse, or a dog, or land, or any other property in England, namely, that the Government might assess it to pay a settled tax, and attach and sell it if the tax was not paid; but that this tax was no more

"rent" in India than it is in England. The fact is that *tax* and *rent* are two things different in their nature, and acted upon inversely by given circumstances; for instance, *rent*, or the annual premium paid for the use of land, increases per head with the increase of population—*tax*, or the annual contribution to the expenses of the State, as a rule diminishes per head with the increase of population; and in this way the taxes of England have been very much lightened per head in the last half century.

But to return to Lord Wm. Bentinck; this enlightened and sincere friend of the natives, when Governor-General of India, took the first opportunity of embodying the recommendations of the above work in a series of regulations, which he sent to General Briggs, then Resident at Nagpore, for correction, and which were the foundation of the North-Western Settlements. I must refer the reader to Mr. Campbell's book for the details, but the principle of these settlements was to ascertain and define first, the extent, nature, and value of the lands, and the rights of their owners, and then, securing the rights of these owners, to settle the tax on a moderate assessment for a term of thirty years, liable to a fixed decennial increase if a certain quantity of fresh land is brought into cultivation, at the same time carefully preserving the native institutions, that is to say *the village system, working through that*, and collecting the tax from the representatives of the different villages.

And now, what does the reader think of the Government forcing its Madras system upon Bombay, not only in spite of Mr. Elphinstone's strong opposition, but in spite of his strongly expressed opinion in favour of the village system (for he anticipated long before the conclusions of Lord Wm. Bentinck), and let the reader think of the Government doing this about the time when it was compelled to avow the ruinous consequences of the "excellent revenue system," in Madras! However, such was the case; and although Mr. Elphinstone's great name enabled him to resist ryotwar settlements as long as he was Governor, the doom of the ryots was sealed when he went home, and the "excellent revenue system" was soon after introduced in Bombay. Of course this method of "wholly untaxing" the



people by taking their rent, soon reduced them to a state of pauperism in Bombay, as it had done in Madras, and not until they were so reduced, did the Government agree to any reduction in the assessment.

A revision, meaning a reduction, of the assessment is now going on in Bombay, but has only yet gone over the southern portion of the Presidency, and it is stated in the "Friend of India," of October 21, 1852, that before this revision, "no ryot ever knew one year what he might have to pay the next, and whatever he paid, or whatever exertions he might be induced to make, he still found an unaccountable amount of arrears hanging over his head. There was no rich landowner to stand between him and the Government, no capitalist to bear the first pressure in a bad season, but he just scrambled on from year to year, and took to flight when the grievance became too great to bear. The collection was, in fact, based upon the same principle as that which to this day governs taxation in Egypt, viz. to take from the peasant everything that can be squeezed out of him and then to make a merit of remitting the remainder."

With regard to "rich landholders" and "capitalists," I have alluded to, the progressive destruction of the native aristocracy in my sixth chapter; and the ruin of the country gentlemen and principal farmers by our over assessment is noticed in Mr. Giberne's evidence before the Commons' Committee of 1848; also in a letter dated 1849, from a gentleman high in the Company's service, quoted by Mr. Bright, in the House of Commons, saying: "*many of the best families in the province who were rich and well to do when we came into Guzerat, in 1807, have now scarcely clothes to their back,*" &c. &c.

I will conclude this chapter by exposing the stupid fallacy, worthy of a bureaucratic Government, which assumes that a land-tax is the best of all taxes, and the Indian revenue must depend upon it. In the first place it cannot depend upon it, for it is notorious that the Government cannot tax the land any more, and the Indian finances are now in a state of the most dangerous embarrassment from the insufficiency of the revenue. In the second place, a land-tax is not the best of all

taxes, not only because Adam Smith and others have shown that a money tax on land must soon become unequal, but because it is a direct tax on produce, which is always the form of taxation least productive to the Government and most oppressive to the people. To say that it is "best" to raise three-fourths of the revenue by a direct tax on produce in India, while we only raise one-fifth of the revenue by direct taxation in England, is a gross and glaring contradiction. Yet, conceive our adopting the "best" principle and attempting to raise three-fourths of our own revenue by a direct tax on the land? Why, the Customs alone pay above twenty-two millions of our net revenue! so that the system is evidently absurd in our own case, or that of any other civilised nation, which a Bureaucracy calls better in India; though it is really quite as absurd there as anywhere else—and it has led to the cruel over-assessment of the people, and the perpetual grasping of the Government for more direct revenue, by confiscating Native States and the landed properties of the Native aristocracy, without saving the Indian finances aicer all from falling into a situation of extreme peril.

How different is this result from that obtained by a Native Government which encouraged the commerce of its subjects. General Briggs has shown that one of the wealthiest Native States, before our time, that of Malabar, had no land-tax at all, and had a very large revenue without one. Yet the Bureaucracy, as I will endeavour to show in my sixth chapter, have done everything to destroy, and nothing to help the commerce of the natives. I am reminded by the subject of this chapter, of one of the effects which would ensue, if commerce was possible, to the natives of India. It is notorious that they have a passion for wearing gold ornaments, and to such a degree, that these used to be a sort of criterion of their family wealth; and it is stated in a pamphlet by a late member of the Bombay Government, and has been confirmed to me by several old Indians, that under the operation of the "excellent revenue system," which ground them down, till it was reported by a Revenue Commissioner before the late revision of the assessment, that "the straits to



which the cultivators were reduced, were not merely those of the most coarse and homely fare, but he believed the far greater proportion could not afford for themselves one daily plentiful meal, of any sort of grain, throughout the year:—"under this process, of course, their gold ornaments and every atom of gold has disappeared from among them. Now, the consequence of a considerable reduction of the assessment in the South of Bombay has been to cause a vast increase of cultivation and a glut of produce, which absolutely rots in the interior for want of a market, and brings back the old difficulty of finding money to meet the assessment. Yet if commerce was possible to these people, and I will endeavour to show in my sixth chapter that it is impossible, not only could they sell their produce, but they would get back all their family treasures, and share with other civilised nations in the benefits arising from the sudden and enormous increase of the precious metals.

However, it is hopeless to ask the Home Government to encourage the commerce of the natives. It is impossible for any man to judge of the unfitness of a Bureaucracy to comprehend the interests or conduct the affairs of a great empire, without having had to deal with the Home Government of India. Burke's description of the statesmanship of a Bureaucracy is not in the least exaggerated: "there is no trade so vile and mechanical as Government in their hands. A large, liberal and prospective view of the interests of states, passes with them for romance; and the principles that recommend it, for the wanderings of a disordered imagination. Littleness in object and in means to them appears soundness and sobriety." It is in vain to ask such a class as this for any enlightened measures of Government. It is in vain to prove to them, year after year, that such a return of part of the taxes in public works, as is the undoubted right of the people who have been "wholly-untaxed" by taking their "rent," that this would produce an increase in the Indian revenues, of which no man could foresee the end—that it would re-establish the finances; relieve the cultivators; restore the capital we have exhausted; and replace the trade we have destroyed. All such appeals, either in private or in the

Court of Proprietors, are rejected as a romance, and resented as an intrusion :

"I'll have my bond ; I will not hear thee speak ;  
 I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,  
 To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield  
 To Christian intercessors. Follow not ;  
 I'll have no speaking ; I will have my bond."

So they will indeed ! they are now goading on the Bombay Government to seize the Enams in that Presidency ; they have taken away many of these estates which had been in the same families for centuries ; and as I show in my sixth chapter, they are in a course of confiscating the territories of Native Princes, whose dynasties date in some of the Rajpoot States from 2000 years back, and whose ancestors resisted Alexander the Great.

To bring\* these things home to the reader, let me suggest a parallel case in England, to what we do in India. Our "great Duke," and our only one, has just passed away from amongst us. I leave his services to the record of history and the praises of posterity ; my business is only with a certain estate given to the Duke and his heirs by the nation, to reward those services. Now let me propose to my countrymen, to show our national gratitude, by pauperising the present Duke and Duchess of Wellington ; and to show our honour and good faith by confiscating Strathfieldsaye. Is the reader shocked at such an idea ? but it does not shock our Indian Government in the least. Does the reader think the present Duke's title to his property is something sacred ? but so is a native gentleman's title to his Enam. Does the reader think the confiscation of Strathfieldsaye would be a very meagre addition to our revenue, after all ? but we see in India that a number of estates taken in this way, do something. Can the reader still hesitate ? has he yet another scruple ? will he say that no empire can be durable which is not just ? why then, in God's name, let him help to stop the injustice of our Indian Government.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

It was one of the greatest evils of the Ryotwar settlements, that they subverted the indigenous municipal institutions of the country. These institutions had formed the basis of every successive empire in India for ages; and they were so rooted in the hearts of the people, that when allowed to retain their cherished privilege of local self-government, they were comparatively indifferent to the title, or creed, or nationality of their rulers, and indisposed to political combination, because they enjoyed a simple and satisfactory administration of civil and criminal law. However, the English, who first acquired territory in the most disorganised part of India, and were then entirely ignorant of the systematic structure of native society—the English rashly assumed that an ancient, long-civilised people, possessing the elaborate mechanism of old governments, suited to their manners and domestic circumstances, grown into a second nature by custom, and to this day working admirably under good rulers—that such a people were a race of barbarians who had never known what justice was until we came among them, and that the best thing we could do for them was to upset all their institutions as fast as we could, and among others their judicial system, and give them instead a copy of our legal models at home. Models, be it remembered, against which we have been inveighing for at least a century and a half, and which have at length become so odious that we have radically changed a great part of them, and may possibly condemn still more. But even if the technical system of English law had worked well at home, it would have been the grossest political empiricism to force it on a people so

different from ourselves as every Oriental people are; and considering that it did not work well, even at home, the reader may conceive the irreparable mischief it has done in India. It is lamentable to contemplate the pictures given us of its demoralisation of the natives; and the more so, because this demoralisation is progressive, so that the worst results are found in our oldest possessions.

There was some excuse for the Government which introduced this system of "artificial technicalities," in its profound ignorance of every native institution, including those rational methods of dispensing justice peculiar to the country. But nothing can excuse the Government of the present day for maintaining such an abuse; nothing can even account for such mal-administration, except the fact, that the Home Government is an irresponsible Bureaucracy. What makes this disregard of the rights of the natives (their right to be well governed) more flagrant in the present instance, is the fact that ample information has long since been supplied to the Government of the evils of its own judicial system and the merits of the native one. Indeed this last has been retained, and is working with complete success in the latest of our territorial acquisitions; for somehow or other we always know how to give the native good government, when we have strong motives for doing so: as in the Punjab, where it is our interest to conciliate a martial people, newly brought under our sway; and in Mysore, where it is our interest to reconcile them to the prospect of absorption. But, says Mr. Campbell, the Punjaub "having had the benefit of our previous experience, the best systems have been introduced." This is no excuse for the Government, but an aggravation of its injustice. Equity would require that the unfortunate people at whose expense our experience has been gained, should be among the first to benefit by it. For it has cost our old provinces dear, this experience! We have experimented upon their population, as if in corpore vili, while we were finding out what were "the best systems;" and now we have found them out, we do not give these unfortunate people the benefit of them.

However, I object to the word "introduced" in the above

sentence. Mr. Campbell's partiality for the Civil Service leads him to speak of our successful administration of the Punjab, as if the Civil Service had invented a revenue and judicial system which we have only adopted, and which is some centuries older than our empire in India. Long before we knew anything of India, the fabric of native society had been characterised by some peculiar and excellent institutions, viz., by a municipal organisation, providing a most efficient police for the administration of criminal law, while the civil law was worked by a simple process of arbitration, which either prevented litigation, or else ensured prompt and substantial justice to the litigants. It may be worth while to add some details on the subject of these institutions.

The village was the germ of the whole political system of native States. The constitution of a village was the model of that of a town consisting of more than one parish; and so on, till the village became a city; each branch of the municipality increasing as the community enlarged, until the single smith or carpenter of the village was represented by the guild of his trade in the city; and in every case the freeholders forming a corporation which managed the municipal revenues and police, and was the organ through which the Government transacted its business with the people. As a rule, all over India, there were three classes of ryots or cultivators in every village: 1st, the freeholders or proprietors of the soil; 2nd, a class like copyholders, who rented of the first, but could not sell nor be turned out of their holdings while they performed their engagements; 3rd, a class of tenants-at-will; the mechanics, police, &c., were paid partly by tax-free lands, and partly by a fixed portion of the produce of each field. Of the above, the landlord class alone was responsible to the Government for the taxes, which were assessed on each member of this body by its elective council, and the surplus rent, after paying Government dues and municipal expenses, was divided among the freeholders, in proportion to their share, large or small, of the property: but there was nothing like "communism" in this division, except the sort of communism we have in many parishes in England, viz., a freeholder's right of pasturage on the village common, where there

happened to be such a thing. The two most useful functionaries in this municipality were the head-man and the record-keeper; both generally hereditary officers, but requiring the confirmation of Government. The head-man was the village magistrate, tax-gatherer, coroner, &c., and had a limited civil and criminal jurisdiction, though in the village council, he was simply "*primus inter pares*." The record-keeper was quite as important an officer as the first, for nowhere in the world were the records kept with more accuracy and statistical detail than in India. The village books contained a register of every field, with dimensions, names of owners, crops sown, &c., with every particular of the possession or alienation of real property by sale, heritage, or transfer, and as the sale of land was one of the most formal processes in all the native institutions, and every circumstance of the transaction was recorded, it was comparatively easy to ascertain the truth in cases of disputed right. Finally, the village chief and record-keeper were represented by corresponding functionaries at the head of each native district or county, who thus connected the local with the general administration, and were the organs of communication between the Government and the people. For instance, in the imposition of any new tax, the native Governments always took care to obtain first the assent of the local authorities; stimulating their self-interest on such occasions, and profiting by their influence over the people. Whereas, our Government has sometimes goaded the natives into open resistance, by making them feel that they were neither represented nor consulted in its arbitrary imposition of new taxes. It was the county chiefs spoken of above, whom Lord Cornwallis mistook for great land-owners; though they were really only great tax-gatherers; and to whom he transferred the landed property of their districts by his Perpetual Settlement.

But certain conditions were exacted from these municipalities under the native system in return for the privilege of self-government. Each community was responsible for a due performance of its police duties, under heavy penalties; as were formerly the "hundreds," in England. They were bound to produce or trace the perpetrators of robberies or outrages committed within their



limits, or else to make good the amount lost, or submit to a fine imposed by the Government; and partly owing to this responsibility, partly to the peculiar fitness for their employment of the Aborigines who fulfilled the police duties, there was no part of the municipal institutions of an Indian village more perfect than its police system. Marvellous stories are related of the sagacity of this native police, who have been known to trace criminals from one county to another, sometimes for weeks together, until they succeeded in apprehending them, and wherever we have destroyed the native institutions and disorganised this force, a great increase of crime has been the consequence. Bengal is a melancholy case in point; and I must continually direct the reader's attention to the fact that wherever we have upset the native institutions, and put inventions of our own in their place, it has produced a great and progressive increase of crime. But it was in the administration of civil law that the merits of the native system were most conspicuous. The Judges were appointed by the King, and sat as his representatives, and the central courts in the capital, and local courts in the districts, corresponded to the old European model: with this difference, that as there was no set of functionaries in the Native Courts, as attorneys and special pleaders, whose livelihood depended on their practice, the Indian judges had a motive for suppressing litigation, and they maintained a system of arbitration, comparatively inexpensive to the litigants, greatly facilitated by the exact and minute record of real property, and scarcely ever leading to appeals to a higher Court.

It is worth while to add a sketch of the forms in Native Civil Courts; as they are still existing and working to admiration, wherever we have not destroyed the native institutions and introduced our system of "artificial technicalities." After the plaintiff's petition is received by the judge, he must attend when it is read in court, to answer any interrogatories the judge chooses to put to him. The defendant is then summoned and required to answer in writing, and it is the duty of the judge, at this stage of the proceedings, to endeavour to effect an arrangement or compromise, and obtain from the parties mutual releases; in which case, this first process is final. Failing in this, the judge proposes



to them an arbitration of friends, generally accepted when the parties are dealing fairly with one another—and then the forms of a regular trial are enforced by an officer of the court, who has power to compel the attendance of witnesses, the production of papers, &c.; the award is made a rule of Court, and this second process is final too. When one or both parties refuse this method, they are required to give securities, the one to prosecute, the other to defend the case. The Court then summons a number of individuals of the same profession or rank as the parties, out of whom a certain number are selected, any of whom the plaintiff or defendant has a right to challenge; the Court deciding on the validity of objection. The parties are then required to sign an instrument agreeing to submit their cause to this jury, and pay a certain fine to Government if they appeal against the decision (this meaning appeal costs), and after the hearing of the cause, before the decree is passed, they are required to sign an affirmation of the fairness of the proceedings. An officer of the Court attends to regulate the forms, as in the Arbitration Courts, and in this way several suits may be conducted simultaneously in the same Court. When the decree is given, the judge awards their costs to jurors, witnesses, &c., and decides who is to pay them. In the event of an appeal, the appellant must enter into recognizances to pay the expenses, but an appeal beyond the district seems to be unheard of, and this simple mode of dispensing justice, minus English law and attorneys and special pleaders, is to this day completely successful. It is not that lawyers do not exist in Native States, but that the Court alone can summon them, if it requires their advice or assistance; the parties cannot hire them under the native system, as they do under our system, to defeat the ends of justice.

Such then is the native judicial administration as it still exists in many parts of India, and did exist everywhere; and so well did it work, that Mr. Elphinstone can only account for "the flourishing state of the Mahratta country," in spite of the obvious defects in its government, by attributing it to the judicial part of the native institutions. And now, in lieu of this simple and rational mode of dispensing justice, we have given the natives an obscure,

complicated, pedantic system of English law, full of "artificial technicalities," which disable the candidates for justice from any longer pleading their own cause, and force them to have recourse to a swarm of attorneys and special pleaders, that is of *professional rogues*, according to Mr. Campbell, to conduct their cases, by which means we have taught an ingenious people to refine upon the quibbles and fictions of English lawyers, and become such adepts in the science, that the course of justice, civil as well as criminal, is utterly confounded in a maze of artifice and fraud, and the natives, both high and low, are becoming more and more demoralised, as they become more dexterous in applying all the "sharp practice" of English law.

The author of "Modern India" has given a very graphic description of our system, but I can only find room for an outline of his revelations. He says that some men go out from Haileybury, who are not, and never can be, fit for the duties of the Civil Service; that in the course of promotion, men are changed from one department to another with a totally different set of duties at every step—frequently posted to different parts of the country where they do not understand the language of the people; and that they only hold the same office on an average for two or three years without interruption, which gives little opportunity for acquiring the local knowledge necessary for administrative duties. As the rule, promotion goes by seniority, and so the most indifferent officers attain a certain rank in time, and the higher appointments are sometimes long blocked up by elderly men, never brilliant and now inefficient, worn out in body, mind, or temper, yet who cannot, or will not retire.

When a collector is old enough, he is made a judge—and to this step there is almost no exception if it is wished for. "It seems to be considered, that if at this time of life a man is fit for anything at all, he is fit for a judge; and if he is fit for nothing, better make him a judge and get rid of him; for once in that office he has no *claim* to farther promotion by mere seniority alone." Altogether, it happens that few above mediocrity remain to be judges, and of those who do, many are disappointed men; and in both divisions of the Bengal Presidency they are promoted

to be judges late in life, with no previous experience whatever of the principal portion of their duties, civil justice.

These judges are nervous, captious, and timid; disposed to overstrain forms and exaggerate technicalities, and to rush into the extreme of legal niceties and quibbles; they are unwilling to convict on reasonable evidence—some, unable to make up their minds, and thinking acquittal the safest course—some, considering themselves charged with the interests of the prisoner as opposed to the magistrate, and seeking for every argument for acquittal, substantial or technical; and finally they are prone to feel that their consequence depends upon active interference with and checking the magistrates, and to give prisoners the benefit of every doubt on their minds, reasonable or unreasonable, rather than face the responsibility of convicting them. Transferred to the superintendence of a large judicial machine, after having spent the best of their years and energies in other employments, it is hardly to be expected that they would well perform so difficult a task." Such being the judges, let us see what are the laws.

The criminal law is a patchwork, made up of pieces engrafted at all times and seasons on a groundwork of native codes, nearly covered and obliterated; in fact, by practice and continual emendations, there has grown up a system of our own, and the Sudder Court, composed of the judges described above, are in the habit of issuing authoritative "constructions" of regulations and points of practice: but successive judges pretty often vary their constructions. In the civil law the Government has scarcely interfered at all in the laws regulating property; but precedents and "constructions" have swelled out into a large and complicated legal system, quite undigested and unarranged, and the judges of one day are constantly altering the constructions of their predecessors.\* Such, then, being the judges, and such the laws, and the police being inefficient, except in the Punjab, where "the wholesome ancient system is more exactly adhered to," let us see how the system works, and first in criminal law. It appears that the magistrate has greater facilities for eliciting the truth than the judge; by questioning the witnesses, whose

evidence is all taken down in writing, and ascertaining that they understand what is recorded; and the author hardly ever knew evidence to be at all perverted where the parties, the magistrate, and the witnesses all spoke and understood the same language. Moreover, in the new territories there is a habit of confessing among the people; though this is exchanged for a habit of denial in the clearest cases when they find out the many judicial chances of escape under our system. Altogether in new territories, an efficient and experienced official can very well get at the truth in most cases; but there is a great deterioration in the course of time, from which Mr. Campbell infers that lying and perjury are quite as much done to our judicial institutions as to the people. It appears that the judge prefers deliberate statements as the best legal evidence, or since the magistrate can to some extent ascertain the character of the testimony of the witnesses, and does a good deal towards weighing them properly. But still experienced criminals, and especially the professional attorneys about the Courts, do much to baffle him; witnesses are sent up well crammed and cautioned to tell a connected story, and not to tell too much; and when the case after a long interval goes to the judge, the evidence is worth literally nothing. All the witnesses are thoroughly well up in a thrice-told tale. Nothing is to be made of strings of such witnesses directly contradicting one another. The judge can get little more out of them. To him a witness is a witness, and he knows nothing else about him. "The civil courts are the great schools for perjury, and in our older possessions false witnesses for criminal trials can easily be procured from thence." At the trial one of the magistrate's clerks does the mechanical duties of a prosecutor, and nothing more. The prisoner may produce any number of fresh witnesses he pleases, and has a right to counsel; although there is none for the prosecution, and "the professional advocates are the most unscrupulous of men." Finally, though the form of a jury is preserved, the judge generally puts into the box some of the pleaders, and such people about the Court—intimates to them very broadly his opinion—they always agree with him—and there is no more trouble. Under this system there is a great increase of crime; most marked in our

oldest possessions; and "the Dacoits have now got the better of the laws!" It would be very odd if it were otherwise!

Now let us see what is the system in civil law. When the plaint is lodged, which is generally long, rambling, circumstantial, exceedingly exaggerated, and full of irrelevant matter, a notice is served on the defendant, or stuck up in the village where he is supposed to reside, requiring him to file an answer in a certain number of days. If he does so, the plaintiff is called upon for a replication, the defendant for a rejoinder, and so on, each paper containing all kinds of assertions, accusations, and technical objections, and refusing to admit the plainest facts. This being completed, issue is supposed to be joined, that is to say, the judge has before him a mass of the most prodigious contradictions which unscrupulous subtlety can deliberately prepare in writing, and great quantities of irrelevant matter, and then he appoints a day for trial. Issues of law and fact are all joined at the same time. In the trial the judge is not permitted himself to make any effort towards the discovery of the truth. Everything is left entirely to the management of the parties and their professional advisers, who avail themselves of every weapon, fair and unfair. Perjury, forgery, and fraud, are altogether rampant in the civil courts; in fact, the whole system is one of highly perfected fencing with such weapons. The parties marshal up their own prepared witnesses, produce their own documents, and apply for reference to particular records. The judge would not on any account refer to the records of his own or the collector's office, except on special application from one of the parties. He scrupulously restricts himself to the *worst* evidence, and having heard that he decides as he best may. If either party commit any error of form, it is fatal to his cause. If the defendant does not appear in the manner required, the decree goes against him by default, and the first he hears of it is in the seizure of his lands and goods, after which he has no legal remedy. In execution of decrees personal property is distrained, &c. Against the possessor of landed rights the process is exceedingly simple. They are at once sold by auction without reserve to the highest bidder in satisfaction of the decree; or if certain rights are decreed, they are at once made over by precept

addressed to the collector, who must implicitly obey, however inequitable he may know the decision to be, and however inconsistent with the rights of others. Such then is the system of civil law, and the worst of it is, we have succeeded in giving the natives a taste for this system of "artificial technicalities," which thrives amazingly; and as most people are frequently involved in litigation in some shape or other, the whole country is demoralised by it, and the lowest villagers are becoming up to many "dodges" of the law. Finally, our author says, "the judicial oath as it is used, does not in the very least affect the evidence. And yet this is not because the religious sanction of an oath is unknown to the people. On the contrary it *was* nowhere stronger, and this is another of the changes caused by our system. In a new country I found that a solemn oath was astonishingly binding, not gabbled out lightly as an everyday matter in the courts of justice, but taken on rare occasions, after the fashion of the people themselves. But such binding oaths do not exist in our older provinces. The judicial oath is much too common-place an affair to carry weight, and the people seeing perjury practised with impunity, become used to it. The longer we possess any province the more common and grave does perjury become."

Such then are our judges, and laws, and administration of what is called civil and criminal justice in India. And the maintenance of this demoralising system is the more iniquitous that Government is aware of the evil, and conscious of the remedy. That remedy has been applied in the Punjaub, and the reason for adopting it is thus stated by Mr. Campbell:—"After a long trial of the working of the old courts, it may be supposed that the Government was little inclined to extend their operation, and the system was so radically vicious that there was no amending it except by altogether sweeping it away and commencing *de novo*." He then gives the details of the Punjab administration which the reader will find is the same native system described in the beginning of this chapter. The remedy then, and the only one, is to return to that local self-government, and simple mode of administering justice, indigenous to the country, and congenial to the manners of its inhabitants. A remarkable instance of the



success of returning to native principles is given by the historian, Professor Wilson, where he relates how a Bengal magistrate succeeded in putting down gang robbery in the district of Burdwan. He says: "The instruments employed were the neglected and undervalued institutions of the country, animated by skilful superintendence and encouragement. The landowners and headmen of the villages and various trades, were called upon to enter into engagements for the performance of those duties, which it was personally explained to them they were expected to fulfil, and the village watchmen were punished for neglect or connivance, and rewarded for courage and good conduct. Attempts to deprive them of their service lands were sedulously resisted, and the villagers were encouraged to give them more liberal subsistence. In this instance it was unequivocally shown that the co-operation of the people was to be had, and that when had it was efficacious. Notwithstanding this evidence of the feasibility of a different system, no attempt was made to act upon it on a more extensive scale." No! instead of that, in spite of every evidence, and warning, and remonstrance from the most competent authorities, the Government has deliberately gone on breaking up the native system all over the country, except in the North-west Provinces and the Punjab, and yet, owing partly to the short date of our Empire in the greater part of India, and partly, to the extraordinary tenacity with which the people cling to the most characteristic parts of their social structure, although we have subverted the fabric, we have nowhere succeeded in destroying the elements of their institutions. The utter destruction of a village, says Sir John Malcolm, and dispersion of its inhabitants for hundreds of miles, and for thirty years at a time, cannot prevent its instant re-establishment when force is withdrawn. At that signal the people at once reappear, the lost records are recovered, every field is recognised and claimed, the hereditary village officers, even when infants, are reinstated, and the little municipality resumes its place and reasserts its nature. The village institutions, he says elsewhere, will after the scenes they have survived, be indestructible, unless the strong hand of power breaks up establishments which have for ages formed the basis of all Indian Governments. Yet



this is what the strong hand of English power continues to do in our old provinces; to break up establishments which ensured the natives a good administration of civil and criminal law, and to maintain the shocking abuse of justice exposed by Mr. Campbell. For I ask the reader whether such a judicial system as this author describes be not an offence to God and man? It seems contrived on purpose, not merely to render person and property insecure, and to stop the means of encouraging every kind of industry, but to force, as in a hot-bed, every evil tendency of the native mind; to paralyse confidence between man and man; and to deprave a whole people as much as it is possible for laws to deprave them. And after the abuses of this judicial system have been notorious for about half a century, especially since the Commons' Committee Report of 1810, can Parliament pretend to believe that the bureaucratic Government which has maintained them, has done its duty to the people of India?—Can Parliament venture to prolong the secret, irresponsible despotism of such a Government, for another twenty years?

## CHAPTER VI.

### FINANCE AND PUBLIC WORKS.

SOME of the most sagacious of princes, such as Diocletian and Queen Elizabeth, have complained that it was next to impossible for even a wise and good ruler to find out the truth, when it was the interest of his ministers to combine together to deceive their sovereign.

Never was this more strikingly exemplified than by the mystification of England with regard to the condition of the natives of India, by the bureaucratic Government to which England commits her authority over them. Never was it more true that, "what flatters the sovereign generally forms the misery of the people;" as we shall see when I examine what those "blessings of the British Rule," which England imagines she confers upon India, really are?

The most curious thing is, that although the imposture of the day is invariably exposed afterwards, the exposure never seems to reach the mass of the people of this country, but the next grand deception of the Indian Government is just as successful as any former one. This reminds me of the following remarks of Machiavelli on the Borgia Pope: "So simple are men, and so prone to obey any impulse from without, that whoever is willing to deceive them will always find those who are willing to be deceived. Alexander VI. never did anything else than deceive men, nor thought of any thing else, and none ever asserted more confidently, or swore to promises better and kept them less, than he did; nevertheless his deceptions always succeeded to a wish, because he understood that part of the business of life thoroughly." And this is the

only part of the business of life which the Bureaucracy seems to understand; however, if the reader has the patience to go through this chapter, I will show him that unless we entirely and immediately change our system, and relieve India from the incubus of a Bureaucratic Government, our affairs in that country cannot be saved from utter ruin: indeed it will be no easy matter to save them now!

As the home authorities always treat the question of public works as one of finance, I will take a leaf out of their book, and consider the subject in a financial point of view. What is it that now renders the state of the Indian finances dangerous and unsafe, and far more so than they were in 1842, when Sir Robert Peel strongly expressed his alarm about them? It is the steady increase of debt; the almost invariable deficit; the non-increase, the decrease in some instances, of the tax-paying power of the people; coupled with the unhealthy symptom of an unnatural weakness in this tax-paying power, and the confession of the Indian Government after it has tried taxes on everything susceptible of an impost, that it cannot carry taxation any further. Is not such a condition of the finances of a great empire enough to alarm any foreseeing statesman?

One source of revenue has indeed increased, and just in time to save us from adding several millions more to the debt, but as this source of revenue is one which forms no test of the general ability of the people to pay taxes, although it now contributes about one-eighth of the net receipt of the Indian Exchequer, it adds to the danger of our situation, that this duty on opium is liable to great fluctuations, and might any day be immediately and finally extinguished (one-eighth of the net revenue!) by an act of common sense on the part of the Chinese Government; viz., by its permitting the cultivation of the poppy at home. Surely, when the reader considers the actual embarrassment of the Indian finances, the yearly peril of losing one-eighth of the net revenue, and the confessed inability of the Government to impose more taxes, he must feel how deeply our own interests are involved in placing the finances of India on a sounder footing; for as the case stands, although it would ruin England to lose her empire in India, it is threatening our own finances with ruin to be obliged to keep it.

The most startling point to English eyes is the small tax-paying power of the people. A comparison with our own happier land will show the significance of this fact. In England the people pay on an average 2*l.* per head of population annually in taxes; yet so far from the industry of the country's being crushed by such a burthen, the people never were so prosperous before; in case of war they could evidently raise a much larger sum for the service of the State, and in peace the yield of the taxes increases with such regularity that a Chancellor of the Exchequer may calculate on a surplus of about two millions sterling every year. In India the people pay only 5*s.* 4*d.* per head, and, deducting the opium monopoly and about half a million of tribute from foreign States, the natives literally pay only 4*s.* 5*d.* per head of population annually in taxes; and yet by its own admission the Government cannot raise any larger sum in case of an emergency, and so far from the yield of the Indian taxes regularly increasing and affording a surplus nearly four times as large as that of England, in proportion to the number of the people, the Indian revenue would be actually declining at this moment without an increase of territory which brings a corresponding increase of charges.

Is it not clear that there must be something radically wrong, something completely rotten in such a state of things as this? The people are described by Mr. Campbell and others, as being full of industrial energy, and "well fitted to accumulate capital." Why then are they so wretchedly poor? What has become and does now become of their productive capital? For it is evidently stationary at an unnaturally low ebb, if it be not even diminishing. Aye! we must ask it sooner or later; and the longer we delay the greater becomes our own danger. What has become of the productive capital of India? I am sorry to say the question opens a dark page of English history; for it is impossible to investigate this subject without recognising the effect of foreign mal-administration in draining away the capital of the natives of India. Independent of the illegitimate gains of the last century, of the enormous sums of money abstracted from the country in the good old times, when it was possible for a young Englishman to go out

with nothing at all, and return at the age of thirty-four with a fortune of a million sterling (vide the histories of Clive, Paul Benfield, and scores of obscure "Nabobs"); independent of the savings of English officials, who monopolise the most lucrative employments in the State, and go home, of course, when they have realised a fortune—independent of the "resumptions" of landed estates and the gradual extinction of the native princes who spend their incomes in the country, to make room for more English officials—in other words, to provide more patronage for the Home Government—independent of all this, there is a regular drain in hard cash every year of about three millions sterling from India, for claims in England designated "the Home Charges."

Now, it has been said by the historian, Professor Wilson, that the transfer of surplus revenue to England is "an exhausting drain upon the resources of the country, the issue of which is replaced by no reflux; it is an extraction of the life-blood from the veins of national industry, which no subsequent introduction of nourishment is furnished to restore;" and some such effects must result from the annual transfer of so large a proportion of the produce of Indian taxes to England. To bring the case home to our own feelings, let us conceive ourselves to be subjugated, and obliged to ship off annually, without one farthing of return, the same proportion of our taxes, which would be more than eight millions sterling, to some foreign country; to see besides, foreigners occupying all the valuable appointments in our public service, and going home with their fortunes, and our great landed estates in a course of gradual "resumption" by the Government; how would our productive capital stand such a drain and such a system as this? Should we not, at least, expect when we remitted our eight millions, to have a good administration in return for our money? We might be sure our foreign masters would keep the peace in the country for their own sakes, but should we not expect them to do something for ours? particularly if they prided themselves on being a very Christian people, much superior in morality to ourselves? Should we not expect then to have an equitable revenue system, and a salutary administration of justice, and above all, considering our heavy tribute, to have