

At forty, a Bengali thinks of having a house to himself. At forty-five, he gets grand-children about his knees. At fifty-five, he retires from service and turns a village politician. It is in the field of politics that he is brought face to face with his younger adversaries. Old and new world ideas clash with one another, and generate disrespect in the young and hate in the old. The old and the young are the two poles of society, the one constantly making for the frigid zone, the other for the meridian. The reason of their differences is not far to seek. The young consider the old as effete, and the old consider the young as intruders. The latter would not let the former assert their rights by stepping into their shoes. They are chafed at leaving the world to inexperienced hands, and cannot bear the idea of having to retire before their time. The young, on the contrary, are ready to pay their elders every respect, provided they quietly make room for them, provided also they do not, in their usual way, sit in the seat of the scornful and deride their acts. The whole thing therefore resolves itself into a contest between conservatism on the one hand and radicalism on the other. Broad ideas are hated by narrow ideas and are hated by them in turn: this, in fact, is the struggle of progress!

Then again, nature is always after change. Change is the law, monotony the exception. The young, in demanding a change, but obey a law of nature. The theory of the "survival of the fittest" is no myth. It

implies not only physical, but moral and intellectual fitness. The strong, the good, and the wise are supplanted by the stronger, the better, and the wiser. One race dies out, another steps in. "The old order," so sings the poet, "changeth, giving place to new." In the commonwealth of God, the Parliament of Nature, the old regime is being constantly voted out, and the new regime voted in. Such being the case, the demands of the young are not improper. To us at least it seems desirable that, to avoid mutual jealousy, there ought to be fixed a certain age at which men, with crow's feet about their eyes, should abdicate the world in favour of men of 25, and surrender their judgment to their soaring intelligence.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

We have said that the old, as a rule, are rather apathetic. They want to be moved towards a certain direction; but, once stirred up, they seldom flag or stop midway. All that they want is fire, a tendency to be ready always and on the wing at a moment's notice. But that want, however, stands them in good stead, for it guards them from doing things by fits and starts. There would have been no French Revolution had the population of France consisted wholly of grey-haired men. The young lead the way, the old follow. Every undertaking, however, in order to be successful,

ought to bear the stamp of age. Youth seldom commands respect. Age has certain charms about it, and carries great weight. One grey-hair is worth fifty black ones. 'Tis, we repeat, for the young to lead, to do, and, if necessary, to die martyrs ; but 'tis the old men on whom devolves the duty of keeping young energies and young impulses within bounds. The rear is as useful as the van, nay sometimes more so. The conjunction of grey-hairs and black is therefore a happy consummation.

The Hitakari Sava, a remarkably high-sounding but do-nothing institution, had died a *Sati* with the late Babu Raj Kissen Mukharji. The People's Association too, like so many creatures of a day, that sport in the sun for a few short hours, then drop down and die, had already lived two years and some months, and was gasping for breath. There was, in fact, a chasm, a void, a vacuum so far as the field of Politics was concerned. Public opinion too had begun to stagnate, and popular feeling, unable to find vent, stood like a vulcano without a crater. After all, it was an opportune moment for a public body to start into life, take the field, and give vent to the lava of popular discontent.

CHAPTER XXI.

A PAIR OF SUSPICIOUS EYES.

The old carp at the doings of the young, no matter what they be. And yet, when early in June, 1885, a

band of young enthusiasts, devoted to the cause of their country and their God, founded a confraternity, and styled it the Uttarpara Union, there was not only no lack of grey-hairs to lord it over them, but so many as one hundred of them joined their ranks. It was the Municipal Chairman alone (glory be to him in the highest !) who, of all grey-haired men, not merely preferred to stand aloof, but imprecated, bit his lips, and even fretted and foamed at the very name of this unfortunate public body. To him the horizon henceforward seemed to be thick with coming rivals.

No wonder, therefore, that the Uttarpara Union should overlay the poor Chairman like a night-mare. His mind lost its equanimity and his eyes the blessings of sleep. In support of this statement we feel drawn to remark that, when out of compliment to his age and his monopolised Chairmanship a letter was written to him, asking his co-operation, he vented his spleen by throwing it away and even spitting on it in a regular Jewish fashion.

CHAPTER XXII.

A CONSOLATION.

The fate of every departure from the existing order of things is persecution. Socrates, Christ, and Galilio wandered out of the beaten track and were persecuted. The Uttarpara Union, to compare great things with

small, was in its own humble way, found guilty of a similar offence by a few Municipal philistines, and was made the butt of ridicule and censure. The young enthusiasts, nothing, daunted, shrugged their shoulders, twirled their moustaches and said, "Well, we share it with very good company."

CHAPTER XXIII.

PERSECUTIONS IN OTHER QUARTERS.

It was about this time that the operation of Part vi. of the Municipal Act commenced, and the people dealing in straws, Kerosine oil and other inflammable substances, and notably the potters as a class, began to have a very bad time of it. People owing allegiance to the party opposed to the Chairman's were fined, harassed and persecuted in every possible way. The Commissioner of the Division, on being appealed to, gave the petitioners to understand that their objections, though valid could not be taken into consideration by reason of their being out of season. The poor sufferers were thus left in the lurch and would have been driven to the verge of abandoning their homes if it were not for the timely service rendered them by the Uttarpara Union.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW NEPOTISM RAN AGROUND.

Nephews are dear to their uncles ; rich nephews the more so. The chairman has a rich nephew, who

is therefore doubly dear to him. This rich nephew, be it said in justice to him, has a liking for horses and carriages and in an evil hour, purchased a landau, which people, happening to be on the main road of the town of an after-noon, may see. The possession of this landau and a pair of greys naturally generated a desire to have the street in front of his house widened. Advantage was taken of his own position as a Zemindar and Municipal Commissioner, and of the position of his Chairman uncle, and an application was submitted to the Commissioners at a meeting for permission to pay the costs of acquiring lands for the purpose. The Commissioners, thanks to their far-sightedness, declined to grant permission until the applicant saw his way to modify his concessions to the extent of promising to pay the whole amount of law-charges, if any were incurred. The question, as was to be expected, met the approval of the blessed majority, and, in spite of the loud protests alike of the aggrieved and the Uttarpara Union, the usual declaration was gazetted and preparations were made for the acquisition. On the illegality however being pointed out the Local Government was pleased to cancel the declaration, stating it as its reason, that as "no declaration for the acquisition of land shall be made unless the compensation for such land is paid from the public revenues or out of some Municipal fund or by a company," and as "in the present case the compensation is not to be paid from any of these sources, the Lieutenant Governor is advised

that the land in question cannot be acquired under the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act." The eyes of the mover and his uncle were thus opened, and the latter lost no time in finding a royal road to success. The mistake was forthwith rectified by offering to pay the costs of the proposed acquisition from Municipal funds, and the local Government was effectually moved in the matter of publishing a fresh declaration. The writer of this short narrative is candid enough to confess his inability to cope with the requirements of the occasion, or he would have gladly undertaken to describe the light in which this piece of Municipal injustice was taken by the public and the sensation it created in the town. Suffice it to say, that even women did not scruple to curse and imprecate the originators of this monstrous idea. To the writer of these lines it seemed that the Municipality was bent upon going back to the old days of Mohamedan misrule and lawlessness !

CHAPTER XXV.

At close quarters.

We have seen that the younger generation is the crater through which the lava of popular discontent finds vent. We have also seen that a time comes, late or early, no matter, when a strict adherence to the policy of indifferent do-nothingism becomes impracticable, and when even the most apathetic of men find

it difficult to sit complacently without being in the least affected by the wanton caprices of licensed power.

The Uttarpara Union had, in the most courteous manner, asked the Chairman of the Municipality to join its ranks, had requested him to furnish it with copies of certain records of the Municipality, had looked upon the local Trenching ground as a source of intolerable nuisance, had denounced the bone-mill as a monstrosity, had espoused the cause of the Female School street sufferers, and, in fact, had tried in every possible way to convince the Municipal authorities that they ought to be on better terms with the rate-payers and the rate-payers that they ought to be a little more mindful of their legal rights. But when the Chairman, in the pride of his power, did not so much as deign to look down upon them from the height of his municipal aerie and even so far forgot himself as to choose to call the two hundred and eighty-five members of whom that public body is composed "a happy family group" the pride of the younger generation was wounded and their blood began to boil. The immediate result of so deliberate an affront was a monster meeting attended by 4 to 5 hundred rate-payers, at which one of the speakers gave expression to his feelings somewhat in the following vehement strain :—

"I say, therefore, that my duty—why, *my* duty, "the duty of my colleagues—to-day is one of grave "accountableness. We take the responsibility of de-

“fending the people, but, in going to give practical
 “effect to our professions, we run the risk of striking
 “our heads against the rock of conservatism. You,
 “men of Uttarpara, have been coming to us daily
 “and even hourly, and complaining about this thing
 “and that, and we, who profess to bring relief to
 “the oppressed have been knocking at the doors of
 “the authorities and receiving for reply an obdurate
 “‘not at home.’ By a mysterious irony of fate we,
 “280 representatives of the people, have at last been
 “driven by obloquies and insults, repeated too often
 “to be brooked, to assume an attitude of defence and to
 “mobilize all our powers of expression for the purpose
 “of condemning the hostile attitude of a smaller body
 “of the people’s representatives, which, like the Govern-
 “ment of Louis Nepolean, has forgotten the source from
 “which it has derived its power and authority, and is
 “now bent upon planning a municipal *Coup d’Etat*.
 “The gauntlet is thrown, and honor demands that we
 “should take it up and descend into the arena. The
 “duty of defending the weak, the oppressed, and the
 “fallen is and will ever be ours. We therefore fail
 “in duty when we refuse to stir ourselves, knowing full
 “well that to us, United Uttarpara, the way to success
 “is as easy as the way to market. Let us therefore
 “appeal to the local representative of Her Britannic
 “Majesty’s government, and wait to see how, with
 “Scylla on the one hand and Charybdis on the other,
 “the ship of state steers !

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE COMBAT DEEPENS.

The next meeting unanimously approved a draft memorial to His Honor the then Lieutenant Governor, in which His Honor's attention was drawn to the following among other irregularities in the management of Municipal affairs in the town of Uttarpara :—

1. Go to the Municipal Office at any hour of the day, and, ten to one, you will not find the clerks there. Ask the Collecting Sarkar, who may be sometimes found there, for any record, and you will be told outright that it is with the Chairman at his house.

2. It is necessary to have an Office establishment; but when that item swallows up a good portion of the total income it requires looking into.

3. Take a garry and drive round the town. First have a look at the "Chowrangee quarters", where the Chairman lives, and through which the big swells are occasionally driven; then please hurry on to the south, and on your way mark every street, and pond, and lane and alley, and then draw a comparison.

4. If you have leisure at any time during the rainy months, please have a look at the western-most portion of the town, and you will have an idea of how people can live in houses actually floating on water.

5. There are only two public latrines but no urinals; and yet people are fined every now and then for causing nuisance.

6. The incidence of taxation, per head of the population of this 'Earthly Paradise,' is Re. 1-1-1,—more than what the financial condition of the generality of rate-payers justifies.

7. The overseer is a factotum, a veritable jack-of-all-trades. One finds in him the overseer, plus the registrar of births and deaths, plus the contractor, plus the Dispensary clerk, in fact, the living sum of half-a-dozen sinecures.

8. The dispensary is more a source of profit to the municipality than a charitable institution. There are often more dying men in the moribund room than convalescents in the hospital. In fact, it is a proof of how benevolence can be perverted to the mockery of a name.

9. The Honorary Magistrates, with only one exception, are Chairman's men, and, with the exception of two, are capital scholars and lawyers. They have besides been ruling the Bench from when time was born.

It took the Chairman a good number of months and about four score thickly printed pages of foolscap to get these charges answered by God knows whom ; and it pleased the local Government to inform the Uttarpara Union in reply that "the affairs of the Uttarpara Municipality are efficiently conducted." The Memorialists, we are told, quietly submitted to the decision of the authorities and only grumbled out, "Well the difference is one of degree only. Our idea of efficiency is a little too refined, and hence this seeming incongruity."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DESPAIR.

The gun-powder element, we have referred to, was touched to the quick. One of the young men, by way of consolation, read out to his compeers the following extract from George Elliot's *Middlemarch*:—

“We mortals, men and women, devour many a disappointment between break-fast and dinner time; keep back the tears and look a little pale about the lips, and in answer to inquiries say, ‘Oh nothing!’ Pride helps us; and pride is not a bad thing when it only urges us to hide our own hurts, not to hurt others.”

The reading over, some one from among the assembly was heard to roar out,

“—————on younder earth,

Falsehood now triumphs; deadly power

Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth!”

 CHAPTER XXVIII.
RELIGION *vs.* LAW,

In a civilised country law is the last resource, law-courts the last great strongholds. When simple appeals fail legal remedies are sought for. The Mondle street men had grown tired of their noxious neighbour, the bone-crushing Monster, and had tried their hands at all sorts of remedies, but when every one of those remedies failed they betook themselves to Law. The

Sub-Divisional Officer of Serampur, to whom the complaints were made, declined to take any action in the matter before satisfying himself as to the existence of the nuisance. A day was accordingly fixed, and the mill-owners, thanks to their endeavours, succeeded, with the aid of the Municipal Overseer and the coolies, in giving their Golgotha an air of cleanliness and keeping the mill stopped for two or three consecutive days. These precautionary steps were enough to convince the Sub-Divisional Officer that the nuisance complained of was a myth. He accordingly dismissed the case as a purely vexatious one. In less than no time the sufferers were again driven to file a fresh complaint, and it pleased the Sub-Divisional Officer to summon the witnesses for the prosecution to give evidence before his Worship in his camp at Dwarhatta, about 28 miles from Uttarpara. As proof of the disgust with which people look upon this irreligious monstrosity, we may state here that so many as twenty gentlemen of position volunteered to undergo the fatigues of the journey, the scorching rays of a tropical sun and the want of conveyance notwithstanding. The trial, though conducted in the absence of the accused, ended in their favour, but on the aggrieved moving the Hon'ble High Court the case was remanded for a retrial. This time, however, all the forms of legal routine were observed, and the accused cited among others a learned representative of the medical profession and the Chairman of the Municipality. The former with his labelled bottles tried to prove that bone-dust does not defile the

water of the neighbouring tanks ; the latter salved his conscience as best he could with an open verdict in favour of the mill-owners. But strange to say, the deposition, given in solemn affirmation, by nearly a dozen gentlemen of culture and respectability, who, by the way, were all led alike by personal experience and regard for their religion to volunteer their services in condemning the Bone-mill, was weighed in the balance and found wanting. The Joint Magistrate took the Chairman's words as Gospel truths, and dismissed the suit, to the utter sorrow of orthodox Hindus, the mortification of the complainants and the great exultation of the mill-owners. The sufferers, however, thinking it so much waste of energy and purse to appeal to criminal justice as administered in this country, began to despair of finding redress at law-courts. They accordingly got up a memorial and had it signed by hundreds of rate-payers, but put off sending it in view of a coming revolution in the Municipal Board. The confidence they, in common with their countrymen, place in the noble assurance of protecting their religious belief from being outraged vouchsafed to them by their Gracious Sovereign in the Magna Charta of 1858, has been the one great instrument of buoying up their sinking spirits.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PROBLEM THEORETICALLY SOLVED AT LAST.

To anyhow avoid removing the Trenching ground.

Let the Trenching ground sufferers raise a hue and cry.

Let the Deputy Sanitary Commissioner pronounce it "a dangerous site" and let him "recommend that a site farther away from human habitations should be chosen".

Do as much as you can to throw cold water on the sufferers' complaints, and convince the authorities that they are all humbug.

The Trenching ground will remain where it is, at least during the Chairman's tenure of office.

Because the Joint Magistrate, after repeated refusal to entertain the case, comes down one morning and inspects the Trenching ground,

And asks the Chairman to arrange for its removal ;

It becomes necessary to remove it ; But fullest advantage is taken of the 'law's delay' ;

It takes some time to appoint a committee for the purpose of selecting a site, some more time to deposit money, acquire land, and so forth ;

Therefore the end is gained.

Wherefore the removal of the trenching ground is delayed. Q. E. F.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW PETER WAS ROBBED AND PAUL WAS PAID.

In 1879, Mr. Carstairs, the then official Chairman of the Municipality, determined that an encroachment had been made on the southern side of the Kalipur Road by a buttress erected by one Babu Chundra

Narayan Chaterji, and asked the then Vice-Chairman to place the matter before the next meeting. The Municipal records show that the papers "were laid before the meeting," but that no resolution was come to. In course of time however, as Mr. Carstairs had apprehended, the effects of erosion began to be felt, and the Municipality felt the necessity of widening the Street by acquiring land along its other side. The owner objected to the acquisition, but his objections went for nothing, and the lands were taken possession of by cutting down about a dozen trees, all of them a century old.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOW LIP LOYALTY ENDED IN SMOKE.

The Celebration of Her Majesty's Jubilee engaged the attention of the Chairman during the early part of last year, and a meeting of the Commissioners was convened for the purpose of determining the best way of perpetuating the memory of so auspicious an event. One of the Commissioners having, however, pointed out the necessity of consulting the opinion of the rate-payers on a matter affecting their own purses, a General Meeting of the rate-payers was held, and resolutions were come to but no practical effect was given them. Among other things a ghat in the Vice-Chairman's quarters was proposed to be built. But a few *chirags* by way of illumination, and a Sankrityan party organised by the Chairman, were all the tribute this vaunted paragon of a Municipality could pay to the 50th anniversary of Her Majesty's reign.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CHAGRIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

To get thwarted in every honest endeavour to be of service to those from whom power is derived, to have to sit in the Municipal office with the arms akimbo and the mind wandering, to bear indignities, to see gross pieces of injustice done in open day-light and under colour of legal right, to witness the sufferings of people without having the power of mitigating them, in fact, to be always in the minority, are more than what even the coolest of tempers and the most indifferent of men can afford to brook. It is, we say, a punishment, a regular infliction, to have to associate with men whose very presence is gall and wormwood. No wonder therefore that some of the Commissioners grew tired of their offices and even tried to avoid the unpleasantness of being made the laughing-stock of their stronger colleagues. From the beginning of last year, therefore, they began to absent themselves from municipal meetings, and about its middle three of them ceased to be commissioners under Sec. 20 of the act.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NIPPED IN THE BUD.

It was during this part of the year that the Chairman tried to introduce certain obnoxious measures, but his projects had the misfortune of falling dead-born.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

INDICATIONS.

The three Commissionerships hung vacant for a good number of months. Two of them had to be filled up by elections, and one by appointment. The day fixed for the bye-elections had to be changed, for God knows what. As a preliminary step, the Uttarpara Union, on behalf of the rate-paying public, applied for registration of the names of about 100 men qualified to vote. The Chairman, in his usual way, questioned the right of the Union to constitute itself "the spokesman of the people." But when the day for hearing voters' claims and objections came, so many as eighty persons were enlisted, in spite of the tooth-and-nail opposition made by the Chairman. This resistance, thus offered by the Chairman to the legitimate aspirations of the people, gave the Sub-Divisional Officer some idea of the motive that led the Chairman to be so very fastidious about granting the franchise. The Elective System has all along been an eye-sore to him, and it was only natural that he should look upon the expansion of the franchise as a sure sign of his own overthrow.

The Union had its own candidates for the three vacancies, the Chairman for two of them only. The bye-elections came off on the 19th of September, under the presidency of the Dy. Magistrate of Serampar. There being only one candidate for the vacancy in Ward No. 2, and that candidate put up by the Union, the vacancy was disposed of without much ceremony. The Chair-

man's candidate for the vacancy in Ward No. 3 barely got a proposer and a seconder, but no one to vote for him. On a show of hands being demanded for the Union candidate there was a regular forest of them in his favour. Two against 51—a decisive proof of the table being turned, and that, not only for a time, but for all time to come!!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DIFFICULTY TEMPORARILY SHIRKED.

We have seen that the Chairman had his own candidate even for the vacancy in the number of the appointed Commissioners; but that candidate had to come away from the contest with his crest completely fallen, and his reputation damaged in to the bargain. The Secretary of the Union was appointed to fill up this vacancy. As regards the two bye-elections, however, the writer is informed that the Chairman have, some how or other, contrived to get them cancelled as irregular and informal. In a town like Uttarpara, where factions reign supreme, no difficulty is felt in securing a good number of signatures; and a memorial, largely signed, has always some weight with the authorities. The Chairman has his own men to assist him with their signatures in emergencies likely that, and it is with the help of such men that he has succeeded in turning the scales.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BREWING OF THE TEMPEST.

The young men of the Union read with exultation the Notification in the Calcutta Gazette, fixing the 21st December for holding Municipal Elections in their town. They began to hold open-air meetings and instruct the rate-payers in matters municipal. They went from house to house, preaching the blessings of peace and good-will. "You have for your representatives," they said, "men, who have not scrupled to harbour monstrocities within a few yards of your sacred Hindu homes ; but it has pleased God to put an end to your troubles by bringing to a close the three eventful years of their tenure of office. The time, therefore, is come when your own interests and the interests of your brethern demand that you should use your discretion in electing your new representatives for the Board." These and similar exhortations served to open the eyes of the rate-payers, who unanimously agreed to abide by the decision of the members of the Union in the matter of chosing their representatives for the Board. The Chairman and his nephew on the other hand sent out *nugdees* in all directions, for the purpose of intimidating the rate-payers, but learned to their utter mortification that they had been rather late in the field, and that the rate-payers had already been apprised of their duties—in short, that the policy of persuasion had triumphed over the policy of intimidation.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

RE-ENFORCEMENTS.

The Sub-Divisional Officer once more visited the Municipal Office, and, in the teeth of the opposition, which the Chairman offered, so many as 20 to 25 men were admitted into the ranks of voters. Objections, taken with reference to the nomination of two of the candidates, were also rejected. On the Chairman, however, presenting petitions from certain persons claiming to be registered as voters, a day was fixed, but, strange to say, the petitioners being mostly tenants of his nephew, the Chairman raised no objections, although it was pointed out to the Joint Magistrate by the Union that so many as 8 had already been enlisted and that over 7 had no claims.

 CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE BIVOUACKING.

The Uttarpara Union had reasons to apprehend that main force would be brought by the Chairman's party to hear on persons who might express their unwillingness to vote for the Chairman's nominees. They accordingly spent the major portion of three or four successive nights, immediately preceding the elections, in bivouacking. On the one hand could be seen 10 or 12 members of the Union patrolling the streets till 9 or half-past 9 o'clock in the evening; on the other, two gomastas, two latials, and two Durwans,

in the employ of the Chairman and his nephew, could be seen knocking at the doors of sleeping ryats, at some late hour of the night. The writer of these pages feel drawn to reproduce the account furnished to him by an eye-witness, in which he has graphically described the state of affairs in the town on the election day and the day previous.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE DAIRY OF AN EYE-WITNESS.

December 20, 1887.

"6 A. M.—It is six in the morning. The weather is simply enchanting. I feel inclined to go out for a walk, the cold being such as makes it impossible for any one to lie buried in quilts. On the way meet some of the members of the Union in their long travelling coats. They are evidently returning from the *Chakbali* quarter.

One of them comes up to me and whispers: 'They are using threats, and the poor rate-payers are exasperated.' 'So much the better for your cause,' I reply, and part company."

I plunge into the Mondle street and find it absolutely lonely.

I then turn into the Chakbali street, cross the famous bridge, the construction of which is said to have cost higher Engineering skill than that of the

Solani Aqueduct, and more money than what the English had to pay for the Suez Canal. It's here that I find people assembled in groups of 4, 5 or, in some places, more. While walking past these men one of them, says in loud whispers: "We hav't so much as one poor lamp-post, or one metalled road in all Chakbali, and yet they would send darwans almost hourly (with what face, God knows) and threaten us with all kinds of harassment if we do not vote for their men." "Yes," some one else from the crowd takes up the clue, "and vote for one, who spends five months somewhere in the North-west, and comes down, meteor-like, in the 6th, to avoid losing his Commissionership, under section 20."

8 A. M.—On my way back meet —, who takes me aside and says, "If you happen to see — ask him in my name to assist me with a loan of — Rs., or I shall be hauled up to Court for Rs. — I owe —." I nod assent and depart.

10 A. M.—Somebody enters my room in breathless haste and says: "There is to be a regular scuffle shortly on the Grand Trunk Road." I go out straight-way, and find one of the Union peons commissioned to mount guard objecting to a voter being forcibly carried away by Babu Manahar's darwans. While witnessing this rather odd spectacle, a man comes post-haste and delivers a message from the Secretary enjoining the guards to offer no resistance or do nothing

that may tend to break the peace. The Darwans go off with their unfortunate charge, and I with a heavy heart.

2 P. M.—I hear the tramp of horses and the rattling of carriages. But the sounds melt away in the distance, leaving the large air filled with their echo.

5 P. M.—More sounds are heard and more signs of activity seen. Three members of the Union are seen riding up and down the main streets in full gallop.

8 P. M.—See a carriage rattle past. In it recognise the Secretary and two of the members of the Union.

9 P. M.—Another carriage in the north quarter with the Municipal Vice-Chairman and two or three others in it.

About this time some one looks in and says: "The Chairman has caused a telegraphic message to be sent to the Joint Magistrate of Serampur, complaining that a rival zemindar's men are barricading the streets."

10 P. M.—I take a fancy to see with my own eyes what is going on outside. The Chaturjee street is tolerably quiet. Some low whisperings are heard in the Ferry Ghat street. There is silence "deep as death" in the Chowkighata street. I have just explored the quarters near the Railway lines. They seem to me deserted. I knock at the door of one of the

cottages. One of the female inmates replies from inside in a low tone: 'No body at home.' "I belong to the Union" I said. The door opens ajar, and a man, evidently awe-struck, thrusts out his head and says: "Ah, 'tis you! I thought the brutal Darwans were come. We are firm as rocks. Count upon our meeting at 6, early tomorrow morning."

HALF-PAST TEN.—A cry, a shriek, is heard towards the North. I scamper off towards the direction from which it has proceeded. A potter comes breathless and says: "Save me, they are setting fire to my cottage." "Who?" inquired I. "The Overseer and his brother, with a match box in hand." "Why so," asked I. "Because," rejoined he, "I decline to vote for the Vice-Chairman." Just at this time about a dozen constables arrive, and the offenders at sight of them take to their heels.

11 P. M.—I return home and pass an anxious night.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1887.

Notes taken on the spot.

December 21.

I rise at 4—30' A. M. and venture out at 5—30. The streets are already filled with carriages and horses. The Grand Trunk Road is all life and bustle. About 20 carriages are running to and from the Library.

The Secretary, with the muster-roll in hand, is taking note of every fresh arrival of voters. At 7, the voters are counted, and at half past, they are taken to the polling station—a miserable-looking place, hemmed in on all sides by houses of ill-fame. The Presiding officer sits with his face towards south, with the Chairman on the right and the Sub-Divisional officer on the left. The Secretary to the Union takes his position on the steps in front of the table. One of the members sits with the voters' list to take count of the votes.

At 8 the elections commence. Of the two candidates for Ward No. 1, put up by the Chairman, one withdraws, leaving the other to take the fullest advantage of the two votes which every voter is entitled to give. The Secretary to the Union takes a survey of the field and declares it a hopeless task to get both the candidates elected with thirty-nine voters in all, while the opposition has 26. One of the Union candidates accordingly withdraws, leaving the rest two candidates sole masters of the field, and the Sub-Divisional Officer declares them duly elected.

Now come forward the voters of Ward No. 2. The Chairman's candidate in addressing the assembled voters in Bengali says among other things, "In giving your votes, do please take into consideration the age qualification." These words are followed by a groan and a hissing from the multitude. A show of hands in favor of every candidate is called for. The hands raised in favor of the Chairman's candidates can be

counted on the fingers, those in favor of the Union candidate are a legion. The defeated candidate demands a poll, which results in his inglorious defeat, there being only 22 votes in his favor, and that by making every voter give his two votes to him. The Secretary to the Union, who is a candidate for this Ward, gets 82 votes, and the other Union candidate so many as 76. They therefore are declared elected amidst deafening cheers.

The voters of Ward No. 3 next come up. The Chairman's candidate, not satisfied with the show-of-hands system, demands a poll, but meets with a defeat, having only 15 voters to give 30 votes to him. The Union candidates get 44 votes each, and are declared elected amidst loud cheering.

The voters of the 4th Ward come up at last. This time also the Chairman's candidate demands a poll, but gets only 29 votes. The two Union candidates get 63 and 61 votes respectively, and are declared elected amidst enthusiastic cheering, which continues till the Secretary, at the request of the Joint Magistrate, asks the assembled multitude to disperse. Never perhaps in the history of political contests was victory more decisive or defeat more inglorious !

CHAPTER XL.

WHAT SUCCESS LEADS TO.

A few days after the elections the writer happened to be conversing with two of the most intelligent

members of the Union on the subject of the memorial said to have been sent up to Government by the Chairman's party, praying for the cancellation of the elections. "Would to God," said one of them, "they were cancelled. Once having measured the tether of our adversaries we can confidently say that the future is ours. This time we have got seven out of eight; we shall have all the eight then."

CHAPTER XLI.

WHAT IS FOOD TO MANY MAY BE POISON TO SOME.

What to the scholar is a source of endless pleasure is to the truant boy a thing that appals. The sick child may refuse the bitter pill, but it is not a whit the less efficacious for it. The Chairman and his party may do all in their power to frustrate the endeavours of the Uttarpara Union and the general public to secure to the Municipality the privilege of electing its own Chairman, but the privilege is none the less worth praying for, nor are the rate-payers on that account the less deserving of it. The Elective Franchise which, in its fullest form, is a nutritious food for the political stomach of every intelligent people, does not lose its nutritious character simply because it does not suit the palate of the Chairman. The days of ante-memorials are past and gone, and we dare say Government is not prepared, at the present stage of enlightened progress, to ask the people to make a retrograde movement. The

times, we repeat, are changed, and the only natural conclusion that suggests itself to us is that the policy of Government in respect of Municipal Uttarpara needs must change with them. The last three years of Semi-Self-Government must have convinced our rulers that the safest way to avoid being pestered with complaints is to leave the whole burden of responsibilities on the people themselves—must have opened their eyes to the grand mistake that was committed five years ago by appointing to the Municipal Chairmanship the acknowledged head of one of the two rival factions. We are told that the Chairman has of late been more than ever busy with causing counter-memorials to be submitted to the authorities ; but do what he may, with the aid of the signatures of a handful of irresponsible men, the franchise prayed for by nearly four-hundred rate-payers can no longer be held back from a people in no way behind-hand of their neighbours. We feel sure that the fiat will go forth before long, to the glory of British Rule in India, transferring the name of the Uttarpara Municipality from the second Schedule of the Act.

CHAPTER XLII.

DISLOYALTY PUNISHED.

Those unfortunate rate-payers who chose to vote for candidates other than the Chairman's have had the misfortune of having their Municipal taxes increased, and even in some cases doubled, from the third quarter.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE EPILOGUE.

"The first of all gospels," writes an eminent English writer, "is this, that a lie cannot endure for ever;" and endured it has not, in the long run, as we have seen. Truth has at last triumphed, as triumph it must and shall. The tree, that failed to bring forth good fruit, has been hewn down and cast in to the fire at last. The house built on sand has succumbed to the loud lashings of the waves, and great has been the fall thereof. There has, in fact, been a victory of reason over unreason, light over darkness, day over night, right over might. Let us then, while congratulating the young men of the Union and taking leave of the reader, quote from Emerson the following lines as illustrative of those young men's estimate of themselves :—

"The change and decline of old reputations are the gracious marks of our own growth. Slowly, like light of morning, it steals on us, the new fact that we, who were pupils or aspirants, are now society : do compose a portion of that head and heart we are wont to think worthy of all reverence and heed."

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE MORAL.

"Every city or house, divided against itself, shall not stand."

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Jamulpur Municipality.

Bye-laws under Act III (B.C.) of 1884.

**For regulating the conduct of proceedings.
of the Commissioner.**

1. At least three days' notice of all meetings shall be given to every Commissioner. Provided that the annual budget estimate shall be circulated to all the Commissioners at least a fortnight before the date is fixed. Provided also that the accidental failure of service of notice on any Commissioner shall not invalidate the proceedings of any meeting.

2. The notice shall set forth clearly and fully, both in English and vernacular, the business to be transacted at the meeting.

3 The business at meetings of the Commissioners shall be conducted in English. If any of the Commissioners present do not understand English, it shall be the duty of the President to have the subject-matter explained to him in vernacular.

4. Notices of motions accompanied by *verbatim* draft must be sent to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman in time to be included in the list of business for the next meeting. Notices received too late shall be inserted in the list of business of the next succeeding meeting.

Adjourned Meetings.

5. An adjourned meeting is not competent to transact any business save that, which the original meeting left unfinished.

Order of Business.

6. At ordinary meetings the business shall be conducted in the following order:—

- (a) The minutes of the last ordinary meeting and of any special meeting held since shall be read and, if approved as correctly entered, shall be signed by the Chairman of such meeting.
- (b) Business postponed from the last ordinary meeting shall be considered.
- (c) A progress report of works shall be laid before the Committee.
- (d) Letters and reports of Committees shall be read, and accounts and statements shall be considered and passed.
- (e) Motions of which due notice has been given to be discussed.

7. At a special meeting, only the business for which the meeting was called shall be considered. Provided that with the consent of the majority of the members present any other business may be considered.

8. In the event of any objection being raised to the manner in which any resolution has been recorded, the Chairman shall decide the question after reference to the original draft of the resolution, and if he finds the minute to be inaccurate, shall make the necessary correction in the minute book.

9. Unless by permission of the majority of the meeting, all subjects shall be discussed in the order in which they appear in the notice paper.

Of Motions and Amendments.

10. Every motion and amendment duly moved must be seconded, and until seconded no debate thereon can take place.

11. Every motion or amendment duly made and seconded and pressed to a division, shall be reduced to writing and signed by the proposer and seconder before being put to the vote. Every such resolution or amendment shall be recorded in full in the proceedings, together with the number and names of voters for and against it.

12. Every amendment shall be so worded as to be capable of making an intelligible sentence either alone or in its proper place in an original

motion, as the case may be, provided that no amendment can merely negative the original motion.

13. The President of the meeting may, for reasons to be recorded in writing and entered in the minutes of the proceedings,—

(a) Rule that a motion or amendment is illegal or out of order, and

(b) Make such alterations in a motion or amendment as shall, in his opinion, render it legal and in order;

and may in case (a) refuse to put the motion or amendment to the meeting, and in case (b) refuse to put the motion or amendment to the meeting unless and until the proposer and seconder accept and sign the alterations so made; and the decision of the President shall be final.

14. After a motion has been moved and seconded, an amendment may be moved at any stage of the debate thereon.

15. On the discussion being concluded, in the event of several amendments having been proposed the President shall put the last amendment to the vote first; if it is negatived he shall put the last preceeding amendment; and lastly, the first amendment; and if all the amendments are lost, the original proposition shall be put to the vote

16. When a motion of an amendment has been put from the chair and been declared by the President to be duly carried, no further proposals for amending the motion or amendment can be entertained.

Of the right to speak.

17. The President may require members to stand when they address the meeting.

18. The member who first addresses the meeting shall be entitled to be heard first, and should more than one member rise to address the meeting at the same time, the order of precedence shall be determined by the president.

19. Any member shall be at liberty to call the attention of the President to a point of order, even when a member is speaking. On a point of order being raised, the member addressing the meeting shall resume his seat until the question has been decided by the President. After the decision of the President, the same point of order cannot be raised again. Except as provided by this rule, no member shall interrupt a speaker in possession of the meeting.

20. Except as provided in the last preceding rule, no member shall speak except to move or second a motion or amendment, or to support or oppose a motion or amendment which has been duly moved and seconded.

21. A speaker who has exhausted his right to speak on an original motion, may speak on any amendment being moved, as that raises a new question.

22. The mover of a motion or amendment shall in all cases have a right of reply; but otherwise no member shall speak more than once on the same

motion or amendment, unless in explanation of some part of his original speech.

Miscellaneous.

23. Unless not less than two-thirds of the members of the Committee consent by signing a requisition, no subject once finally disposed of can be reconsidered within six months.

24. For the purpose of taking into consideration business involving many details, the meeting may resolve itself into a Committee of the whole body. When this has been determined on, the rule prohibiting any person from speaking more than once on the same question shall be deemed suspended until the meeting resumes.

25. When a motion or amendment is put to the vote, the President shall record against it, first, names of members voting for it, and then the names of those voting against it.

26. Voting by proxy is prohibited, and no member may vote upon any motion or amendment unless he be present in person at the time when it is put to the vote.

27. The minutes shall contain a brief abstract of the discussion preceding each resolution.

Of protests or dissents.

28. Protest must be limited to a concise and definite statement of the motives which prompted the votes of members who voted in the minority on a given question.

29. Protests must be handed to the Chairman before the conclusion of the meeting at which the resolution protested against was passed.

30. Protests duly made shall be appended to the minutes.

Of adjournments.

31. It shall be competent to any member to move the adjournment of the debate or of the meeting in a speech not exceeding five minutes in duration.

32. When a motion for the adjournment of the meeting or of a debate is made, it shall be seconded without a speech, and put by the Chairman to the vote without debate or amendment.

33. No motion of the adjournment of the meeting or of a debate shall be admissible which proposes an adjournment beyond the next ordinary meeting.

*For regulating the conduct of persons employed
by the Commissioners.*

34. All persons employed by the Commissioners, whose services may be no longer required, shall be liable to discharge after receipt of one month's notice or one month's pay in lieu of notice, and no such person shall withdraw from the duties of his office without having given previous notice for the period of one month, on pain of forfeiture of one month's salary.

35. Every officer authorized to grant receipts for money received under the Act, shall be provided with a certificate of his authority to collect the money on behalf of the Commissioners, and every such certificate shall bear the seal of the municipality and the signature of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman. Every collecting officer at the time of demanding payment shall be bound to show this certificate if required.

General Bye-laws.

36. Payment of purchase money for property sold and delivery of the property shall be made immediately after the sale, and if the purchaser fail to pay the full amount of his bid, it shall be lawful for the distraining officer at his discretion to sell the property again on the same or any other day, and the first purchaser shall in such case be responsible to the Commissioners for any loss which shall be recoverable as a debt due to them.

37. The owner or occupier of any drain, privy, cess-pool, houses, land or bank of any nullah or water course or other place, who shall refuse after six hours' notice in writing to allow the Commissioners or any of their servants duly authorized by them to have access thereto, at any time between sunrise and sunset, for any purpose of public conservancy, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs 20.

Penalty for continued infringement after notice shall be a fine not exceeding Rs 3 daily.

38. No person shall perform any office of nature in any place outside private premises other than such as may have been set apart by the Commissioners for the purpose.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding ~~Rs~~ 10.

39. No person shall steep in any river, khal, tank or ditch within municipal limits any jute, hemp, bamboo or other vegetable matter likely to render the water of such river, khal, tank or ditch offensive or noxious to the neighbourhood.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding ~~Rs~~ 5. The penalty for infringement after notice shall be a fine not exceeding ~~Rs~~ 2 daily.

40. No person shall throw, deposit or discharge any night-soil, sewage, or the contents of any private drain, privy or cesspool into any river, tank, drain, khal, water-course or receptacle for water, or excavation of any kind, or dispose of the above-mentioned kinds of offensive matter in any other way than as the Municipal Commissioners may from time to time direct.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding ~~Rs~~ 20.

Penalty for continued infringement after notice shall be a fine not exceeding ~~Rs~~ 5 daily.

41. No person shall be allowed to dig wells within 12 feet of any latrine or cesspool.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding ~~Rs~~ 5.

Of obstructions and encroachments on roads.

42. No person shall without, the written permission of the Commissioners, deposit or cause to be deposited in or by the side of any public drain anything whereby the said drain is or may be in any way obstructed.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs 15.

43. No person shall cut sods or grass or remove earth or grass from the margin or surface of any public road or from any public drain.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs 15.

44. No person shall collect carts or form any encampment upon any public ground without the permission of the Commissioners, or shall tether or picket any animal on or by the side of any public road, drain or water-course.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs 15.

45. No person shall so extend the slope of the roof of any house, or put or cause to be put on any house or other building, any spout or other thing intended for the conveyance and discharge of water, in such a way as to allow the water discharged therefrom to be thrown or to fall upon any public road or thoroughfare.

The penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 5.

46. Any person who shall break or cause to

be broken, any wall, fence, rail or post constructed for the protection of any public well, tank or drain or other excavation, or who shall break or cause to be broken any municipal lamp-posts, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs 20.

47. Any cloth or clothes of persons attached with contagious disease shall be burnt by the relatives of persons so attacked.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 10.

48. No persons suffering from contagious disease shall bathe in any bathing tank or well belonging to the Commissioners.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 10.

*For the regulation and management of
privies and drains.*

49. No person shall carry night-soil through the street otherwise than in closely covered receptacles of such description and pattern as shall be prescribed from time to time by the Municipal Commissioners, and between such hours as the Municipal Commissioners shall from time to time direct, and no person shall use any place, other than those appointed by the Commissioners, for the purpose of depositing such night-soil.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 15.

50. No person shall be allowed to construct

a privy, cesspool, or drain within 12 feet of any well. Existing cesspools and drains near the wells must have pucca floors.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 50.

51. Every person shall provide his privy or premises with suitable moveable receptacles of metal or earthenware.

The penalty for infringement after notice shall be a fine not exceeding Rs 15

52 Within 15 days of receipt of a notice in writing from the Municipal Commissioners, every owner or occupier of any house, land or premises in or on which any well or other underground privy, or any other privy which may seem to the Commissioners to be noxious or improperly constructed, may be situated shall cause such privy to be filled up, closed or otherwise altered as may be directed in the notice; and if the orders contained in the notice be not carried out within 15 days from the date of service thereof, such owner or occupier shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 50, and the Commissioners may themselves cause to be filled up, closed or otherwise altered the privy mentioned in the said notice, and any expenses so incurred by the Commissioners shall be recoverable in the same way as arrears of house-rate.

For regulating burial-grounds.

53. No persons shall bury, or cause to be buried, any corpse or part of a corpse in any burial-ground in a grave constructed of masonry in such manner that the top of the coffin, or the body where no coffin is used, shall be at a less depth than six feet from the surface of the ground.

Penalty for infringement Rs. 10.

54. No person shall build or dig, or cause to be built or dug, a grave in any burial place in any other line than that marked out by the Commissioners.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 20.

55. No grave once used shall be opened for the burial of another body without the permission of the Commissioners.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 20.

56. No one shall carry a corpse through any highway unless it be decently covered from public view.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 10

57. No person shall build or dig, or cause to be built or dug, any grave in any burial-ground at a less distance than three feet from any other existing grave.

Penalty for infringement Rs. 20.

For regulating markets.

58. No owner, occupier, or farmer of any market or shop for the sale of meat, poultry, fish or vegetables within the municipal limits shall keep or allow the same to be kept in a filthy or unclean state.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 20, and a daily fine of Rs. 5 till kept properly.

59. Every owner, occupier or farmer of any market shall remove, or cause to be removed, once in every twenty-four hours, any filth, putrifying or noxious matter that may have accumulated within such period.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 20, and a daily fine of Rs. 5 until the work is done.

For regulating traffic in the street.

60. Every carriage plying between dusk and dawn shall carry two conspicuous lights, and every cart, palki, bicycle, or other vehicle shall carry one conspicuous light.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 15.

61. Every driver of a carriage or cart, or every person in charge of cattle, must keep to his left while passing any other vehicle or cattle moving in the opposite direction.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 5

62. No driver of a cart or carriage shall leave his vehicle on a public road without some one attending it.

Penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 15.

For regulating or prohibiting the use of fire-works, fire-arms or missiles in the vicinity of public roads.

63. No one shall let off any fire-balloon fire-works, fire-arms, or any missile in or near a public street without the consent of the Municipal Commissioners previously obtained.

Penalty for infringement Rs. 10.

For regulating the disposal of offensive matter and dead bodies of animals.

64. Every person within whose premises any animal may die shall, within six hours after its death, or if death occurs at night within two hours after day light, either remove at his own expense the carcass to such place as may be set apart by the Commissioners for the reception of such carcasses, or report its death to the conservancy overseer of the division within which such premises may be situated, and in such latter case shall pay to the said overseer the expense of removing the carcass at such rate as the Commissioners may determine; and in cases where the said person is not the owner of the animal and the owner is known, the owner shall alone be responsible for the payment of such

expense, and such expense shall be recoverable as a debt due to the Commissioners. No overseer when called upon shall neglect to remove a carcass.

The penalty for infringement shall be a fine not exceeding Rs. 10

65. The Commissioners may from time to time appoint places for the deposit of the carcasses of animals. Any person who shall deposit or cause to be deposited the carcasses of any animal in any place other than such place as may have been appointed by the Commissioners, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 20.