

We interfered in India when tenures were in a transition state and prescription imperfect; and unfortunately—except in Bengal Proper, which Lord Cornwallis's perpetual settlement has made the most flourishing and contented Province in India—instea<sup>d</sup> of confirming and consolidating the actual and substantial rights which we found in existence, we went back to abstract principles, bungling and disputing about them to this day, revolutionized society, ruined the great families, and converted nominal rights of ownership upon under-tenants and labouring occupants, which they had never possessed under the native Governments, and which they are incapable of employing to advantage under ours. And thus the North-West Provinces are filled with decayed families of rank, and with village proprietors involved in debt and incapable of rising, all impoverished and all discontented; while four-fifths of the land in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies are in the hands of beggarly cottiers, who submit to be rackrented and tortured, and who have not a hope or a motive beyond the morrow

The Mahomedan Kings of India, with a rude but unerring instinct, had gradually introduced some elements of stability and improvement in the social structure. They created a class of great feudatories and wealthy landlords between the Government and the occupants of the soil. The Mahratta rulers, following

this example, continued and extended this system throughout their dominions. And sooner or later, according to the good service rendered to Government, interest at Court, or local power and influence possessed by the landholder, the revenue assessment of his estates had a tendency to become fixed, and the tenure to become hereditary.

Before the commencement of our administration in Oude, the prescriptive rights of the Talookdars and Zemindars,—with the exception of some of the smallest and newest among them,—had been established and secured as between them and the Sovereign, but the respective limits and rights were still unsettled and undefined between different members of the class, and between them and their tenants, and the tillers of the soil. It was for us to confirm all actual beneficial possessions, and to recognise or establish equitable relations between classes. But, unfortunately, there was a hankering after North-West principles, and a prejudice against independent landlords, which led Mr. Gubbins and his “highly experienced” coadjutors into those fatal experiments of *restoring* a proprietary right to the village communities; “the practical friction of which they had scarcely known,”—or in plain terms, which had never existed, and which was of less than no value to the villagers, since it deprived them of their chieftain and left them exposed to the underlings of office.

Lord Canning himself thus gives us a glimpse of this restorative process :—" The Government of India, perhaps with more of chivalrous justice than political prudence, determined at once to reinstate these proprietary occupants of the soil in what were believed to be their hereditary rights, and to restore the ancient village communities; and upon the annexation of the country the Chief Commissioner was instructed to make the settlement of the land revenue with the proprietary occupants of the soil, to the exclusion of middlemen. This instruction was carried into execution in some districts with undue haste, harshly, and upon insufficient evidence; and where this took place, injustice was done to the Talookdars, some of whom were deprived of villages which had long been attached to their talookas, and their titles to which had not been satisfactorily disproved.

" The injustice might, and probably would, have been corrected in making the revised settlement, but this does not excuse or palliate the wrong."—(Lord Canning's reply to the Ellenborough Despatch, paragraph twenty-six.)

Perhaps there is some little ambiguity of meaning here, with " chivalrous justice " at the beginning, and " injustice," " wrong " that nothing can palliate, at the end of the paragraph; but never mind, it is clear that Lord Canning sees the error that was committed, and for which, it may be added, Lord

Dalhousie, and not he, is responsible. The following extracts from Lord Dalhousie's instructions to the Chief Commissioner will suffice to prove the eminently conservative principles upon which the administration of Oude was founded. "The settlement should be made, village by village, with the parties actually in possession, but without any recognition, either formal or indirect, of their proprietary right."

\* \* \* "It must be borne in mind, as a leading principle, that the desire and intention of the Government is to deal *with the actual occupants of the soil*, that is, with village zemindars, or with the proprietary coparcenaries, which are believed to exist in Oude, and not to suffer the *interposition of middlemen as Talookdars, farmers of the revenue and the like*. The claims of these, if they have any tenable claims, may be more conveniently considered at a future period."<sup>4</sup>

That future period has arrived at last, I hope.

It is openly asserted by our well-wishers among the natives (as, for instance, in the *Hindoo Patriot* newspaper) that the true explanation of the confiscating proclamation is, that the gross iniquities and complications, caused by the land settlement of Oude directed by Lord Dalhousie, were such as could never have been set aside by a measure of less com-

---

\* *Oude Blue Book*, p. 259—260.



prehensive operation. Lord Canning's answer perhaps implies as much ; but why was it not more plainly stated ? Reticence on this and other subjects has carried respect for the late Governor-General to a mischievous and misleading extent.

I believe that Lord Canning must have been sadly misinformed when he stated in the despatch from which I have so often quoted,\* that only "a few" of the Talookdars were "representatives of ancient families," and that "the majority" were interlopers, who by favour at Court, or by the abuse of their official authority, had taken possession of land to the exclusion and deprivation of the village proprietors. There has been a Mussulman monarch in Oude for a century and a quarter, and the Nazims, Chaekladars, and other great revenue administrators, with few exceptions, have always been Mahomedans ; but the vast majority of Talookdars and other landholders are Hindoos, while many of those who are Mussulmen, betray, by retaining the title of Rajah, their Hindoo origin and ancient importance, and their comparatively recent subjection and conversion. But we have an unexceptionable witness on this point in Mr. Gubbins, so friend to these "oppressive middlemen," who says :—"These Talookdars varied greatly in their origin. Some, *and the greater*

---

\* Paragraph 24

*number*, were hereditary heads of Rajpoot tribes settled in the neighbourhood. Others, again, were new families, sprung from some Government official, whose local authority had enabled him to acquire a holding of this description."

I consider the Talookdars to be properly described as the lords of the soil, and the Barons of Oude; the greater number of them, as Mr Gubbins tells us, were hereditary Rajpoot chiefs, and in whatever rude fashion some or all of them may have acquired their estates, they were in legal possession when we entered on the government of that country.

But they were oppressive and tyrannical, and turbulent, and ground down their tenants and the labouring population. I suspect there is a good deal of truth in these charges, and that the Barons of Oude, the feudatories and vassals of a weak government, were not quite exempt from the faults and failings of the feudal Barons of Germany and England. Does not the history of these two European countries teach us that some centuries must elapse before the great landlords can divest themselves of the power, and the supposed right, to do what they like with their own? And yet the work that has been accomplished by these feudal oppressors and their descendants, has not been entirely noxious, or selfish, or exclusive. But of course it is very different with Asiatics,—“niggers.” That I allow

It is a singular fact, however, that a search in the Oude Blue-book discloses a tremendous list of charges against the King and his ministers, and his judges, and his collectors of revenue, but scarcely any against the Talookdars. The minor members of the class are said to be among the oppressed and not among the oppressors. And the more powerful landlords are represented as being ambitious and turbulent, frequently fighting among themselves and resisting the Government, but protecting their tenants and dependents. One of them in particular, who is repeatedly mentioned in the Oude Blue-books as one of the worst of his order, "a remarkable tyrant," a new man also, really an interloper—Durshun Sing (father of Rajah Maun Sing, who has played an ambiguous though not an unskilful part during the rebellion,) is held up as an example of the benefit conferred upon the poor ryots by their being removed from the immediate superintendence of the King's official collectors, and handed over to a Talookdar or great landlord.

"It may be curious to compare the acts of the most celebrated Nazims under the *izarah* and the *amanees* systems. We will choose Rajah Durshun Sing, and Agaie Alce Khan.

"Rajah Durshun Sing taxed in equal proportions rich and poor.

"Agaie fears the one and ruins the other.

"Durshun Sing was the sworn enemy to dacoits and thieves.

"Agaie has ever spared them.

"Durshun Sing made for himself by oppression, a vast estate, styled the Bairamahi, yielding from five to six lakhs ; *but ruled it with the utmost leniency.*

"Agaie, instead of seizing on lands, seized on hard cash.

"Durshun Sing, though a tyrant to all powerful Zemindars, was, as Nazim, *kind to the poor, and ever protected the ryot* ; and above all was true to his word in most instances.

"The very contrary may be said of Agaie

"Durshun Sing, in all his innumerable '*dours*,' or expeditions, shared the fatigues of the commonest soldier.

"The very reverse may be mentioned of Agaie."\*

And from the same source is taken the following description of another person of the same class, also an interloper and usurper to some extent, Ramdutt Pandey :—"He does much good, and is more generally esteemed than any other man in the district ; but he has, no doubt, enlarged his own landed possessions occasionally, by taking advantage of the necessities of his clients, and his influence over the local authorities of Government. The lands he does

---

\* *Oude Blue Book*, p. 71—72.

get, however, he improves, by protecting and aiding his tenants, and inviting and fostering a better class of cultivators. He is looked up to with respect and confidence by almost all the large landholders of the district."

One cannot help having some doubts whether these usurping oppressors are not rather more useful and important in their generation than the "occupants of the soil" and "village coparceners," so much favoured by Lord Dalhousie and his North-West officials.

## LETTER XVI.

## HINDOO HONESTY.

IN some highly experienced and distinguished quarters it would be considered an imaginary case, almost too absurd for serious discussion, if any one were to suggest that a few of the chieftains and nobles of Oude and other parts of India, may perhaps have been liberal landlords and useful members of society. Indeed, if we were to place our trust in the current expression of Anglo-Indian ideas,—as manifested in the conversation of society, in a great part of the local press, in the general structure of our administration, and in the published minutes of Government during Lord Dalhousie's rule,—we should be impressed with the belief that no native is a good member of society, whatever his sphere may be—unless it be that of a ploughman or artisan—that all native bankers and traders are extortioners and cheats; that native judges always sell their decisions to the highest bidder; that native sovereigns are invariably debauched and avaricious tyrants; and that their ministers and courtiers are mere parasites, “devouring the revenues of the country and fattening on corruption.”\*

---

\* These elegant expressions are taken from one of Lord Dalhousie's minutes.

I do *not* believe that these notions are shared by more than a very small minority of the real Governors of India, the thinking Englishmen of the present day, but I know that these notions do prevail extensively among the great unthinking majority of Europeans in India, who are much more demonstrative in their expression of opinions, and who by the very force of numbers impress the natives with the idea that they have nothing to expect from their foreign rulers but ill-disguised contempt and dislike.

I shall not attempt to estimate how much of the anger, disgust, and horror, so often experienced and expressed by persons who have had a long official intercourse with natives, is founded on just, and reasonable grounds, and how much arises from the pride and antipathy of race, and the impatience of irresponsible power. I will but remind my readers that it is the easiest thing in the world to be angry with vice and sin, that the greatest offenders are indignant at the faults of others, and that the feeling of indignation is merely spontaneous, instinctive, childish, and totally barren, and devoid of all moral effect either within or without. Nothing whatever can be gained or hoped from the wholesale abuse of a pupil race, over whose manners and morals we can never hope to gain a powerful influence without sympathy and love, and whom we can only raise by

first raising their self-respect. Never despair of human nature! Recognise humanity in the Hindoo.

On the grave moral evil of this prevalent want of sympathy I shall not for the present expatiate, taking for granted that no one will gravely venture to justify or to extenuate English pride and impatience by pointing to native selfishness, indifference, and apathy. If we are to measure our conduct by the native standard, and to be contented if we excel them by an inch; if we Anglo-Saxons are not here as masters, as teachers, and superiors, to rule with temper, with charity, and with *love*, then indeed India will be held by the sword, and by the sword only. And although it may last my time, and my grandson's time, it is not difficult to see that the end of such an empire will be with the sword also.

But before reviewing the question in its more serious aspect, I shall endeavour to show by some familiar examples, which I believe will come home to many a man's conscience and memory, how apt we are summarily to condemn a particular class for some enormity asserted or implied to be peculiar to Hindoos, and to form a striking contrast with the behaviour of the corresponding class in Europe. How indignant we are, how we vituperate the native character on discovering some petty pilfering or embezzlement on the part of our domestic servants! Surely the lamentations of English housekeepers



regarding the marvellous consumption of tallow candles, and the expansion of "kitchen stuff," the necessity of locking the tea-caddy, and keeping a key for the beer barrel, must be pleasant jests; and the complaints of bachelors against lodging-house keepers for levying black mail on their coals and cold meat, were never heard of before the performance of the farce of *Box and Cox*, and have no existence except in its scenes. Spoons never disappear mysteriously except in India; and what is professionally called "a put up" robbery may have been heard of in London, where foreign servants are kept, but never otherwise. Courvoisier was a Swiss.

Did you ever hear the traveller by dawk launch out upon the marvellous, incredible rapacity and ingratitude of palanquin bearers, and the impossibility of satisfying them or eliciting a word of thanks by any amount of liberality? Yes, you have; and you know how some moral philosopher (whose name I forget) applied the *Experimentum crucis* by giving his bearers exactly three times their fare, which was sulkily received, and a request for two sheep preferred. But still methinks some rumour has reached me of a being in a remote island, whose favour no offerings can propitiate, (except his exact fare, the ceremony of "taking his number" being simultaneously performed,) and who, unlike the humble bearer, often enforces his unjust

demand with railing and sarcasm, particularly when he can get a lady into a quiet street. Shall I name the London cabman? I beg to remark that my experience of his nature is not drawn merely from the pages of *Punch*: I have been home on furlough.

But what shall we say of that personification of all that is griping, greedy, grasping, extortionate, cruel, fraudulent and hypocritical, the Hindoo Soucar? Well, I don't know how we should get on without him. He deals in money, a ticklish commodity; and he must try to make a profit on every transaction, whether it be cashing an order or granting a hoondce, or else he can't carry on his business long. The sources of his gains, the style and spirit of his transactions, are not very different from those of English bankers and brokers, while his credit and repute in both these capacities will be found to be not inconsiderable. But how as a money lender? The ordinary interest of money in India is high,—there are many sufficient causes for it,—and if superficial young gentlemen imagine that the Soucar is never in straits himself, or at least that he never has been,—that all his life he has been a lender and never a borrower,—then young gentlemen are very much mistaken. However, there is no doubt that our friend knows what four, three, and two per cent. per mensem are, and prefers four to two when he can get it; he knows the virtue of

stamped paper, he loves good security, and he knows how much he can recover from military persons in a Court of Requests, and what interest that Court will allow. Consequently he has learned how to extract something additional under the name of premium or commission, or some equally significant word. He deducts the interest in advance upon the whole sum borrowed—oh, we know all about that. But there is *one* European refinement that has not, as far as I have heard, yet found its way into the Soucar's business. The London money-lender (not always of the Hebrew race) charges premium and commission, and deducts the interest beforehand also; but the Hindoo at least gives cash, he has not yet hit upon the plan of giving half in money and half in paying stones, port wine or pictures.

But has the Soucar himself nothing to say regarding the borrowers? Does he run no risks? Is there not an Insolvent Court? Did he not once cash a large bill on Aldgate Pump and Co., London? Did not Tom Dunshunner write to say that he was going to settle with all his creditors at Calcutta, and then dawd down to Bombay and embark there after all; and three months after sell out and retire on his pension at home? *'And I must say I*

---

\* I know one who did so

*do like to hear of a Soucar being done occasionally,*" is the style of remark that is usually called forth by sharp practice of this description.

Now what do I mean by all this? I will tell you. I *don't* mean to say that the moral character of the natives of India is as high as that of Englishmen; I don't mean to say the class of native servants, of bearers, or of Soucars is as enlightened, as honest, or as honourable as the class of English servants, cabmen, or bankers, but what I do mean to say is this, that the prevailing characteristics of the classes in both countries are the same, that there is nothing abnormally or singularly base or bad to be seen in the one country which will not be seen in the other, and that there is no actual or possible good quality in the Englishman which is not either actual or possible in the Hindoo. In short, the natives of India are human beings of like passions and intellect with ourselves, but degraded and depressed by centuries of foreign invasion, war and tyranny, by the anti-social laws of caste, and the effects of a ferocious though fascinating superstition. It is sympathy that is necessary both to educe and to render visible and sensible the good and beautiful feelings that exist among the natives of India; and a kind word and gracious manner will do more towards creating confidence, truth, and gratitude, than will the contemptuous bestowal of myriads of rupces,

shillugs, or sheep. These are truisms to which all will subscribe, but we must learn to make them living and operative truths, or our mission in India will never be performed. Those who will open their eyes and their hearts will find no lack in this world of honest and grateful servants, reasonable and civil cabmen and bearers, and even generous Soucars and bankers.

## LETTER XVII

## EDUCATION OF THE NATIVES

THE second century of our Indian Empire is commencing,—a new century and a new era. We have had many a hard task to perform, for years we struggled for existence; and at more than one momentous epoch our footing has appeared precarious. We have crushed many giant dangers, abolished some horrible customs, and inaugurated some brilliant reforms. We are perhaps entitled to an amnesty and full acquittance for the past. But year by year the development of the resources, and the social and moral improvement of India, have called more and more urgently for the direct aid and influence of the natives themselves. We have excluded them from power hitherto, and now our reforms are at a stand-still, and the reputation of our Government endangered for want of them. The Empire requires vitalization. A profound distrust in the good faith of their foreign rulers has been widely spread, and deeply implanted, among the natives of India, by the destructive policy of the last ten years; and the belief has become general that we are intent upon reaping all the fruit of their fertile

plains, and leaving them nothing but the stubble and the husks. To re-establish a healthy community of interest and feeling, to enlighten and give moral weight both to the legislative and to the executive power,—the direct aid, the public countenance and co-operation of influential natives are required, and cannot be dispensed with much longer. Let us lose no time in opening the door for the admittance of *qualified* persons from among this intelligent, docile, and laborious people, to a share in the government of their own country. Thus alone can human relations be re-established between the two races; thus alone can a deadly blow be struck at Hindoo superstition and Hindoo stagnation.

I am not an advocate for *less*, but for *more* interference with the customs and prejudices of the natives. If in the proper sphere of legislation, which must be duly defined and circumscribed, obstructions and difficulties and great social wrongs are presented for removal and redress, the work must be *fearlessly* performed. But this work cannot be either *planned* in a just and practicable manner, or carried into execution safely and effectually, without accurate information from native experience, and moral support from the agreement and example of influential natives. Even the flagrant and intolerable horrors of Suttee and infanticide were cautiously and timidly assailed by us, and were not abolished and penally

forbidden, until by arguments drawn from Hindoo religious books and favourable opinions derived from Hindoo Pundits, we had made the idea of abolition familiar throughout the country, and enlisted a considerable party on our side. But if our Government of India is to be really progressive, and not actually to lag behind enlightened native requirements, we ought to be prepared within a few years to take up such subjects,—difficult and delicate, and yet unavoidable,—as, for instance, those of polygamy and religious mendicancy. I do not think that such questions can with justice be disturbed to any extent. I do not think they can safely be touched, and I am sure they cannot be solidly or satisfactorily disposed of, until we can bring a very considerable and conspicuous force of native intelligence to bear upon them in our Council and in our administration.

Unfortunately there are still some persons who are not entirely devoid of influence and of pretensions to be heard, who broadly declare that the natives belong to an inferior race, and are therefore unfit for high office; and some others who will not hear of natives being admitted to any position of power or influence until they are converted to Christianity. The ethnological question is much too extensive and too interesting to be treated in a few pointed and cursory sentences. The scale of intelligence of the Hindoo and Mussulmán tribes who people India is undeniably so high, the literature,



the architecture, the laws, and the social economy they have created so admirable, that it is impossible to draw sweeping distinctions, and comparisons to the discredit and condemnation of their right to compete with us on equal terms. Their claims and their qualifications and ours must be judged, for all imperial purposes, individually and not collectively. The Hindoos and Mahomedans of India may be an inferior race,—or there may be inferior tribes among them,—but every individual native is not inferior to every young Sparkler and every old Barnacle who occupies a lucrative place in the civil or military service.

Both the ethnological and the religious objections smell most foully of blood; and, if they were well-founded, would be incapable of being settled in any way except by fire and sword, and, if pushed to their logical conclusions, *ought* to be upheld by those means. It has often been irresistibly demonstrated that if Government is justified in excluding the professors of a particular faith from office, or from any of the privileges of a citizen, and still more, if Government is justified in using its supreme authority and the material means at its disposal,—as, for instance, the money raised by taxes,—for the support of a particular religion, and especially for the propagation of that particular religion, then there is no possible logical ground for denying that Government is justified in propagating that religion by all convenient force, and in punishing apostacy and heresy

by due and sufficient penalties. The slightest patronage of a particular creed by Government, either involves a succession of inconsistencies and contradictions, or leads to a stern and consistent system of sectarian supremacy and persecution.

It is not among the functions or duties of Government to teach religion, or to teach anything. Government does but meddle and mar when it professes to educate or to assist in education. It is the duty of Government to protect life and property, to enforce contracts, and to offer a fair field and no favour to all loyal subjects.

Undoubtedly it is the mission and the duty of the British nation to civilize and to teach our Asiatic brethren, and it will suffer the penalties of its neglect, if that duty is not assisted and advanced by every Briton to whom the power and the opportunity falls; but the Government cannot do our work, it can only mar it, and retard it.

If a fair field to educated natives be opened by the Government, the best men will educate themselves; education will be truly popular; and there will be a kindly and human feeling of obligations conferred and received between the races. No person, no people ever felt grateful or obliged to such an abstraction as Government. Its gifts are looked upon with suspicion, especially its gifts of religion or education, and thus suspicion must be immensely aggravated when the

rulers are of a different race, colour, and creed from the subjects. But in India we know that these suspicions exist in their most dangerous and unmanageable forms. All these great measures of social reform and public decency to which I have alluded must be abandoned, and had better not be proposed or mentioned, if the Government of India is to be self-exposed to the suspicion of aiming at the propagation or the encouragement of the Christian religion. The introduction of Bible classes in the schools supported by the State would be a most fatal and retrogressive step; but in my humble opinion any connexion between the Government and education must hamper the progress of reform by rendering education unpopular, and by discouraging private efforts and national self-reliance.

And although not thoroughly accepted in Europe, these opinions certainly represent the general tendency of the most cultivated and advanced thought on these topics; and it is a most hopeful fact that Lord Stanley appears, by his late answer to a deputation from the Missionary Societies, to have accepted the doctrine of the strict religious neutrality of the State without reserve. I wish he would go a step farther, and accept the non-interference of the State in educational efforts also.

Let the missionaries work, and let all good Christians second their exertions. If by any human means the natives of India are to be converted to

Christianity, they will convert themselves, and will pay for their own missionaries, as well as for their own schoolmasters, when the proper time arrives. That time cannot be hastened by one day by any act or by any policy of the State.

Can any one seriously expect that the conversion of the natives will be rendered more complete or more rapid by their intermediate proscription and exclusion from the government of their own country, and from all high and honourable office in its administration? And have we any right from history and experience to believe that their moral cure would be as speedy and as complete by their conversion to Christianity as might be hoped, and as theoretically it ought to be? The Christian standard of rectitude in 1858 is very high. But our English judges were corrupt, our English landlords were oppressive for many centuries after they were Christian.

Let the British nation according to its convictions, and every individual according to his lights and his obligations, promote education and religion; but let the Government be confined to its legitimate functions.

But it is possible to err in the other extreme. It is painful and disheartening to hear certain statesmen, from some of whom we might have hoped better things, enunciating the doctrine, opposed alike to humanity and to expediency even on selfish principles, that education in India would be dangerous

to our supremacy, and repeating the savage, stupid cry, "India was won by the sword, and must be kept by the sword." If prophets abounded in these days, and such words were uttered by some inspired sibyl, or some venerable sage to whom "the sunset of life gave mystical lore," we should hear in them a prediction of judicial blindness and of terrible punishment, of carnage, torture and hell upon earth, the only possible results, however long delayed, of such unworthy and stupid injustice and ingratitude. But as our wildest as well as our most oracular politicians are but mortal men, and their loudest effusions are not in general accredited with any Pythian significance, let us draw no bad omen from their defiance of humanity, but hope the contagion has not extended very far. Do these statesmen imagine that "with the sword" they can make a world after their own fashion, and a human race with stunted minds and seared sensibilities, to suit their own purposes, their own purblind blundering purposes? We know that similar fears were formerly expressed with regard to the education of the English working classes, but one seldom now hears any one broach such stale, flat, and unprofitable bigotry. Unprofitable indeed! for it is well known now that the working classes *will* be educated, whether some nobles and employers approve of education or not; and that the only way in which the

higher classes can obtain any voice in the matter at all is by joining in the good work.

The American slaveholders forbid their slaves to be taught to read; and any deprecation, obstruction, or discouragement of education in India would obviously be based on the same principle, or want of principle. And why are we to manifest the guilty fear of the unfortunate possessors of that fatal inheritance? Why should we play the slaveholder's part with a people who are not slaves, and who would receive any generous gift from us with the most loyal affection and gratitude? Let us not begrudge the gift; let us not misunderstand or slight the true community of interest, between the giver and receiver. Nobly and sweetly sings the greatest poetess that ever lived in England, and one of the greatest of living poets:—

“How to our races we may justify  
 Our individual claims, and as we reach  
 Our own grapes, bend the top-vines to supply  
 The children's uses: how to fill a breach  
 With olive branches: how to quench a lie  
 With truth, and snate a foe upon the cheek  
 With Christ's most conquering kiss! why these were things  
 Worth a great nation's finding, to prove weak  
 The glorious arms of Military Kings.”\*

Is there no guarantee for the future in the absence of all laws suppressing the free publication and inter-

---

\* Mrs. Browning—Casa Guidi Windows.

change of counsel and opinion, and in the inestimable institution of a free press, that elastic safety-valve to which England owes her present security from the rude tyranny of physical force by either people or Government? It is maintained by many, with much appearance of reason and with much warrant from experience, that a nation requires to be accustomed gradually and trained to the safe use of such powerful means of swaying public opinion and influencing its rulers; but here is a nation, here is India, absolutely being brought up from childhood in the possession of this power, of the nature, value, and extent of which she is at present absolutely unconscious, and which she certainly will not be able to use with effect until a long apprenticeship has taught its legitimate and prudent employment. A people may misuse a privilege snatched by force, or thrown as a sop to quench their rage; but when the free press is an institution of slow and natural growth, it will be at once an honest informant and instructor for rulers and subjects, and a safety-valve to disgorge and dissipate all that violence, falsehood and folly, which flourish best in forced concealment and under heavy coercive pressure, fretting, swelling, growing, gaining strength for the inevitable explosion at last. The Government which forbids the publication of foolish or mischievous opinions, forbids their exposure and destruction.

## LETTER XVIII

## HOW INDIA MUST BE GOVERNED.

INDIA must be governed on British principles, as a part of the British Empire, and not as a conquered foreign country, the home of an inferior race. We did not gain our vast possessions and virtual supremacy by conquest, in opposition to the will of the inhabitants. From 1799 to 1819, though some of the princes were jealous and alarmed at our progress, public opinion was very generally and decidedly in our favour. Our only opponents in the acquisition of those vast provinces which constitute the Madras Presidency were the French, Hyder Ali, and his son Tippoo Sultan. I will even consent to set aside our own native troops as mere unthinking, ignorant mercenaries,—though, perhaps, the events of 1857-58 might teach a different lesson,—but in the invasion of Mysore, one of our most critical campaigns, which terminated in the storm of Seringapatam and death of Tippoo, our army was strengthened by twenty thousand native allies. In the Assaye and Argaum campaign, General Wellesley had 5000 of the Nizam's Cavalry, and 4000 of the Peishwa's troops under his orders, whose services against the Bhonsla's and



Scindiah's swarms of Malhatta horsemen were invaluable. In 1817-18 the Peishwa Bajee Rao,—stained with the blood of Gungadhur Shastree, a Brahmin, a guest and an ambassador,—and Appah Sahib of Nagpore, who had treacherously murdered Rajah Pursojee, his cousin and sovereign, were our two principal enemies. Both of them were regarded with horror and detestation on account of these crimes, and both of them—more especially Bajee Rao—had completely lost the confidence and alienated the affections of their most powerful officers and dependents, by their infamous profligacy, their cruel exactions, their cowardice and vacillation. Public opinion all over India was on our side; and these two monarchs met with but little support even in their own families. The ban of our Empire was respected then. But between 1816 and 1856 our reputation retrograded, and our power was not increased.

In the year 1856 we did not hold the lofty moral position, the credit of disinterested and impartial motives, that we ought to have attained, before we decided on such a step as the annexation of the kingdom of Oude. To perform such an act with the high hand, we ought to have had clean hands, and had our past dealings with other allied and protected States been void of reproach, I believe that—excepting some objectionable details, such as auction sales of royal property—the public opinion of India

would have supported and approved our policy. The plea upon which the kingdom was mediatized, if not by the general law of nations and by the terms of treaties a sound and sufficient plea, was at least a true one—the misgovernment, or rather no-government was notorious and scandalous,—life and property were not secure. But we were not entitled, either by universal acknowledgment of the blessings of British rule, and any marked contrast of its superiority in our adjacent districts, or by any complaint or appeal for redress and protection from any class of the inhabitants of Oude, to use our overwhelming power for the extinction of that friendly and faithful sovereignty. And our previous and recent annexations, on very much weaker pleas, of Sattara, Nagpore, Jaloun and Jhansi, caused our professed and proclaimed anxiety for the ryots of Oude to be received all over India with contempt and derision. But no sensible person who has “been in India,” cares what the niggers think; in fact, distinguished and experienced officers know that there is no public opinion in India, that the niggers don’t think.

Lord Dalhousie disposed of boxes of despatches and reports in rare workmanlike fashion; he was a perfect master of the system of administration and of a vast quantity of details, he was always up to time, and made every one keep pace with himself: he had a singular facility, if not always felicity, in

writing minutes. But he did not know the grand imperial style; he made the ban of our Empire cheap by threatening our best friends with it; and he made our supremacy dreadful and hateful by annexing at least three principalities and declaring the extinction of at least three illustrious families on false pleas.\*

\* Yes,—on false grounds were Sattara, Nagpore, and Jhansi annexed;—in the particular case of Nagpore, on grounds so false that the whole transaction might well be considered as null and void. The persons most nearly interested, the widows of the late Rajah, have never ceased to protest against it, and to declare it null and void, to the best of their poor ability. In pleading their own cause, their great difficulty has always been that they have never heard what adverse case, what objections of fact or law are set up against them. Lord Dalhousie told them roundly enough that there was no heir; but they know that there is an heir, the grand-nephew of the late Rajah, the great-great-grandson of Rughojee the Second, who fought against us at Assaye and Argaum, and paid dearly for three months' hostility by the cession of Cuttack and Bevar. In conse-

---

\* There are other cases, but I mention the three which I have thoroughly investigated

quence of this young prince's inherent right of succession by consanguinity, he was, according to Hindoo and family custom, chosen as a son, adopted by the widowed Ranees on the day of the Rajah's death, and officiated as a son at the funeral pile. Yet Lord Dalhousie, in his farewell minute of review, dated 28th February, 1856, paragraph fourteen, writes as follows:—"No son had been born to his Highness" (the Rajah of Nagpore); "none was adopted by him; none, as they have themselves admitted, was adopted at the Rajah's death by the Ranees, his widows." This statement is peculiarly and mysteriously erroneous; it seems impossible to explain its occurrence in a paper written by Lord Dalhousie; for so far from admitting anything of the sort, the Ranees have never ceased to press the claims of their adopted son upon the Government. It is true that the public processions through the city and other ceremonies of adoption, and of giving a new name to their son, were postponed by the Ranees,—at first because with somewhat overstrained deference to our Government they did not wish to take the initiative out of its hands, and afterwards because, until two years had elapsed, the local authorities actually prohibited the public celebration, probably from some fear of a disturbance in the city of Nagpore,—but most unquestionably Janojee Bhonsla was adopted by the Ranees, in the plain obvious meaning of the

word, chosen as a son on the day of the Rajah, his grand-uncle's death.

I have said that the plea upon which Oude was annexed was a true one, but that the plea upon which Sattara, Nagpore, and Jhansi were confiscated was false. But I am very far from believing that the misgovernment and extravagance of the Court of Lucknow, and the solicitude of the Honourable Company for the welfare of the ryots of Oude, were the pure and sole considerations and inducements that led to the appropriation of that rich and flourishing province, the revenue of which was computed at nearly a million and a half sterling per annum. And I certainly do not assert, or insinuate, or suspect that Lord Dalhousie and the eminent gentlemen associated with him in Council, were conscious of the falsity and iniquity of that pretended "law and custom of India," under which the Honourable Company, setting the law of the land and history and treaties at defiance, refused to recognise the succession of adopted sons in the families of its faithful allies of Sattara, Jhansi, and Nagpore. Jeremiah tells us that the human heart is "deceitful above all things;" and all experience teaches that the corporate heart of councils, whether in India or in Europe, is not exempt from the frailties to which the individual is liable; if indeed self-deceit be not aggravated by the absence or division of responsi-

bility.\* I have no doubt that Lord Dalhousie's intentions were excellent; that his lordship and the members of council, and the Court of Directors, had no objects in view but the general good of the British Empire and the good government of the inhabitants of these newly-annexed provinces; in short, that they all deceived themselves most sincerely and effectually; but unfortunately they did not and could not deceive the people of India. Native principles, native traditions, native prejudices, were systematically neglected and despised; native public opinion was either treated as utterly unworthy of notice and attention, or declared to have no existence; until at last, when forty years of Mr. Gubbins and the North-West Settlement, and ten years of active annexation, resumption, and confiscation, had ruined innumerable families of every rank, from the prince to the substantial gentleman, and beggared their retainers and servants, had shattered and shaken all conservative interests, feelings, and hopes, and filled the land with mourning, and curses, and threats,—then one day the storm arose and filled the land with blood and fire.

It took all distinguished and experienced officials

---

\* Some one said that "corporations had neither bodies to be kicked nor souls to be damned."

by surprise,—nobody had ever dreamed of such an event as a general mutiny of the army, as a widely-extended rebellion, except some few crotchety men, regular old croakers,—clever no doubt some of them, but queer in their notions,—such as Metcalfe, who set the press free, but was always an alarmist; and Frederick John Shore,\* who seems to have really had some doubts about the blessings of British rule; and old Sleeman, who had the most exaggerated ideas of the native character and of natives' capabilities, though he ought to have known better, since it was he that discovered and hunted down the Thugs: and all these men had the same mischievous, old-fashioned opinions about the evils of annexation, and of destroying the old families, and about employing natives in the higher branches of the public service. But after all they did not foresee when the rebellion would happen, or how it would break out; it was merely a sort of guess, a vague idea they had picked up from some native or other, most probably disaffected people,—old Sleeman was always talking to natives, and always used to stick up for them in a most absurd way, as if they were gentlemen. So that really they did not know anything about it; nor

\* Read his admirable book on Indian Affairs. J. W. Parker 1837.

did they expect that a rebellion would break out so soon. And it is a most extraordinary fact that no one has found out how or where the plot began,—or whether indeed there was a plot. In fact, nobody can understand it,—from the very first day of the mutinies no one could account for them; and nothing can account for the rebellion to this day, except Russian intrigue, or Persian agency, or a Mussulman conspiracy, or the missionaries' operations, particularly Colonel Wheeler's preaching, or the lax discipline of the army, or a licentious press,—or perhaps, after all, it *was* that stupid oversight of the greased cartridge,—or a little of all these causes combined. But the great secret, and the true fundamental explanation of the outbreak and of the horrors which distinguished it, is the truly diabolical Oriental character, which assumes the vilest and lowest type in the races of Hindostan. The truth is that Asiatics, and particularly Hindoos, are only to be governed through fear, the most abject fear, once release them in the slightest degree from that restraint, and they become perfect demons, they revel in blood, and in the indulgence of the most infernal passions. Why—every one knows that, if we consider their disposition even in times of peace, and among the most respectable class, no native is capable of feeling gratitude; even among themselves you never hear of one native being grateful to



another. They only act under two motives, self-interest and fear; and although of course it is very proper for the missionaries to go on, and we ought all to subscribe to their schools and so forth, still I doubt very much whether they will ever do any good. What can you expect from a people who can't feel any gratitude for anything, who positively don't know what gratitude means? And it is of no use, indeed it is positively dangerous, to show them any kindness, because they directly interpret it into fear. That was the way with the sepoys; they were kindly treated, and they thought we were afraid of them. The fact is, that it is quite impossible to calculate on the actions of Asiatics; they are cowardly and yet ferocious; they have no reasoning powers, but a great deal of low cunning; they are just like very wicked children, and they must be treated like wicked, dangerous, mischievous children. The only plan now is to take such precautions that they may never have such a chance of again catching us unawares. We shall not differ much about the precautions. In the first place, we must have an English army of a hundred thousand men, or eighty-five thousand at least; and all the artillery, which must be very largely augmented, must be European,—no native must be made an artilleryman, or admitted into our arsenals or laboratories, then we must have fortified gaols, and strong posts with guns wherever

more than two English officers are on duty, for instance, at all civil stations, and we must disarm the whole country, and make the manufacture and sale of gunpowder felony, and if any native army is to be kept up it should be composed of Sikhs and sweepers in equal proportions, and armed with flint muskets, and the commandants of native corps should have the power of flogging, shooting, and hanging, without any nonsense of court-martial, and the pay of European officers ought to be raised, and the half batta order ought to be done away with at once, and we ought to have forty or fifty battalions of negroes, or Kroomen, or Malays, or Kaffirs, and a few Italian or Spanish legions, half caste cavalry, volunteer guards, militia, military colonies in the Hills, &c &c. But above all, there should be none of that conciliation policy, no truckling to those wretched upstart Baboos, who would cut our throats if they could, it is the worst policy possible to try to conciliate the natives, they only believe that we are afraid of them, and they see their advantage at once, and ask for more. We ought to insist on proper respect being paid to all Europeans, every native, whatever his pretended rank may be, ought to be compelled under heavy penalties to salaam all English gentlemen in the streets, and if the native is on horseback or in a carriage, to dismount and stand in a respectful atti-

tude until the European has passed him.\* Anything more?

I confess I do not rise in a very hopeful state of mind after reading or hearing speculations and recommendations of this nature. I do not recognise the voice of my countrymen there. Yet the very words are ringing in my ears day after day. I think they will require no comment or refutation in England.

\* I regret to say that a magistrate at Agwa disgraced himself and his nation by publishing a police regulation to this effect and trying to enforce it.

## LETTER XIX

## INDIAN STATESMANSHIP

*December, 1858*

IN my last letter I expressed a confident opinion that the hopeless views of Asiatic character, and of the necessity of rule by fear, would not need much confutation in England, although in India they were painfully common and obtrusive.

I have become strongly disposed to think that, as a general rule, the field of Indian administration is the very worst training ground for Indian statesmanship. There is neither the time nor the space on the present occasion to discuss the origin and inherent cause of the deficiencies of our distinguished and experienced officers. Perhaps we might be able to trace them to the imperfect education, the scanty English intercourse, the premature authority and immediate caste distinctions, of gentlemen in the civil and military services, who arrive in India at ages varying from seventeen to twenty. Perhaps a purely official life never is the best sphere for learning the art of government, and for acquiring enlarged ideas. Even in England, I doubt whether twenty years' experience as County-Court Judge, or as Excise Commissioner, would be a good introduction to a seat

in the Cabinet. I suspect there is not a single instance on record in which a Sous-Préfet, however long in the service and however dexterous at his work, has attained to the dignity of a portfolio, or has been supposed capable of holding one. And I fear that an Indian Collector, whose duties are very similar to those of a French Préfet, is seldom fit to be a Pro-Consul.

There have been brilliant exceptions; but I believe that recent and contemporary history will be found to confirm this rule. Sir John Lawrence's vigour and skill as administrator of the Punjab were sufficiently conspicuous for many years before 1857, when the rebellion, and especially the siege of Delhi, called forth his marvellous energy and resource, and gave him the opportunity of rendering services to the Empire that cannot be over-estimated and will never be forgotten. His natural and acquired talents are just such as at once impress and attach the people of the country. He commands respect and obedience with a complete absence of English hauteur, and with much geniality and openness; and he never fails to recognise the due position by birth or by official rank of every native whom he receives as a visitor or on business. He is always accessible and always reliable; whatever he undertakes to do is done. Yet he is generally understood to take the North-West civilian view of revenue

matters, and to have, at least, offered no opposition in the Punjab to Lord Dalhousie's mania for resuming estates and dealing directly with the occupants of the soil;\* and to prefer and uphold the arbitrary, stealthy "Non-Regulation" system, by which administrative, police, and judicial functions are concentrated and confounded in the hands of every official. And lately, while firmly though mildly deprecating the violent proposals of his gallant coadjutor, Colonel Edwardes, he has advocated the introduction of Bible classes in Government schools, and the prohibition of religious processions,—which he calls a mere regulation of police. These two recommendations appear to me retrogressive and unprincipled, incompatible with imperial duties and with a just and consistent policy, and tend to confirm the truth of my surmise that a great administrator, and especially a great Indian administrator, is very liable to become a narrow-minded statesman.

---

\* The following passages, extracted from the Second Punjab Report, disclose the nature of the "settlement" which took place during the first year or two after the abolition of the Board of Administration in February, 1853, of which Sir Henry Lawrence was the president, and indicate the extent of these operations "Paragraph 490. In the year 1852-53 the receipts were as follows—The land-tax exhibited a slight falling off, being 149½ lakhs," (1,497,500*l.*) "against 152" (1,520,000*l.*) "in the previous year. The out-turn, however, is more satisfactory than could have been expected, if the reductions granted

Sir Thomas Munro and Sir Henry Pottinger at Madras, Sir John Malcolm and Sir James Rivett Carnac at Bombay,—all of whom were men of talents far above the common order, and had been eminently useful public servants in the highest secondary offices,—have not made their periods of government memorable by any reform of importance or by any proposed reform, and, in fact, all of them quite disappointed public expectation. This is particularly remarkable

by the settlement then in progress be considered. Rindens, amounting to several lakhs, had been removed from the shoulders of the agriculturists, and yet the loss to the State had been disproportionately slight, *owing chiefly to the lapsing of jagheer estates*" Page 205-6 "Paragraph 487 The item of Tribute amounts to upwards of five lakhs. A large portion of this is derived from the feudatories in the Cis Sutlej States. *It will probably be decreased by lapses and resurreptions, which will, on the other hand, compensate by additions to the land-revenue*" Page 203-4 "Paragraph 318 The statements referring to Lapses and Resurreptions are not in all respects complete, it is hoped that the omissions will be rectified for the future. *The appear to have been 674 estates and 1097 minor tenures either lapsed or resumed*" Page 137 Which I think may be considered a pretty good clearance of more middlemen in one year!

It was understood at the time, and frequently been stated since, and, although the papers have not to my knowledge been published, has never been denied, that the cause of Sir Henry Lawrence's removal from the Punjab and of the abolition of the Board of Administration, was Sir Henry's persistent endeavours to save the Rindlords from extinction, upon which measure Lord Dalhousie was determined, and which Sir John, raised from member of the Board to be Chief Commissioner, carried into effect.

with reference to Munro and Malcolm, whose previous careers had been so brilliant, and whose recorded opinions on many subjects are so liberal and enlightened.

Lord Teignmouth was an indifferent if not a weak Vicéroy. Mr. Thomason, the late Lieutenant-Governor of Agra, was nothing but a big Collector.

Mountstuart Elphinstone and Lord Metcalfe seem to me to be the only two statesmen that the Indian services have produced during this century; and the latter, though always known and noted as an able man, was, on account of his essential differences from civilian orthodoxy, decidedly distrusted and depreciated by his order, and by the civilian Court of Directors, who at last virtually discarded him as altogether unfit to be Governor-General.

On the other hand, Lord Cornwallis, the author of the Perpetual Zemindarce settlement of Bengal,—who both in that great measure and in his less known and more imperfectly established judicial scheme, evinced at once the wisest conservatism, and the broadest liberality,—has never been a favourite with the high official class of Anglo-Indians. On the contrary, a few attempts, more or less bold, and many proposals have been made by them to disturb the constitution of Bengal; and Lord Cornwallis is generally spoken of as a well-intentioned, but highly injudicious ruler, who under some visionary notions



of a landed aristocracy and a happy tenantry, hastily committed the Government to a most unprofitable bargain, and converted mere middlemen into owners.

At last came Lord Dalhousie,—the first Governor General who openly avowed and relentlessly practised a policy of annexation among our allies, and of revolutionary confiscation among the nobles and landlords of the country. In his eight laborious years of power he threw us back fifty years in reputation; and an utter despair of justice and even of a fair hearing in matters connected with acquisitions of territory and revenue became established throughout the land. Yet he and the rebellion—which followed his departure so closely, and in which his name and his acts were so often mentioned by the rebel-leaders,\*—were wanted. A generation had grown up and was planted in every position of authority and influence, which, calm and self-complacent, believed in its own infallibility, in the inherent and necessary subserviency of the natives, and in the eternity and omnipotence of the regulations and monthly returns. Lord Dalhousie was the civilians' beau-ideal of a Governor-General realized, a Viceroy in their own shape, a covenanted Avatar, their Ormuzd,

---

\* The Nary Sahib Khan, Bahadour Khan, and the Ranees of Jhansi

as Lord Ellenborough had been their Ahirman. He came to push the theory of Asiatic inferiority—a low type of mind and morals entailing an inferiority of rights,—to its climax. This theory—otherwise called the damned nigger system—is in origin and principle, if not in degree, identical with the theory by which modern American slave-owners defend their “domestic institution.” But in India there has been generally more self-deception in its adoption, much more disguise and reticence in its avowal: instead of appearing in its true deformity as the selfish arrogance of race, it was tricked out as anxiety for the interests of the ryots, the under-tenants, and the lower classes of suitors in the Courts; delay was advocated, and total proscription disavowed, hopes were expressed that the progress of education and of Christian principles might in time render natives eligible for positions of trust, and so forth. The patient was dumb, the doctors blind, and the disease so deep-seated that nothing but violent inflammation could bring it to the surface.

In settled times, with an independent Council and a watchful, well-informed public opinion to keep him in the right path, Lord Dalhousie might have been an efficient Governor. There cannot be a question of his talents and application, but they were the qualities of an administrator, not of a statesman. He was far too able and too self-reliant to be led by

his Secretariat or by his colleagues in Council ; but all his mental predilections and moral tendencies fell in with the cold-hearted 'mechanical' bureaucracy of Calcutta. He seems never to have had an original thought ; in all his innumerable minutes not a single great principle, not a single word of generous faith or genial hope enlivens the dreary waste. He is no example of an English statesman ; he never acted, and never professed to act, on English principles.

Lord Canning has yet to manifest the faculties, and to win the fame of a great ruler. We have had but little earnest of the great remedial measures which are to restore the moral and material reputation of the British Empire, and to make Queen Victoria's supremacy not only credible, but acceptable throughout India. Since the first outbreak of the rebellion, military questions have been exclusively engrossing ; and such a time is altogether unsuited for marked concessions and changes. But it is earnestly to be hoped that the precious and critical days of our conspicuous and undisputed power and triumph will not be lost. Until peace is completely restored it would be premature to hint or to entertain a doubt the simple fact, however, of no reforms having yet been instituted or publicly proposed, must be noted here to prevent future misconception.

But with the exception of the Press Restriction Act,—which his lordship is generally understood to have reluctantly introduced in deference to the unanimous recommendations of the Council and of every adviser at Calcutta,—I do not know of any mistake of consequence with which Lord Canning is justly chargeable during the two years of rebellion, while we have many reasons to be proud and thankful that an English nobleman was at the head of the Indian Government, and not any distinguished and experienced servant of the Company. But few of that class were uninfected by the diseased and untutored, though not unnatural public opinion, which, maddened by the horrors of Cawnpore and Jhansi, called for all but indiscriminate slaughter. But few of them could approve, or appreciate, or comprehend the dignified and judicial spirit in which, from the first, the English statesman surveyed the whole scene, and weighed all its consequences,—conscious that he could not give way with impunity to the passions of the hour, conscious that he would be held answerable by his country and by posterity, for the general action of his Government, and for its remotest results.

Soon after our first success at Delhi, the conduct of many of the civilians in power created a belief, which was industriously fostered by the more determined insurgents, that our Government positively

intended to exterminate all men of rank throughout the country. The course of action pursued by many of those officers who, humiliated and exasperated hitherto, now found themselves armed with unlimited and irresponsible power,\* was not calculated to restore confidence; and their severities led to the defection of many waverers, such as the Nawab of Banda, Tej Sing of Mynpoorie, Narrain Rao of Tirohan, and others who had not committed themselves before the siege of Delhi.† But few of the officers who were placed in charge of the re-occupied territories commenced steadily and firmly to act up to the tenor and spirit of the instructions which Lord Canning, the responsible ruler of the country, laid down for their guidance; and in several instances where information reached the Governor-General, their

---

\* Under the special Acts XIV. and others of 1857.

† After Delhi had been taken, a much greater impression would have been produced by the news spreading of our actual generosity, deliberate judgment, and mercy, than by the most extensive promises of amnesty. Unfortunately the general voice was for terror, and much regret was expressed that the life of the old King of Delhi had been promised to him. The greatest error committed was the execution of the Nawab of Jhujur and the Rajah of Bulluhghur at Delhi, especially that of the latter, who had assisted European fugitives, and merely offered ceremonial homage to his ancient sovereign, the King of Delhi. The moderate punishment and disgrace of these two chieftains, and the pardon of their families, would have had a most beneficial and reassuring effect.

observance had to be sternly enforced, and contravention severely visited.

They know little of the 'actual state of India in March, 1858, of the temper of men's minds in those days, they can divine little of the hopes and speculations of an ignorant nation in its first rebellion, who think that Lord Canning was wrong in insisting on Lucknow being assaulted and occupied, before the campaign in Rohilund was commenced. Every day that Lucknow was held, and the semblance of a Government kept up there by the Begum and other leaders, added to the chances of a fresh rebellion breaking out in some other province, far or near either in our own dominions or in those of some native prince. The capture of Lucknow made what was deemed a hopeful cause appear a losing one, and put a stop at once to the spread of the insurrectionary spirit among the people."

The Oude proclamation was wrong in its terms, wrong in being a proclamation at all, and wrong in having been allowed to make its appearance in an English form; but it was as right in its intention, and necessary in its effect. The powers claimed by it were claimed for a benevolent purpose, really for a purpose of restitution, and not, as ostensibly, of confiscation. But if its actual and literal purport be insisted on, it was indefensible, illogical, inconsistent, and contradictory. And the reply to Lord Ellenborough's condemnatory

despatch, though offered as a defence and a solution, only makes the affair more complicated and more contradictory. So far as the resistance in Oude and other provinces is concerned, no harm whatever was done by the proclamation: and most certainly no effect, good or bad, was produced by the publication of Lord Ellenborough's despatch.

I cannot but feel a suspicion that in this matter of the Lucknow proclamation, as in the entire explanation of his policy and plan of settlement for Oude, and in other points, Lord Canning has failed to do justice to himself, and has suffered a loss of credit in proportion, from a certain delicacy and tenderness in touching upon the deeds of his immediate predecessor; and that the public is thus deprived of information and intelligence to which it is entitled, and light is withheld from the greatest dangers and weaknesses of the Empire.

I see no reason at present for losing confidence in Lord Canning; but whether he continues to work harmoniously with the present Ministry or not, or if any other reason should withdraw him from India before the termination of the usual period, I trust he will be replaced by another English statesman, and not by any Indian official, however distinguished and however experienced.

## LETTER XX

## PROSPECTS

*December, 1858*

THE British Empire in India must be governed on British principles, or it will gradually become a source of weakness, danger, and disgrace, instead of being a source of wealth, honour, and military strength.

I think the previous letters contain a few suggestions as to the causes of the rebellion which will convince the reason and touch the conscience and the heart of many an English officer, who has been unable to accept either the greased cartridge, or the ingratitude and cruelty of Asiatics, as adequate to explain so tremendous a convulsion. For my part, I hold the question, "What was the cause of the Indian Rebellion of 1857?" to be as incapable of a concise answer as the question, "What was the cause of the great French Revolution?"

And some suggestions have also been given as to those practical reforms which would vitalize the Empire, would promote the permanent enlightenment of the people by a natural and voluntary process, without the artificial and ill-directed interference of Government, and would institute those human rela-



~~dominant and the pure~~

there can be no social security, no peace,  
and no true progress.

The next ten years of our rule will form a most critical period; and on the use that is made of our lessons and of our opportunities will depend the future stability of our Empire.

If we still continue blinded with the pride and prejudices of race, and creed, and custom, and refuse to postpone indefinitely all measures of just conciliation and encouragement, it is possible that peace may be prolonged,—though it will really be only a truce,—and through a wise economy, skilful financial measures, and a judicious expenditure on public works, the revenue may increase, and with it the material prosperity and content of the masses. But whether our moral influence and power can advance, whether England can thus fulfil the glorious task confided to her, may be more doubtful.

Nay,—whether England contributes her full share to it or not, we may be sure that, however scanty its symptoms and slow its movement at present, the progress of the Indian people in knowledge is going on, and will not cease. But no thanks will be given to England; the progress will be all against us, adverse to our interests and derogatory to our fame. May that time never come when having been too selfish and careless in a period of passive submission,

we too proud to yield to  
in the safety-valve, and trust to the state  
machinery. If ever we, forgetting our E.  
faith and traditions, and declining any intellect  
contest, adopt restrictions and violent coercion, and  
oppose our physical force, and our physical force alone,  
to the enormous numbers of awakened and conscious  
India, then will be the beginning of the end.

But it shall not be so. Centuries must elapse, if  
peace continues, before India can be capable of self-  
government without retrogression, but let us so  
associate and initiate our Indian brethren in the  
rule of their own country, and in its political rela-  
tions with England, that they may see how the  
interests of each and all are combined; so that when  
the fulness of time has come, the sceptre may be  
committed to no unaccustomed hands, and the  
British Empire in India be closed with mutual  
benefits and brotherly congratulations, and not with  
a confused noise and with garments rolled in blood.

THE END