paratory to being formally introduced to the Governor-General. But just as he was at the highest point of favour, and holding grave counsel with English officials as to the best way of furthering the moral and intellectual interests of the rising generation, there arrived all the way from Umballa, in the Punjab, a certain Captain Parsons, who went straight to the quarters of the Wahabis, made several arrests, and carried off a batch of prisoners forthwith for trial in the criminal courts of the Punjab. After this batch of conspirators had been disposed of came the turn of the now notorious Ahmed Oolah, the pet of the Bengal Government. He was forthwith arrested, convicted on the clearest evidence, sentenced to be hanged, and subsequently banished to the Andamans; and we have to add that he was at Port Blair at the time Lord Mayo was murdered. Now that circumstances had come to the rescue of the innocent, Mowla Buksh has been decorated with the Star of India, and we soon hope to learn that Mr Tayler, the commissioner, has received some reparation for his unmerited disgrace.*

* In allusion to the Wahabi conspiracy the late Sir Herbert B. Edwardes wrote as follows:—"The centre of this truly bitter and formidable conspiracy was Patna. You lived there, and knew what was going on. You acted on your knowledge, and paralysed the whole of the Wahabi sect, by seizing their leader at the very moment when they could and would have struck a heavy blow against us. The Bengal

The reader will naturally be anxious to learn why we have told this long story, and we must therefore say that we have done so partly to give an idea of the extraordinary astuteness of the Wahabis and the gullibility of the English, but mainly to show that in India, if we wait for such evidence of a conspiracy as would satisfy Chief Justice Bovill in a court of law, we may wait for ever. Such evidence is seldom or never procurable, and if Mr Tayler had waited for it Patna would have gone. He had to form his opinion by a variety of information and facts, not one particular of which, in all probability, could be admitted as strictly legal evidence. And in judging as to the probable causes of Lord Mayo's murder we must do the same. The exact link between the Wahabis and Shere Ali we shall probably never learn; but here are the leading points, and the reader can form his own conclusions.

First of all, immediately after the conviction of Ahmed Oolah in 1865, an attempt was made to murder Mr. Ainslie, the convicting judge, at Patna. In the next place Chief Justice Norman fell a victim to the assassin's knife immediately

Government was determined not to believe in the Wahabi conspiracy, and punished you for your vigour. Time has done you justice, shown that you were right, and hanged or transported the enemies whom you suspected and disarmed."—From a published letter of Sir Herbert Edwardes to Mr. William Tayler.

after rejecting sundry applications made on behalf of the Wahabis, and just before he was about to sit on the Wahabi appeals. In the third place we come to the sad murder of Lord Mayo, whose activity in pursuit of the sect was notorious. As regards the facts connected with Port Blair, they are simply these. Nearly all the Wahabi convicts were there, and headed by their most influential chief—our old acquaintance—Ahmed Oolah, and from the laxity of discipline had frequent communication with their friends in India; and further, it is an absolute fact, that when one of the spiritual leaders was arrested some years ago, three letters from a Wahabi convict on the Andamans were found amongst his papers.

We may repeat, that if the Government waits for legal evidence, it may wait for ever; and the question now is, whether we should wait for more assassinations or act at once. There can be no doubt that we ought to choose the latter alternative. This Wahabiism must be stamped out. These men, it must be remembered, do not appreciate our forbearance; they call it cowardice, and the more we exhibit of it, the greater contempt they will naturally feel for us. It should be proclaimed from one end of India to the other, that any one convicted of treason will be hanged, the whole of his kith and kin banished, and the possessions

of the family forfeited to the State.* A barbarous remedy truly, it will be said, but we must in any case be content for many a year to come, and for ever if we continue our present system of government, to say with Macbeth :—

> "For mine own good,
> All causes shall give way; I am in blood
> Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go o'er."

We are aware that the course recommended will be in the last degree unpalatable to the tender-hearted British people; but if we do not choose to govern the country, at least to some extent, on Asiatic principles, the sooner we leave it the better.

In conclusion, we must protest, as strongly as possible, against the adoption for the future of the course pursued as regards Chief Justice Norman's murderer. He was, the reader will recollect, not only subjected to every possible personal indignity, but the Government, by burning the body, showed in the eyes of the people a malicious desire to injure the prospects of the deceased in a future

* We believe that the French stamped out the vendetta in Corsica by the simple process of putting a murderer's kith and kin in gaol till he gave himself up.

state. This action of the Government, as has been amply seen from the murder that followed, is not sufficient to act as a deterrent, while it exasperated the Mahommedans to the highest degree, and is supposed by some to have had no small effect in aiding to bring about the assassination of Lord Mayo, who approved of the indignities practised on the murderer and his remains.

As it is probable that many will read this paper who never read a line about India before, and who perhaps will never do so again till another Governor-General is murdered, I may be allowed here to offer one word of warning. That word is simply, that the people of England should either rouse themselves up, and put their Indian affairs in order, or that they should get back as fast as possible the enormous sum they have been weak enough to lend on the security of an empire which not only contains all the elements of decay, but which, at this moment, is only preserved from immediate and utter bankruptcy by the fact that it is still able to force some eight millions worth (nearly one-sixth of the revenue) of opium on the Chinese.

I may here add that it has since been proved by Shere Ali's last letter to his cousin Arsala Khan, that, so far from being miserable at the Andamans, Shere Ali seemed to think himself rather well off

than otherwise; and there is also strong reason for asserting that he had expectations of obtaining the pardon of the Government. This, I need hardly say, makes it still more probable that he was urged on to the deed by the Wahabis.

CONCERNING JOHN'S INDIAN AFFAIRS.

IV

MY DEAR JOHN,—Some weeks after my last interview you were kind enough to send for me again, in order that sundry matters regarding your Indian affairs might be discussed, and during the visit in question the whole of my suggestions as to the future management of your Indian property were brought to an end. In this final conversation, if you remember, the Finance Committee was again alluded to, and some practical methods suggested for bringing its work to a satisfactory conclusion. Other matters connected with the remodelling of the Indian Government were also discussed. Altogether our conversation seemed to be so interesting and important, that I feel fully justified in reminding you of at least a portion of our final talk on Indian affairs.

I commenced the conversation, you will remem-

ber, by observing that the Secretary of State for India seems at last to have arrived at that beatific condition described in the ancient Hindoo books, where it is said that the sight most pleasing to God is when a Brahmin, steadfastly contemplating the tip of his nose for a lengthened period of time, repeats at intervals the sacred monosyllable. That condition of mind, where the soul, as it were, retires completely within itself—that state in which the individual sees nothing beyond the termination of his nose, has at length been satisfactorily attained by an exalted member of our aristocracy, and will no doubt be looked upon by the Brahminical sages as a pleasing proof of the progress of the British race. But, to speak seriously, my dear John, this passive state of your principal Indian agent at Westminster is an indication of the rottenness of your Indian estate management which is worthy of elaborate record. What is that we see? Well, we actually behold an individual who is in fact the Emperor of India, remaining absolutely deaf to all the clamour of his subjects—to all the representations of important officials—to all the representations of the most powerful organ of the most powerful press in the world. Steadfastly contemplating the tip of his nose, he refuses not only to act, but not even to notice indications which no other person in the world

similarly situated could contemplate without uneasiness, and without making at least some endeavour to provide a remedy for the evils complained of. But the evil I allude to, the evil of an iniquitous and galling tax, still remains to be an instrument of oppression, and a curse to millions of the inhabitants of your Indian estates. That tax has been repeatedly alluded to, I am aware, but I am equally aware that while the very name* of it exists it cannot be alluded to too often, and I hope you will allow me to mention some facts which I omitted in our last conversation. Let me point, then, for one moment, my dear John, to the *Times* of December 5th, and call your attention to the evidence there adduced as regards the Income Tax, and to the able leading article which pronounces what every one must consider to be a satisfactory and final judgment. So decisive, indeed, were the reports on the oppression arising from this abominable scourge that the *Times* simply declared that "even financial equilibrium, however desirable, may be purchased too dearly, and whatever may be the theoretical recommendations of an Income Tax, its practical

* As long as the very name of this tax exists it will be quite sufficient to enable the low-class tax-gatherers to bully the ignorant rural classes, who have no knowledge of the numerous taxational fluctuations, and are necessarily at the mercy of their sole informants, the tax-gatherers aforesaid.

evils, as they are delineated in the communications of our correspondent, must be allowed to preponderate. In any case, however," it is afterwards added, "we fear that an Income Tax, unacceptable everywhere, is really an exotic that cannot be acclimatized in India, and that some substitute must ultimately be found for an impost admitting of such intolerable abuses." But, my dear John, I assert, without fear of contradiction, that your very highest agents have always been aware of the oppression and evils arising from this tax; and I may here mention that a friend of mine, at that time a high Indian official, was present when the late Lord Canning was told by the collector of Cawnpore, that he had simply ordered all the returns in his district to be doubled, as he *thought* that the natives had *all* sent in incorrect returns. But arbitrary exactions like these are nothing compared to the various powers of annoyance which are at the command of the corrupt petty officials who are responsible for the collection of the tax. Of these powers we have had many proofs, but the following facts are, perhaps, better calculated to convey an idea of the evils to be apprehended than anything that has yet been published. When the tax was imposed at Benares two native chiefs—Rajah Raliaram and Deonarain Singh—came forward and made themselves responsible for

the collection of the whole amount demanded from the city, in order to spare the people from the intolerable infliction of having our tax-collectors let loose on them. They collected what they could, and paid up the amount, but at a loss to themselves of about two thousand pounds. Such indeed, my dear John, is the nature of this tax that a relative of mine, who has lately returned from India, told me only the other day that no more disagreeable and painful duty could be imposed on an officer of Government. He had been employed in the collection of the tax, and he told me that the collection was as painful to the Government officer as it was to the people. If the amount demanded was not paid up in fifteen days the tax was doubled. And a common trick, he said, was for the assessors to tax people who could not appeal, for the simple reason that they could hardly find money enough to pay the stamps which must be attached to the petition. Here you begged to interrupt me for one moment, and said you were quite satisfied that a grosser instance of despotism than the maintenance of such a tax had never occurred in civilised times. "I am now quite prepared to admit," you continued, "that immense evils exist as regards the management of my Indian estates, and that a complete reformation of the whole system of government is

urgently required; but how can you expect the poor Duke and Grant Duff can bring in a bill for setting my Indian affairs in order till they have got in the report of the Finance Committee, which is inquiring so long and wonderfully into matters, and which, I am told, is so constituted as to get at all the evidence procurable?" At this point of the conversation, you may remember, you were very nearly sending for your physician, for I could do nothing but ejaculate, "Get at all the evidence procurable—get at all the evidence procurable!" and simply stood staring at you like a cow bursting upon clover. After a rush of bewildering thought I, however, managed to rally at last, and proceeded to inform you that whoever told you anything to produce such an impression as that must have evidently swallowed an enormous dose of cocculus indicus. The Duke of Argyll, I suppose, told you all that—or was it Grant Duff, the Under Secretary of State for India, who sits on the right hand of the chairman of the committee, watching the case for Government, and who has ventured not only to snub, and endeavour to turn into ridicule, but even vaguely, and some might say distinctly, to threaten, an Indian official who has dared to utter unpalatable truths? Why, my dear John, you might put all the talent in England into the committee, and I would defy it to obtain a satisfactory

result, if you set it to work in the same way as this committee has been. If it was a committee to inquire into the Game Laws, would the inquiry be satisfactory if gamekeepers were mainly examined, and there was no one, or only an occasional individual, to represent the tenant farmers? But the flimsy veil this committee cast over the deliberate denial of justice to the people of India—a denial of justice as fatal to the English as to them—has long ago been seen through by the shrewd-witted Indians. It was only the other day that one of them said to me, "This committee will not only come to nothing, but it will be worse than nothing, for if ever any inquiry is asked for again it will be said, 'Oh, you have had a committee already, and nothing whatever has been discovered, and what is the use of having another?'" And now, my dear John, if you will allow me, I will tell you something about the committee; I will next show you what Grant Duff has been doing, and how his treatment of one of the witnesses has produced the most disagreeable conclusions as regards the fairness of the Government; and, finally, I will show you how alone any investigations can be brought to a conclusion thoroughly satisfactory to both countries.

And here, at the outset, allow me to say, that if you want to improve your opinion of Englishmen

in general, you could not do better than go in disguise and observe the proceedings of your Indian Finance Committee. And, my dear John, I am not at all speaking by guess; for, on the 12th of April last, the committee honoured your humble servant so far as to ask him three hundred and ninety-three questions. It was nervous work, I can tell you, and was a great deal worse than going into a jungle on foot after a wounded tiger, where you can't see far before you. The chairman, it is true, had somewhat a sleepy look (an appearance not always to be trusted, by the way), and some of the committee looked harmless enough; but when you are fairly enclosed in the arena, with a reporter at your elbow, and twelve or thirteen pair of eyes regarding you, and the prospect before you of an indefinite examination, the situation to a man who has had plenty of jungle fever is far from comfortable. My anxiety to meet the wishes of the committee was, as you may imagine, very great; and, indeed, so much was this the case, that I soon threw the whole proceedings into confusion. I commenced my answers before the examiner had quite finished his questions, and this, of course, reduced the reporter to despair. Then my utterance was too rapid, and, from looking at the examiner instead of addressing my answer to the chairman, the members on the other side could

not hear. But the patience and good-nature of the committee soon set me fairly at my ease, and then away we went, question and answer, and answer and question, for more than three mortal hours—in fact, for the whole sitting. And, my dear John, I must say that the examination was extremely fair; there was an evident and honest desire to get at the truth, and not to put one in a hole; and if you stepped partially into a hole, which I did once or twice for want of readiness, some member, when it came to his turn, asked questions calculated to supply the defects of former answers. One elderly gentleman, however, addressed me rather sternly, and at one time seemed inclined to be somewhat sarcastic. But this, I believe, was mainly because he was labouring under the erroneous idea that I was what is commonly called poking fun at him. Having found out that I was really doing nothing of the kind, he eventually seemed to consider me as, to say the least, somewhat eccentric. And, my dear John, as this gentleman was a Manchesterian, and may be presumed fairly to represent the men of his class, it may not be altogether uninteresting if I briefly glance at some of his questions, as they will show you how very ignorant people are in this country as regards the conditions of Indian life, and how little Eastern civilisation is likely to be benefited

by having the new wine of Manchester poured in upon it.

My Manchesterian examiner commenced with about eight questions, of a nature not worth detailing, and things were going on well enough till we came to loggerheads as to the value of time. This arose from my having pointed out that where ferries are possible, you should never have bridges in India, at least in the rural districts, because the country can't afford them. "Then," said my examiner, "you probably think that we did very unwisely in the erection of bridges in Europe?" To this I replied, that time is of great importance in Europe. "Then why should it not be so in India?" was the next question. "Well, simply because whether a man takes half an hour in getting his cart over a river, or takes five minutes in going over a bridge, is really a matter of no importance with reference to the demands on his time." "But do you not think that an economy of time might be of great value to the natives of India?" To this I replied, that, generally speaking, it certainly would not; and begged to add that what I was mainly contending for was that the first thing wanted in India is irrigation, and that all the money you take from the country to spend on bridging rivers that can be crossed in other ways is a loss to the country. Then my

examiner went to that well-worn topic—the resources of India. "What," he asked, "are the resources of India to which you look for the country being made more productive, and the people placed in a more prosperous condition?" And here, my dear John, I fell into irretrievable disgrace: for I simply said that there are no resources in India; and then, after a pause, added that there is only one resource in India, water, to add to the production of the soil. "But you are aware," urged my examiner, "that India has been celebrated for manufacturing produce of great value, beauty, and usefulness?" To this I replied in the affirmative. "Then why cannot India run a race with us? India was in advance of us some centuries ago; why cannot she resume her position by increased activity?" To this I replied, that if Manchester has the means of producing at a cheaper rate, the incentive to increased activity does not exist: and here we got to the end of the resources of India. Then we got to sugar, cotton, and wool; and, nothing of any importance having been elicited, my examiner got back to the economy of time, a subject which he, as a Manchesterian, could not lose sight of. And here, my dear John, if you will allow me, I will just read a few of the questions and answers, as they stand in the report of the evidence.

"3207. Do not you think that an increase of bridges and roads, giving facilities for communication, will be a great convenience to all those having produce to send away?—Certainly, in the case of roads; but I consider that the time saved by building an immense bridge is not worth the money to the country, considering that irrigation works are so much needed.

"3208. You are probably aware that all the inventions of this country of utility are based on the economy of time?—Yes; but that rule does not apply to the natives of India. Supposing a man in Mysore has half-a-dozen carts, and carries coffee to the coast, he can only make one trip during the season, and would never make a second by saving ten minutes here and there by going over a bridge; and the same rule would apply elsewhere."

After a few questions more my examiner was evidently reduced to despair, and said, "On the whole you arrive at the conclusion that India should be left very much in the state it is now?" No; that it should be watered, and that, having been watered, it should be left alone. "But," urged my examiner, quite forgetting that with irrigation comes mud, and manure of the most valuable description, "water is a mere solvent; it is not nutritious in itself." However, not to bore you

more than I can help, my dear John, I will hurry on as fast as possible, and get to what I am told is the favourite expedient for developing the resources of India—deep ploughing; and here I was asked if ploughing to the depth of say eighteen inches had ever been tried in India? To this I replied that it would not pay to carry it out with the means existing in the country. Then we got to famines, and other matters, and then my questioner wanted to know whether more coffee was not grown in Tanjore than in Mysore, Tanjore being a region impossible for the production of coffee. My examiner was now all but exhausted, but an idea of promise at last seemed to occur to him, and it was this:—

"3225. Do the natives read the agricultural reports that are published in this country; have they any idea of what is going on here; are they acquainted with the vast activities prevailing, not only in Great Britain but on the continent of Europe?" What a temptation to ask whether the farmers in this country, supposing them to be unable to read any language, were in the habit of consulting the best Chinese works on agriculture! But, my dear John, I simply said that I didn't think they had any knowledge of these things at all.

3226 was the last, and it was this: "Is there no-

thing that can be done to stimulate them to render themselves more comfortable and more useful in the great family of mankind?—Water is the great thing to stimulate them, as I said before;" and here the man of Manchester sank back fairly exhausted. Now, my dear John, I have since made some enquiries about this gentleman, and I am told that he is president of an important chamber of commerce, one of those bodies that are always worrying at the Government to develop the resources that they imagine must exist somewhere in India, and if the knowledge of the members of such bodies is of a piece with the knowledge of this worthy man, how can you imagine that your Indian agents can both serve them and the natives at the same time? The Manchesterians want, above all things, bridges and railways for the economization of time, or, in other words, to get produce cheaply to the coast; whilst the natives want firstly irrigation, not only because it is their only resource, but to save them from the risks of famine. And so the cart has been put before the horse, and will be so for many a year to come, to the great detriment of both countries, for it is as much to the interests of the Manchesterians as it is of the Indians, that the country should be watered first and railed afterwards, seeing that there is no money to do both at once. And, my

dear John, if you consider for one moment, you will see that whichever way you turn as regards matters Indian, the answer always comes the same, and you get to water at last. If the financier comes to me, I tell him that the key of finance is population, to pay plenty of taxes; that the key of population is ample and certain food; and that the only key to regular and ample food is to be found in water. If the general politician comes to me, I say to him that if we wish to hold our own in India this can best be done by rendering her people rich and contented; that this can only be done by developing the resources of the soil, and that this again can only be done by cheap and abundant water. If Manchester comes to me I say that India can only become an active purchaser of her wares by being enriched; and here again we get to the one, the only answer. If Manchester again comes to me and says that she wants an improved quality of cotton, and that she wants to have it as cheaply and regularly as possible, I say this can only be effected by irrigation, and by rendering agriculture so safe that the area devoted to the production of food can be safely reduced, and more land spared for cotton without the smallest risk of famine. If the investor in Indian railways comes to me and complains of the miserable traffic receipts and paltry earnings, I point to the

fact that if ever he wants railways to pay he must find more produce to carry, and here again we get to water. If the general observer comes to me, and says that you can't expect rapid development in a climate which relaxes the frame, and where the people are thus naturally possessed of but little enterprise in matters requiring much physical exertion—if such a man comes to me, I tell him that we must find some way which shall add to the resources of the country with the least possible demand on the labour forces of the people, and this can only be done by water. Ask any man you choose who really knows India well, and who is able to take in at one glance all the circumstances of the situation—ask any such man what is to be done, and he will tell you to get Rungasamy up to his middle in mud and leave him alone.

And now, my dear John, all this talk about water reminds me of famines, and that I was asked a number of questions as regards these awfully frequent calamities—so many, in fact, that without boring you to death, I could hardly give you an idea of all the points raised during the course of the enquiry. I may tell you, however, that I suggested that grain should be procured by Government, and laid up in granaries in all districts where famines are possible, so as to help the people

through a time of dearth, and, waiving all considerations of humanity, I urged that their safety is the first thing to be looked to, and that we should provide so that it would be impossible to have a famine in future to carry off a million or so of taxpayers. Out of this arose a multitude of questions. The catalogue of deaths* from famine seemed certainly to strike the committee as an important fact, but they seemed very unwilling to surrender themselves to an idea so contrary to what are called the laws of political economy. But to every objection I simply urged that the safety of life must be secured; but, to give you a notion of the objections, urged one of the committee—

"3133. Then, instead of endeavouring in any way to encourage habits of forethought or providence in the people, you would discourage them by making the Government undertake the duty of feeding them?—I consider that the people are in that particular state of civilisation that you cannot look to them to take such precautions as a more civilised people would do, and therefore you must treat them to a certain extent as children instead

* In the famine in the North-Western Provinces 250,000 people perished; in the Orissa famine, 1,200,000; and in the Rajputana famine, 1,364,529; making a grand total of 2,814,529 deaths; and these famines have all taken place since the year 1861. Then there seems to have been some form of famine lately in Ganjam, but there are no particulars published as yet that I am aware of.

of letting them die from famine, as they commonly do, by millions, because to preserve their lives in the way I have suggested would be contrary to the so-called laws of political economy."

I was subsequently asked why grain should not be imported, but I pointed out that there were really no corn-growing countries within reach—that you had none at all on the west, while on the east there is only Burmah to rely on. Then we got to railways, but I pointed out that the tendency of railways was to increase the risks of famine, by encouraging the production of articles of export that cannot be eaten; and as to their being able to prevent famines, I pointed to the fact that there was a railway right up to the famine districts of 1861, and yet that the people died to the amount of about a quarter of a million. Altogether, there seems to be no immediate way of averting famines except by keeping stores of grain in the country; and I pointed out, secondly, that we could look to irrigation alone for making the people independent of any assistance on the part of Government. And, my dear John, it has since occurred to me that there would be no objection to these granaries at all if, when the grain was in danger of being spoiled from age, the old was exchanged for new grain. Some grain, I may observe, as for instance ragee, will keep in these dry climates for an im-

mense time, so that there would be no occasion for the Government to turn itself into a grain dealer. And here, my dear John, I may as well give you a few examples of the questions raised on this subject, if you will just allow me to read them to you as they stand.

"3368. Will not the fact of their having such stores to fall back upon rather render the people negligent in making exertions for themselves in order to bring grain from a distance?—It might perhaps do so, but I consider that the first duty is to see that the safety of life is preserved; that that is the key of the position, and that everything should give way to it.

"3369. We will grant that; but I want to see what the results of your mode of doing this are. Now, will not the fact of there being these Government stores in reserve operate to prevent private cultivators from storing up their own grain, or holding back their own grain?—No, I do not think so; because, owing to their present position and knowledge, we see that they actually sell out their grain, and I am not aware that they would be influenced in any way by the fact that there were granaries at hand; they do now, notwithstanding the risks of famine, sell out their grain to a dangerous extent.

"3370. Do you think that it will always be the

case with the natives of India, that they will be so indifferent to the general law which governs dealers in any commodity elsewhere, that they will not care to hold back an article which they see is rising in price and likely to become more profitable?—Well, I think that in their present state of civilisation, and up to such time as the people advance very much indeed, to such a period as you could not look forward to—I believe for a great number of years—the people would act in what you may call an improvident manner, and we see that they have actually done so.

"3371. Where?—In those countries where famines have occurred.

"3372. Where they have, to a certain extent, relied upon the Government to help them?—I do not know what they relied on, I am sure; but whether they relied on the Government or not, they have died.

"3373. Do you think that it is wise to lead people to rely on the Government to help them through these crises?—Yes; until the people are more efficiently educated, and are better able to take care of themselves.

"3374. Do not you think that there would be considerable danger, both of jobbing and discontent and suspicion, if the Government had stores of this kind scattered all over the country,

which were to be thrown on the market at the discretion of Government officers?—No: I do not see what ill effects could arise from it, unless you made them into grain dealers from year to year, which is a case I am not assuming."

And now, my dear John, I won't trouble you any more about these famines; but the fact is, that from having lived amongst the people, and witnessed the general tendency, from the facilities given by roads and railways, to hoard values in cash instead of in grain as they used to do, I do not think it possible that, from both humane and financial considerations, too much attention could be paid to the subject. Nor would what I propose be such a very gigantic undertaking. I would simply take the map of India, and say, "Here you have irrigation, here you have districts where the monsoons have never been known to fail, there you have districts contiguous to safe grain-producing countries." All these I would of course except, and I would firmly secure my base in other parts by laying up grain, nor would I break up my granaries till I had by irrigation given the people that safety of life which they have a right to demand of their rulers. Here you begged to interrupt me for one moment, and observed that there certainly seemed to be some sense in what I said, "but," you continued, "the objections urged

by the committee certainly seem very serious, and the notion of setting up granaries seems to be the revival of a system long ago exploded, and would interfere with the laws of supply and demand." Here I observed that you do here in effect exactly what I propose should be done there. You don't allow people to perish by thousands by the roadsides, in order to encourage habits of forethought amongst the lower classes, and much less do you let them die by millions. You recognise the duty of saving life, and take the chance of being able to teach habits of forethought by educating and improving the people, instead of letting them improve themselves off the face of the earth. "But," you urged, "we buy food in the ordinary way, and feed the people in the workhouse, and that is not at all the same thing." Now, my dear John, this sounds all very well, but if, from the experience of the past, it had clearly been found that you could not, from any combination of causes, provide food in time to save the lives of the people, it would clearly be your duty to lay up food, in your poor-houses, beforehand. The principle, you see, is exactly the same, but Englishmen are so dreadfully groovy, that if you propose to carry out a thing in a slightly different way from what they have been accustomed to, you can hardly drive

the point into their heads by any known process of reasoning.

After famines the question next in importance related to Public Works, when my answers tended to prove that all these matters should be left to the decision of the revenue authorities, whose interests are identical with those of the people, seeing that the interests of both lie in the economical development of the resources of the country, and because being in constant contact with the population they are best able to judge as to what the most urgent requirements of the country really are. In short I pointed out that the engineers should be merely the executive servants of the revenue authorities. Connected with the position of public works we got, I may mention, to the point as to whether native engineers are competent to carry out important works. To this I replied that they certainly had succeeded admirably in everything they had undertaken (a great deal more than can be said for our engineers, by the way), and as a proof of this I pointed to the magnificent irrigation works, tanks and channels, works many of which had been constructed hundreds of years ago. Then we got to bridges, and here I was able to point out that the natives had been as successful in bridging large rivers as in the other works they had undertaken, and instanced the stone bridges

constructed in the province of Mysore—bridges that have withstood the floods of sixty, and in one instance of more than a hundred years. And generally the evidence on the head of bridges went to show that there was a strong tendency (I suppose with the idea of developing the resources of our iron-masters), not only to put up bridges which the country could well do without, but to send out iron bridges from England, instead of using the materials of the country.

Amongst the numerous objects of enquiry agriculture, as you may imagine, was not neglected, and the well-worn subject of the loss arising from using cattle-dung as a fuel of course came foremost. And here, my dear John, I trust I set the minds of the committee finally at rest as regards these stercoraceous deposits, about which such numerous laments have been made. The fact is that in a thousand pounds of the dung of grass-fed cattle in this country, there are only seven pounds of valuable manure (four pounds of nitrogen, three pounds of phosphoric acid, and four pounds of lime), and the amount in the dung of the very lean kine of India must be still less. Well, the ashes of the burnt dung are always returned to the soil, and, in the opinion of an experienced chemist in this country, the loss of manure is extremely small, and what loss there may be is

amply compensated for by the fact that in consequence solely of the demand for fuel, every morsel of manure that falls on the highway and on the barren plain is carefully gathered up to add to the general stock. The whole of the existing delusion regarding the immense loss arising from the use of cattle-dung as fuel, arises, I believe, from the fact that people have been arguing as if the cattle were fat, oilcake-fed beasts, instead of animals which are generally in greyhound condition, and because they are under the idea that burning cattle-dung for fuel is equivalent to using farmyard manure for that purpose. The manure question having been disposed of, the committee turned its attention to machinery, and asked if I had any information to give regarding the introduction of English machinery into India. Very little, I said, except that a reaping machine had been exhibited near Bangalore; and it certainly did astonish the natives, my dear John, for it simply swept everything before it, the crop ready for the sickle, and the leguminous plants which are put down with the corn crop, and which come on as a secondary crop after the corn crop has been got in. In short, not to worry you with any further details, I may simply say that my evidence tended to show, that with reference to the means available in the country, it was impossible

to improve the agriculture in any way in any part of India. The fact is, my dear John, that the late manager of my coffee plantations in Mysore was a shrewd-headed Scotch farmer—a man of first-class intelligence—and he naturally examined closely into the agricultural system, and the end of it was that he said, "Well, when I came here first, I thought I could effect great improvements, but I now see I can suggest nothing at all unless it is an alteration in the plough at present in use." It is of course very easy to prove on an experimental farm that it would be an advantage to grow crops to feed cattle fat, and produce better manure, and an improved system of agriculture, but when you come to apply your improved system to the existing condition of things, and the smallness of the holdings, you will find that you can effect simply nothing. And here, my dear John, I may as well tell you that I find my conclusions amply confirmed by Mr. W. R. Robertson, the able manager of the Sydapet experimental farm, Madras Presidency. He tells us that "we greatly undervalue native implements and tools," and adds that "take, for example, the Picottah (native water-raising apparatus), mamotie, the plough and drill; these are frequently made of very inferior materials, and are carelessly put together; still, taking into consideration their small cost and

their suitability to the present circumstances of the ryot, I feel sure we have nothing that will successfully compete with them." And if, my dear John, you will go to the trouble of looking over the reports of three successive years you will find that in this farm alone, in that period, upwards of £4,000 have been spent, without a single fact having been discovered that is of any practical use to the present circumstances of the Indian farmer. The breed of sheep, however, has been improved, and as the improvement of the breed of cattle and sheep is really of importance, it is to be hoped that attention may, for the future, be almost exclusively paid to this branch of farming, which will give an immediate return for the outlay, and might be made to pay both the Government and the people.

And now, my dear John, I am only going to notice one point more as regards my evidence, and that has reference to the steady decrease of the native stake in our securities. And here I cannot, perhaps, do better than read you a few of the questions and answers on the subject.

"3460. Have you not expressed an opinion that a subject of very grave importance is, that the natives are each year retaining a smaller amount invested in English securities in our Government loans?—Yes; their stake in our funds seems to have been steadily decreasing, and if you look

at the end of that blue book (the first Report of the Finance Committee), you will see that it has decreased steadily, and to the extent of more than a million within the last few years. What the amount of decrease has been since the mutiny I do not know, but there has been a decrease.

"3461. Then your point is this, that the seriousness of the state of things is greatly increased when it is borne in mind that, as the financial stake of England increases in India, the stake of the Indian people in the debt of India diminishes? —Yes.

"3462. And you think that it is going on at the present time?—Yes; it is due to a want of confidence on the part of the people in the Government; and I myself share that so far that as a trustee, whereas three years ago I recommended money to be invested in Indian securities, I felt it my duty the other day, after careful consideration, to recommend these funds to be sold, and the proceeds invested in securities in this country, and I am not surprised that the natives, feeling doubts as to the stability of our rule in India, should diminish their stake in the debt.

"3463. Why during the last three years has your belief in the stability of our financial position in India so much diminished?—From the great increase of indebtedness, and the generally expen-

sive nature of the Government, and in fact from the general tendency shown to go from bad to worse, to increase our risks.

"3464. Then you think that the gravest danger that we have to contend against in India is coming financial embarrassment?—Undoubtedly; our stake in India is so very large that a slight disturbance would derange our finances hopelessly, and I think that the natives, perceiving the possibility of that, decline to trust their money with us. In fact, I know that a native expressed that opinion to a friend of mine, who asked him why he did not invest; he said that the Empire might go smash, and he would sooner have his money in his pocket or under the ground."

And the only set-off we seem to have against this is that Maharaja Holkar has lent us a quarter of a million to make a state railway in his Highness's territories. That this fact did not quite tally with the opinion expressed by me, was pointed out by one of the committee, but I replied that one swallow did not make a summer, and then, my dear John, Holkar might have consoled himself in the reflection that, if our Empire did go smash, he would still have the railway to fall back on.

At this point of our conversation you said you were sick to death of my evidence, and as I was beginning to get more than tired with it myself, I

hastened on to the consideration of Duff's conduct on the committee. Here you again begged to interrupt me and said, "Now, my good man, you had better be very careful. Duff, as I told you before, has exerted himself immensely as regards my Indian estates. He has looked sharp after the cotton, and sent out more cotton gardeners. He is also looking after silk, and even talks of getting my salt into India, and, as I told you before, he seems to be determined to get everything possible out of, and everything possible (of my own making) into, my Indian estates. If you will only look at his own peculiar pet, the annual report of the moral and material progress made on my Indian estates, you will soon see how advantageously my agents are laying out the proceeds of the concern. Just look at the railways alone; why they are actually doing something, more or less, on fifteen different lines of railway, and they are going to make fifteen thousand miles in all; and my finance man in India with honest pride brings forward the fact that they are going to get through another thirty millions of English money within the next ten years alone, and that will make the total cost of the Indian railways up to about one hundred and fifty millions, a sum that any Government might have been proud to have got through in works of such utility had they even been at work

for twice the time my agents have been. Now, what have you to say to all that? I see that you are pleased to sneer, and I must insist on an explanation before I have a word on any other subject." Finding you quite determined, I then at once, you will remember, begged to bring to your notice the following facts as regards Indian railways, and the magnificent profits that have been derived from them.

And now, my dear John, let us look at the economic results of Indian railways first of all. Well, speaking in round numbers we may say that they have actually cost from first to last one hundred and twenty millions, and as the annual value of this sum is declared to be not less than 5 per cent., and the railways only pay two and a half millions a year, it follows that the annual loss which is practically extracted from this poverty-stricken country comes to three and a half millions. Now this is a strictly accurate way of looking at matters, for it includes everything—the sums actually spent on the works, as well as the twenty-four millions that have been taken from the peasants of India to make good the interest payable to the English shareholders. But this, of course, is not the way Indian officials like to look at the matter; and here these gentlemen have been fortunate in finding an able defender in Colonel Chesney, who with convincing logic urges that it is

really a matter hardly worth mentioning, seeing "that the saving (of the twenty-four millions aforesaid) would have gone to increase the public works grant, or some other source of expenditure." However, as our Indian officials don't seem to like statements which calculate profits from the expenses actually incurred, we will take their own statements and see what we can make of them. And here we cannot do better than go straight to Sir Richard Temple's financial statement for 1871-72, and review that portion of it which relates to railways. In the first place I have to observe that he informs the public that the railways in India, as a whole, are paying less than 3 per cent. In the next place, I have to inform you that he says that "tonnage and passenger traffic show no considerable increase of late, and leave an immense way for our traffic to make up before it will bear any favourable comparison either with the size and population of India itself, or with the results obtained from railway communications in other parts of the world;" and he also points out that *within the last five years only two lines show any large increase of earnings, and that the other lines have remained comparatively stationary in this respect during the period in question.* The next fact of importance is that the guaranteed interest levied from the people of India to enable the Government to pay the English shareholders their 5 per cent.

interest, must be set down at £1,856,900. And here Sir Richard seems to have fallen into a state of low doubt as to the value of railways, for we find him saying that "the steady accretion year by year of these payments does indeed form matter for serious reflection;" and when he subsequently informs the public that "the growing importance of railway finance will hence be apparent to the tax-payers of India," we loudly applaud a remark, which would have been even more correct if he had placed the word "disagreeably" before "apparent." After these cheering statements, you might naturally suppose that Sir Richard would counsel your Indian agents to pause, at least for a time, before proceeding with such tempting undertakings. But so far from that we find the low-doubt vein rapidly disappearing, to be succeeded first of all by a tinge of joyous well-being; and from that, passing from a state of buoyant satisfaction, we find him fairly landed into a condition approaching to expansive delirium. We purpose to carry out a grand total of fifteen thousand miles of railway; we shall probably want thirty millions more within the next ten years; "we are actually," to use his own exulting terms, "endeavouring to do something, more or less, on fifteen different lines of new railways." Now, my dear John, this may be a comforting reflection for Sir Richard Temple, but I

ask you in the name of common sense whether it is a comfortable reflection for the English to find that they are being led into laying out hundreds of millions on such works, or for the natives of India that they have to pay the enormous loss that is represented by the difference between the guaranteed interest and the railway earnings. I ask you, in the name of that political economy your Indian agents are so fond of, whether it would not be wise to suspend the execution of these magnificent schemes until we see our way more clearly, or at least until the railways already made pay their way, and cease to be a burden on the resources of your poverty-stricken Indian Empire.

And now, my dear John, allow me to remark on the extreme ingenuity by which the burdens of these works have been shifted from the English shareholders on to the backs of the unfortunate natives. Talk of Asiatic art! Why this is really a masterpiece. To get more than the normal rate of money the English can get here—to force the unfortunate natives to take works that don't pay, and then to make them pay for losses that are entirely owing to our own culpable carelessness, in permitting such works either to be made at all, or to be made in such an expensive fashion—to have effected all this is certainly bad enough, but to persevere in the face of the disastrous results already arrived

at, seems to be an act of folly (a much stronger word might fairly be used) which it is impossible to censure too severely. And here allow me to remind you of what I have said in a former paper, namely, that no class of the human animal as yet discovered is fit to be entrusted with the outlay of large sums of money, where the money is not watched and controlled by the representatives of the people; that the only check you can have on the waste of public money in India,* is by limiting the stock of money to be wasted, and that therefore you should borrow no money at all for the future, unless, perhaps, for well-considered irrigation schemes. But, my dear John, where the affairs of a nation are entrusted to a miscellaneous assemblage of irresponsible officials, you are sure to have all the results of the worst kind of despotism; and such a financial despotism at least the natives never before had. In the ordinary course of affairs there are many checks on a despot—the check of his own interests mainly which causes him to consult the wishes of the people as much as possible—and when the worst comes to the worst,

* We have sufficiently shown the numerous ways in which money has been wasted, but we hardly expect to be believed when we say that, on at least one railway, the line has been carried across the country apparently with the sole intention of avoiding every town of importance.

they can generally manage to cut off his head in order to encourage his successors; but you can no more get rid of the never-ending succession of money-squandering despotical officials, than you could get rid of the establishment of Messrs. Spiers and Pond, by cutting off the heads of all the Spiers and Ponds at present in existence. "Now, my good fellow," you broke in, "don't you be in quite such a hurry with your insinuations. I've been thinking over what Colonel Chesney said, and it really does seem quite plain as he says that the twenty-four millions raised from the people to help to defray the cost of these useful railway works, would merely have been spent on some other work." But, my dear John, did it never occur to you that the money need never have been raised, and that the sum represents a great deal of that over-taxation which has made your rule so unpopular, and that it might, if raised at all, have been laid out in the irrigation works which are so urgently needed in India? If your agents set to work to defend the indefensible, why, in the name of Heaven, they don't send for Serjeant Ballantyne instead of attempting to do it out of their own heads, I cannot understand. Every defence one reads seems worse than the last. We find Sir Richard Temple stoutly declaring in the face of evidence that would have satisfied all the judges of

England that there was no oppression under the income-tax because few people complained; Mr. John Strachey, saying that till the establishment of the local cesses the land-holding natives had never paid taxes before, seeing all the money raised was in reality rent, and Mr. Grant Duff declaring in his place in Parliament that there had been no kind of physical disaster during a period when there had been a tremendous famine. Then if you point to the fact that the native stake in our funds is steadily diminishing, they tell you that this is so because the natives are not likely to invest money at 5 per cent. when they can get 10 per cent. amongst themselves; and if you ask on what principle of political economy you take twenty-four millions of money which might have yielded 10 per cent. and lay it out in works that don't yield 3, you will have Colonel Chesney telling you, I suppose, that it really does not matter, as the money would only been spent on some other works.

We have now looked at railways from an economic point of view, and we see that they certainly are a failure. Nor do they answer, from any point of view that I can see. They ought, by the account of the railway men, to avert famines, but they don't; they ought to carry goods cheaply, and in large quantities, to be of any practical use, but they do neither the one nor

the other; they ought to enable us to work our army more cheaply, and they certainly have not done that. Then their weakness, from a military point of view, becomes more apparent the more you consider the subject. Railways are only valuable as long as they are in the entire occupation of the force wishing to use them. Bridges may be blown up; point may be isolated from point, and we may any day be called upon to move troops by road, long after the organization necessary for such work has been broken up. Then they favour the meeting of conspirators, and you can now get down an assassin from the Shere Ali country as easily as you can procure a landlord-shooter in Ireland. But all these, and many kindred considerations, are mere tarts and cheese-cakes when we come to ask ourselves where the money comes from to make these railways, and how it is to be got back. Adding up the total liabilities of the Indian Government, we get to a sum of more than two hundred and thirteen millions, of which less than fourteen millions are held by natives. Well, the Government is going ahead with the railways and threatens to spend another hundred millions in about twenty-seven years more; and the burdens of the Indian tax-payers will, of course, increase with the railway expenditure; at least, Sir Richard Temple thinks

so; and there seems to be no means of knowing that they will not. Now let us look forward twenty-seven years, and imagine us with India tight round our necks, and with liabilities to the English people of about three hundred millions. Frankly, my dear John, I may say that I don't care about the security. What does it depend on? Just let the Chinese know that you don't mean to cut their throats if they don't take Indian opium, and I think your Indian empire, which has hitherto gone up like a rocket, would certainly come down like the stick. Why the concern would be at an end; and as the Chinese have taken to growing the drug themselves, and seem already, by the last account, to have produced as good a quality as the best Indian opium, you may consider that it is merely a question of time as to when your revenue from that source will terminate. At this point of the discussion you began to show signs of great impatience, so quitting the subject of your agents' rotten railway schemes, I turned your attention to Grant Duff, and his conduct on the Finance Committee.

And here, my dear John, I need hardly say that I didn't like saying anything against your favourite agent, but the fact is that Duff, in consequence of there being no one to look after him, has got quite above himself. The truth is, my dear John, that

we all require looking after a bit, and I think I can show you that Duff forms no exception to the rule, and has acted in a way that he never dared have done had he not known how little any Indian matter is noticed by the English press. Well, to make a long story short, I may simply say that a certain Mr. James Geddes, one of the agents on your Indian estates, had written a pamphlet,* which showed the extremely piscatorial condition of the finance of your Indian empire. Now Mr. Geddes came before the Finance Committee, and that the members thought him well worth examining is evidenced by the fact that he was examined at very great length. Here was a chance for Duff; he thought he would do a very clever thing, and as Mr. Geddes had introduced into his financial pamphlet some views of rather a novel description, and had besides made use of some rather out-of-the-way illustrations, this gave a good opportunity for putting questions in such a way as was calculated to cast ridicule on Mr. Geddes, and depreciate the value of the important points he had brought out. But this was far from being all. It was intimated pretty plainly to Mr. Geddes that his opinions ought to be in harmony with the Government he served; and here Mr. Geddes said

* *The Logic of Indian Deficit.* By James Geddes. Part I. Williams and Norgate.

that he certainly ought to be in harmony with the Government, if there was any spirit of harmony in it. Mr. Geddes was clearly not to be put down, and Duff thought he would try something more severe. "You hold an appointment in the Government, do you not?" "Yes," said Mr. Geddes. "And do you expect to return to that post?" asked Duff. Now, my dear John, you will not find that question in the report, for the simple reason that it was ordered to be expunged. So here, my dear John, in a committee appointed with the express purpose of doing justice to the natives of India, you have the eminently English spectacle of an important Indian official—a man who no doubt looks forward to being Secretary of State for India some day—actually browbeating a witness who was bringing out unpalatable facts. But the truth is that your Indian affairs can't bear the light of day, and I dare say Duff thought he was doing a very sharp thing in treating a hostile witness as a personal enemy, and trying to break down the value of his evidence. But just look at the political result. The evidence, of course, went out to India; and it was at once noticed in the Indian papers that this witness, with his awkward facts, had been publicly snubbed by the Under Secretary of State, and this of course just added another stone to that huge cairn of discontent, and to that general sense of

injustice which the people of India are feeling more keenly every day. And then people wonder at the difficulty of getting at independent evidence, and the opinions of the natives of India! The fact is, my dear John, that Duff had no business on the committee at all, and ought immediately to be removed from it; and considering the harm he has done, and that the Indian Government has even taken to punishing severely officers who may possibly have somewhat exceeded their duty in the midst of an exciting outbreak (I allude to Messrs. Cowan and Forsyth), it certainly seems that some inquiry ought to be made into the conduct of an official, and a member of Parliament, who has ventured to act in a manner which is calculated to injure in the eyes of the natives our character for fair play, and to defeat the very end for which the committee was originally appointed. "Well, well," you broke in, "let me hear no more of it. I'll speak to the Duke, and see what he has got to say about Duff's conduct; and at least take care that he is kept in better order for the future."

After this long talk a considerable silence ensued on both sides. You sat and ruminated, while I sat and regarded you with respectful attention. After a long pause, you at length said that you would be glad to have some definite plans for the future. "The fact is," you continued, "that what

with the time that has elapsed between our conversations, and my attention having been so much occupied with our American difficulties, my brain is, as regards Indian affairs, in a general sort of jumble. Your education schemes, your irrigation suggestions, your plans for doing away with what you call departmentalism, and your granaries for preserving the lives of Indian taxpayers, seem certainly worthy of attention; but then there seems to be no money, and by your account the concern is almost bankrupt already. What I want to know is how my Indian estates are to be made to pay their way without grinding and worrying the people." To this very reasonable question I replied that my investigations had not gone far enough as yet to enable me to go into all the details of the administrative reforms that are really necessary; I, however, added that I would just run over the outline of the plans which must be adopted if you want things to go on fairly well.

And now, my dear John, the first thing you have to lay down is that your opium revenue, or at least three-fourths of it, should be treated as a fund for the reduction of debt, and that you must work your concerns on that base if you want to attain a sound financial condition. If you lay down that as a base, you will see at once that no mere clipping and paring will be of much service. Your Finance

Committee, I grant, may stop up a few gutters here and there, but that will not prevent the rain from falling. You must get to big sums at once, and the only way to do this is—

1. To break up the country into at least five great divisions—say Bombay, Madras, Bengal, North-west Provinces, and the Punjaub.

2. The duties of the Governor-General in future to be confined to having the control of all the political relations of the Empire, either in dealing with States inside or exterior of India, and to being minister of war.

3. To centralise the command of the army under one commander-in-chief, who is to be directly under the order of the Viceroy; to substitute generals on three thousand a year for the present military command-in-chief in each presidency, and to do away with the military secretaries of the various governors.

4. The expenses of the army to be apportioned as may seem equitable between the five great States.

5. The permanent force of each regiment of native infantry to be reduced to the lowest possible limits, and the men not required for active duty to be sent to their homes, on a trifling monthly pay, and to be called out once a year.

6. Each governor to manage his own finance,

keep within the present income of his country, and pay year by year his contribution to the national army.

7. Each governor to have a council composed as the presidency councils now are.

8. Appeals to be made direct to the Secretary of State for India on any matter of general importance, as, for instance, in the case of a governor acting in opposition to the constitution of the State.

9. No new laws to be made for the future unless initiated by petition from the people.

10. Every county to have a consultative council, to meet once a month, or as often as may be needed.

11. These councils to act as a channel of communication between the Government and the people, and to be consulted by the collectors regarding all matters of internal administration.

12. The governing power in each collectorate in all points of internal administration to rest with the collector, who is to be assisted by the advice of the councils, and to endeavour to act in accordance with the wishes of the people. Public works, education, and forests, in short everything, to be under his direct control.

13. The income-tax to be abolished, and no fresh taxation to be levied without the consent of the

local councils, and then only for local purposes, unless in the case of a levy required for some extraordinary Imperial emergency, as for instance war.

14. Railway works not to be continued by Government until those already made pay their way.

15. Half of the building expenses of the India Office in England to be returned to the Indian exchequer in India.

16. The Indian Council, and all superfluous officials, to be paid off.

17. All stores for the army, and everything that the Government or Governments in India may require, to be purchased directly by the Indian authorities, without any intervention of India Office officials in this country.

18. The Engineering College at Cooper's Hill to be abolished. Officers to be allowed to volunteer from Royal Engineers on condition of serving twenty years in India; and an engineering college for all classes of British subjects to be established in India.

19. At least one half of the English army in India to be a local force, as this would save enormously both in the expense of supplying men, and do away with many depôts of regiments in this country.

20. The number of English officials to be largely reduced, and their places supplied with natives.

21. A British guarantee to be given for all the liabilities of the Indian Government, with the view of reducing the interest of the debt, and no fresh liabilities to be incurred unless in case of war or some extraordinary emergency, or, perhaps, for some very well-considered irrigation scheme.

22. Each Governor to be directly responsible for the safety of the lives of the inhabitants of his territories, and to take full precautions to prevent deaths* from famines, either by forming State granaries, or in whatever way can be proved to be practicable.

23. The accounts between India and England to be carefully examined, and all sums unjustly extorted from the natives of India to be refunded.†

24. The abolition of the existing Revenue Boards, and the substitution of secretaries to act between the collectors and the Government.

Such, my dear John, is a very rough outline of a

* It has been previously pointed out (see *ante*, pp. 78 to 80) that consultative councils would be of great use, as regards urging the people to store more grain than they do at present, and also in keeping the Government informed as to what grain there was in the possession of the natives. But many years must elapse before these councils can come into practical operation, and the Government must, in the meantime, take measures to insure the lives of its taxpayers.

† The extortions alluded to descend to the lowest depths of meanness, and when we find that the very expenses of the Duke of Edinburgh's aides-de-camp from England to India were charged to the latter country, one is irresistibly reminded of Napoleon's famous sarcasm.

scheme of Government by which the country might be managed cheaply and effectively, and by which it may advance steadily towards representative constitution, and eventually to self-government. In fact the construction is such that you would hammer out at length five compact countries, so that when the day of separation came you would leave behind you, not an unmanageable and disjointed assemblage of nationalities, but five distinct countries well able to look after themselves individually. And not only would you do this, but you would be able to pay off debt, and so lessen the English money-stake in India that the loss of the entire empire would hardly be felt here in a monetary point of view. I need hardly add that the main outline of this scheme is nothing new, and had the sanction of Mr. Bright many years ago. He saw perfectly well that the idea of uniting into one nation peoples so various, and with so many different languages and interests, is as impracticable as it would be to unite all Europe, less Russia, into one nationality, with the seat of Government partly at Paris and partly at Pekin; and in fact, my dear John, that is an exact parallel of what we have been attempting to do in the case of India, the seat of Government being partly at Calcutta and partly in London.

And now, my dear John, I must bid you good-

bye, and go home and commence to work out the details of the new system of Indian administration —an administration, I flatter myself, that will at least pay, which is more than the present one does. And when I have got the whole thing into shape I hope you will be kind enough to grant me another interview, though I am afraid I shall not have things fully ready for many months to come. Here I made a profound and respectful salaam and withdrew, leaving you in a study of the profoundest shade of brown. But just as I was closing the door I heard a long and deep sigh, while with a tone of disgust I heard you say, "Confound this Indian Empire; I wish I was well quit of it, and could get out of the country with my two hundred millions safe in my breeches pockets."

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As I was wending my way home, ruminating as I went on the magnitude of the task I had undertaken, half shrinking from the idea of the labour it involved, and yet upheld by the hopes of helping to provide a satisfactory government for the people amongst whom I had lived on pleasant and neighbourly terms for the best years of my life—as I was ruminating on all these and many other points —a messenger came running after me to tell me that you had a few words more to say. I accordingly hastened back, and on re-entering the

chamber I had left you in, you reminded me that I had forgotten all about the way of getting the work of the Finance Committee brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Having duly apologized for the omission, I then proceeded to say that if your agents will only consent to setting up such a constitution as I have suggested, you might disband the committee to-morrow morning. If, however, people will persist in believing that there are some hidden resources to be discovered somewhere in India, and that any methods could be devised for accelerating the national progress at such a rate that we may look forward to our existing expenditure being met by the natural increase of the revenues—if people will persist in entertaining such notions, why, in the name of heaven, let every possible evidence be collected as soon as possible. But to do that you must send on behalf of the committee some confidential agents to India to collect information from the prime ministers of native States and from native chiefs, who are often men of intelligence and education, and who will tell you everything that can be learnt about the means and prospects of the country; and these men are just as anxious to increase their revenues as your people are to increase theirs, and if you sent to them men whom they could trust to explain personally to them the object of the enquiry, I feel

sure they would speak their minds freely, and the most valuable information procurable. Commissioners might also pick up in a quiet informal way information they could get from Englishmen resident in India. But, as I told the committee (and this is the opinion of men of the greatest Indian experience), if you sent a formal Commission to sit and take evidence in some public place, you would simply ascertain nothing at all of the really valuable opinions in India.

One word more, my dear John, and I have done. I have painted you a gloomy picture enough, and unless the Government be reformed the evils I have anticipated will certainly ensue; but reform the administration, and you may lead the people with a single thread of silk. The Hindoos are the most reasonable and easily governable people in the world, and if you will only treat them fairly and frankly, you may govern them safely for an indefinite period. As for the Mahommedans, they do not like us; but, as a Musalman, speaking of his people, said to me only the other day, "We are in the minority, it is true, but we are a powerful minority, and if the English withdrew there would be blows and bloodshed again, and we must therefore have some outside power to govern India, and what that power is we don't particularly care." So you see that the Hindoos will keep quiet if you

.e, because they are a very governing
.id all the respectable classes of the
medans (excepting, perhaps, as I have said
.e, under very powerful temptations), will keep
.iet because, if they got rid of us, they don't exactly see their way to being able to assert their ancient supremacy. But the Hindoos and Mahommedans alike feel that they have a right to be consulted, and to have some share in the administration of affairs, and a larger share of Government employment; and if you want to hold India as alone you can safely and honestly hold it, by the free consent of the people, you must make up your mind to reform your Government in some such way as I have indicated, and show the people, in short, that you are leading them on towards that self-government which we ourselves enjoy, and which alone can insure the lasting happiness and welfare of the peoples of India.

THE END.

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