

the questions involved; and the report of the Commission has just reached England. Whatever may be the fate of the draft law which these folios propose, they will remain a monument of noble intention, able discussion of principles, and honest statement of the facts. The Commissioners of 1879, like the legislators of 1859, have arrived at the conclusion that a substantial peasant-right in the soil exists in Bengal. They would confirm all the rights given to the peasant by the Land Code of 1859, and they propose to augment them. The first class of cultivators, who have held their land at the same rates since 1793, can never have their rent raised. The second class, or those who have thus held for twenty years, are still presumed to have held since 1793. The third class of cultivators, who have held for twelve years, have their privileges increased. Their occupancy rights are to be consolidated into a valuable peasant-tenure, transferable by sale, gift, or inheritance; and it is proposed that all increase in the value of the land or the crop, not arising from the agency of either the landlord or tenant, shall henceforth be divided equally between them. This provision is a very important one in a country like Bengal, where new railways, new roads, and the increase of the people and of trade, constantly tend to raise the price of the agricultural staples. What political economists call the 'unearned increment,' is no longer to accrue to the proprietor, but is to be divided between him and the cultivator; so that landlord and tenant are henceforth to be joint sharers in the increasing value of the land.

98 *Compensation for Disturbance' in Bengal.*

But the great changes proposed by the Rent Commissioners of 1879 refer to the fourth or lowest class of husbandmen, who have held for less than twelve years, and whom the Land Code of 1859 admitted to no rights whatever. The Commissioners declare that the competition for land, if unchecked by law or custom, will reduce 'the whole agricultural population to a condition of misery and degradation ;' and they have resolved, so far as in them lies, to arrest this slow ruin of Bengal. They enunciate the principle that 'the land of a country belongs to the people of a country ; and while vested rights should be treated with all possible tenderness, no mode of appropriation and cultivation should be permanently allowed by the ruler, which involves the wretchedness of the great majority of the community ; if the alteration or amendment of the law relating to land can by itself, or in conjunction with other measures, obviate or remedy the misfortune.'

Strong doctrine this ; and very stringently do the Commissioners apply it. In their draft code, they propose a system of compensation for disturbance whose thorough-going character contrasts strongly with the mild Irish Bill which the House of Lords rejected last session. The Bengal Rent Commissioners would accord a quasi-occupancy right to all tenants who have held for three years. If the landlord demands an increased rent from such a tenant, and the tenant prefers to leave rather than submit to the enhancement, then the landlord must pay him, first, a substantial compensation for disturbance, and second, a substantial

compensation for improvements. The compensation for disturbance is calculated at a sum equal to one year's increased rent, as demanded by the landlord. The compensation for improvements includes payment for buildings erected by the tenant, for tanks, wells, irrigation works, drainage works, embankments, or for the renewal or improvement of any of the foregoing; also for any land which the tenant may have reclaimed or enclosed, and for all fruit trees which he may have planted. The operation of these clauses will be, that before the landlord can raise the rent, he must be prepared to pay to the out-going tenant a sum which will swallow up the increased rental for several years.

The practical result is to give tenant-right to all cultivators who have held their land for three years or upwards—that is, to the mass of the people in Bengal. Whether these stringent provisions become law remains to be seen. For we must remember that the landlords have rights as well as the tenants. But before the Commissioners' suggestions can become law, they must obtain the assent, successively, of the Provincial Government of Bengal, of the Governor-General in Council, of the Indian Legislature, and finally of the Secretary of State who represents the majority in the British Parliament. At each of these stages, the vested rights of the landlords will be carefully considered, and the arguments on which the proposed changes are based will be threshed out.

While the efforts of the Indian executive are directed to the increase of the food-supply, the Legislature is thus

endeavouring to secure a fair share of that supply to the tiller of the soil.

The analogy of the situation in Bengal to the agrarian agitation in Ireland, is in some respects a striking one. In both countries, a state of things has grown up under British rule which seems unbearable to a section of the people. In Bengal, the peasantry have fought by every weapon of delay afforded by the courts; in England, the Irish representatives are fighting by every form of obstruction possible in Parliament. In both countries we may disapprove of the weapons employed; but in both we must admit that these weapons are better than the ruder ones of physical force. In neither can the Government parley with outrage or crime. In both countries, I believe that the peasantry will more or less completely win the day; for in both, the state of things of which they complain is repugnant to the awakened conscience of the British nation. But the analogy, although striking, must not be pushed too far. For on the one hand, the Irish peasantry has emigration open to it—a resource practically not available to the Bengal husbandman. On the other hand, the proprietary right in Bengal was a gift of our own as late as 1793—a gift hedged in by reservations in favour of the peasantry, and conferred for the distinctly expressed purpose of securing the welfare of the people. The proprietary right in Ireland is the growth of centuries of spoliation and conquest. It may, perhaps, be found possible to accord a secure position to the peasantry of Bengal without injustice to the landlords. The Irish difficulty,

although on a smaller scale, is complicated by old wrongs.

One comfort we may derive from our experience in Bengal. It is, that the land laws, if rightly dealt with, form an ordinary and a necessary subject for legislative improvement in countries like India and Ireland, where the mass of the people live by the tillage of the soil. The reform of the existing tenures is, therefore, a matter for legislation, not for revolution. The problem, alike in India and in Ireland, is how to do the best for the peasant at the least cost to the State, and with the least infringement of vested proprietary rights.

IV. THE MAINTENANCE OF A GOVERNMENT ON EUROPEAN STANDARDS OF EFFICIENCY FROM AN ASIATIC SCALE OF REVENUE

I HAVE endeavoured to explain the real meaning of the poverty of the Indian people. I shall now ask attention to some of the difficulties which that poverty gives rise to in the government of the country. Men must first have enough to live upon before they can pay taxes. The revenue-yielding powers of a nation are regulated, not by its numbers, but by the margin between its national earnings and its requirements for subsistence. It is because this margin is so great in England that the English are the most taxable people in the world. It is because this margin is so small in India that any increase in the revenue involves serious difficulties. The 34 millions of our countrymen in Great Britain and Ireland pay their 68 millions sterling of Imperial taxation* with far greater ease than the 190 millions of British

* Customs, 20 millions; Inland revenue, 48 millions. total taxation, 68 millions. The *gross* revenue of the United Kingdom in 1880-1 £81,265,055, besides £29,247,595 of local taxation; total, £110,512,650.

subjects in India pay an actual taxation of 35 millions. It may seem a contradiction in terms to say that the English, who pay at the rate of forty shillings per head to the Imperial exchequer, besides many local burdens, are more lightly taxed than the Indians, who pay only at the rate of 3s. 8d. per head to the Imperial exchequer, with scarcely any local burdens. But the sum of forty shillings per head bears a much smaller proportion to the margin between the national earnings and the national requirements for subsistence in England, than the sum of 3s. 8d. bears to that margin in India. In estimating the revenue-yielding powers of India, we must get rid of the delusive influence which hundreds of millions of tax-payers exercise upon the imagination. We must think less of the numbers and more of the poverty of the Indian people.

But while anxious that the gravity of our financial situation in India should be realized, I do not think that any good can come of exaggerating it. At this moment we are taking less taxation from the Indian people than was taken by their own Asiatic rulers. The following table (p. 104) shows the revenues of the Mughal Empire from the reign of Akbar in 1593 to its practical downfall in 1761. The figures are derived from many independent sources,—from returns drawn up by skilful English officers of the East India Company; from the materials afforded by the Native Revenue Survey, and the Mughal exchequer accounts; from the reports of European travellers; and from the financial statement of the Empire as presented to the Afghán conqueror, Ahmad

FROM A SMALLER AREA AND POPULATION THAN THOSE OF BRITISH INDIA.

	Mughal Emperors.	Authority.	Land Revenue.	Revenue from all Sources.
1	Akbar, A.D. 1593, . . .	Nizám-ud-dín Ahmad : not for all India, Allowance for Provincial Troops (<i>bámi</i>), †	... ...	£32,000,000 10,000,000 †
2	" 1594, . . .	Abul Fazl mss. : not for all India, . . . }	nett £16,574,388	nett £42,000,000
3	" " . . .	Official Documents : not for all India, . . . }	nett 16,582,440	...
4	" 1605, . . .	Indian Authorities quoted by De Laet, . . . }	nett 17,450,000	...
5	Jahángir, 1609-II, . . .	Captain Hawkins, . . . . .	...	nett 50,000,000
6	" 1628, . . .	Abdul Hamíd Láhorí,	nett 17,500,000	...
7	Sháh Jahán, 1648-9, . . .	" " " " " " " "	nett 22,000,000	...
8	Aurangzeb, 1655, . . .	Official Documents, }	gross 26,743,970 nett 24,056,114	...
9	" 1670? . . .	Later Official Documents, }	gross 35,641,431 nett 34,505,890	...
10	" 1695, . . .	Gemelli Careri, . . . . .	...	nett 80,000,000
11	" 1697, . . .	Manucci (Catrou),	nett 38,719,400	nett 77,438,800
12	" 1707, . . .	Ramusis,	nett 30,179,692	
13	Sháh Alam, 1761, . . .	Official Statement presented to Ahmad } Sháh Abdáli on his entering Delhi, . }	nett 34,506,640	

* The above Table is reproduced from Mr. Edward Thomas' *Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire*, published in 1871, and has been revised by him from materials which he has collected since that date.

† This is the lowest estimate at which the *Bāmi* or Landwehr, in contradistinction to the Royal Army, can be reckoned.—Mr. Thomas' *Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire*, p. 12. I insert the words *net* and *gross* by his direction.

Sháh Abdáli, on his entry into Delhi. One of the most learned numismatists of our day, Mr. Edward Thomas, has devoted a treatise to sifting these materials, and I reproduce his results. Indeed, the difficulty of a comparison has arisen, not from the absence of information in respect to the Mughal revenues, but from want of exact statements regarding our own. As I pointed out at Birmingham in 1879, the Parliamentary Indian Accounts are rendered in such a form as to permit of the widest assertions regarding Indian taxation, varying from an annual total of 34 to over 60 millions sterling. Efforts have since then been made to remedy this, and a statement lately presented to Parliament exhibits the actual revenue and expenditure of British India during a series of years.

From this authoritative statement I find that the taxation of British India, during the ten years ending 1879, has averaged $35\frac{1}{3}$ millions per annum. That is the gross sum, as shown in the table on next page; the net would be less: say for purposes of easy recollection, 35 millions sterling, or 3s. 8d. per head. From the table on last page we see that in 1593, when the Mughal Empire was of much less extent and much less populous than our own, the burdens of the people amounted, under Akbar, to 42 millions sterling. Captain Hawkins, from careful inquiries at Agra, returned the revenue of Akbar's successor in 1609 at 50 millions. At the end of that century, we have two separate returns for 1695 and 1697, giving the revenues of Aurangzeb respectively at 80 and $77\frac{1}{2}$ millions.

GROSS TAXATION OF BRITISH INDIA.

	1869-70.	1870-71	1871-72.	1872-73.	1873-74.	1874-75.	1875-76.	1876-77.	1877-78.	1878-79.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Land Revenue, . . .	21,088,019	20,622,823	20,520,337	21,348,669	21,037,912	21,296,793	21,503,742	19,857,152	19,869,667	22,330,586
Excise,	2,253,655	2,374,465	2,369,109	2,323,788	2,286,637	2,346,143	2,493,232	2,523,045	2,457,075	2,619,349
Assessed Taxes, . . .	1,110,224	2,072,025	325,241	580,139	20,136	2,747	510	310	86,110	900,920
Provincial Rates, . . .	...	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	238,504	2,638,835
Customs,	2,429,185	2,610,789	2,575,990	2,653,890	2,628,495	2,678,479	2,721,389	2,483,345	2,622,296	2,326,561
Salt,	5,888,707	6,106,280	5,966,595	6,165,630	6,150,662	6,227,301	6,244,415	6,304,658	6,460,082	6,941,120
Stamps,	2,379,316	2,510,316	2,476,333	2,608,512	2,699,936	2,758,042	2,835,368	2,838,628	2,993,483	3,110,540
Total,	£ 35,149,106	36,296,698	34,733,605	35,680,628	34,823,778	35,309,505	35,798,656	34,007,138	34,727,217	40,867,911

Total for Ten Years ending 1879, £357,394,242

Deduct Refunds, Drawbacks, and adjusting Payments, as

per Parliamentary Statement, 4,379,234

Taxation for Ten Years ending 1879, £353,015,008

Yearly Average, £35,301,500

If we examine the items in the Mughal accounts, we find the explanation of their enormous totals. The land tax then, as now, formed about one-half of the whole revenue. The net land revenue demand of the Mughal Empire averaged 25 millions sterling from 1593 to 1761; or 32 millions during the last century of that Empire, from 1655 to 1761. The annual *net* land revenue raised from the much larger area of British India during the ten years ending 1879, has been 18 millions sterling (*gross*, 21 millions). But besides the land revenue there were under our predecessors not less than forty imposts of a personal character. They included taxes upon religious assemblies, upon trees, upon marriage, upon the peasant's hearth, and upon his cattle. How severe some of them were, may be judged from the Poll Tax. For the purposes of this tax, the non-Muhammadan population was divided into three classes, paying respectively £4, £2, and £1 annually to the Exchequer for each adult male. The lowest of these rates, if now levied from each non-Musalmán male adult, would alone yield an amount exceeding our whole Indian taxation. Yet, under the Mughal Empire, the Poll Tax was only one of forty burdens.

We may briefly sum up the results as follows. Under the Mughal Empire from 1593 to 1761, the Imperial demand averaged about 60 millions sterling a year. During the past ten years ending 1879, the Imperial taxation of British India, with its far larger population, averaged 35 millions. Under the Mughal Empire, the land tax between 1655 and 1761 averaged 32 millions.

Under the British Empire, the net land tax has, during the past ten years, averaged 18 millions.

Not only is the taxation of British India much less than that raised by the Mughal emperors, but it compares favourably with the taxation of other Asiatic countries in our own days. The only other Empire in Asia which pretends to a civilised government is Japan. I have no special acquaintance with the Japanese revenues; but I find from German writers that over 11 millions sterling are there raised from a population of 34 million people, or deducting certain items, a taxation of about 6s. a head. In India, where we try to govern on a higher standard of efficiency, the rate of actual taxation is 3s. 8d. a head.

If, instead of dealing with the Imperial revenues as a whole, we concentrate our survey on any one Province, we find these facts brought out in a still stronger light. To take a single instance. After a patient scrutiny of the records, I found that, allowing for the change in the value of money, the ancient revenue of Orissa represented eight times the quantity of the staple food which our own revenue now represents.* The native revenue of Orissa supported a magnificent court with a crowded seraglio, swarms of priests, a large army, and a costly public worship. Under our rule, Orissa does little more than defray the local cost of protecting person and property, and of its irrigation works. In Orissa, the Rájá's share of the crops amounted, with dues,

* The evidence on which these statements are based, was published^o in my *Orissa*, vol. 4. pp. 323-329: Smith, Elder, & Co. 1872.

to 60 per cent., and the mildest Native Governments demanded 33 per cent. The Famine Commissioners estimate the land tax in the British Provinces 'at from 3 per cent. to 7 per cent. of the gross out-turn.' Ample deductions are allowed for the cost of cultivation, the risks of the season, the maintenance of the husbandman and his family. Of the balance which remains, Government nominally takes one-half; but how small a proportion this bears to the crop may be seen from the returns collected by the Famine Commissioners. Their figures deal with 176 out of the 191 millions of our Indian fellow-subjects. These 176 millions cultivate 188 millions of acres, grow 331 millions sterling worth of produce, and now pay 18½ millions of land revenue. While, therefore, they raise over £1, 15s. od. worth of produce per acre, they pay to Government under 2s. of land tax per acre. Instead of thus paying 5½ per cent. as they do to us, they would under the Mughal rule have been called upon to pay from 33 to 50 per cent. of the crop. The two systems, indeed, proceed upon entirely different principles. The Native Governments, write the Famine Commissioners, often taxed the land 'to the extent of taking from the occupier the whole of the surplus' 'after defraying the expenses of cultivation.' The British Government objects to thus 'sweeping off the whole margin of profit.'

What becomes of the surplus which our Government declines to take? It goes to feed an enormously increased population. The tax-gatherer now leaves so large a margin to the husbandman. that the province

of Bengal, for example, feeds three times as many mouths as it did in 1780, and has a vast surplus of produce, over and above its own wants, for exportation. 'In the majority of Native Governments,' writes the greatest living authority on the question,* 'the revenue officer takes all he can get; and would take treble the revenue we should assess, if he were strong enough to exact it. In ill-managed States, the cultivators are relentlessly squeezed: the difference between the Native system and ours being, mainly, that the cultivator in a Native State is seldom or never sold up, and that he is usually treated much as a good bullock is treated; i.e., he is left with enough to feed and clothe him and his family, so that they may continue to work.' John Stuart Mill studied the condition of the Indian people more deeply than any other political economist, and he took an indulgent view of Native institutions. His verdict upon the Mughal Government is that, 'except during the occasional accident of a humane and vigorous local administrator, the exactions had no practical limit but the inability of the peasant to pay more.'

Throughout British India, the landed classes pay revenue at the rate of 5s. 6d. per head, including the land tax for their farms, or 1s. 9d. without it. The trading classes pay 3s. 3d. per head; the artisans, 2s.—equal to four days' wages in the year; and the agricul-

Mr. Alfred Lyall, C.B., formerly Governor-General's Agent in Rájputána, and now Foreign Secretary to the Government of India; quoted in the Despatch of the Governor-General in Council to the Secretary of State, 8th June 1880. 'Condition of India,' Blue Book, pp. 36-37.

tural labourers, 1s. 8d. The whole taxation, including the Government rent for the land, averaged, as we have seen, 3s. 8d. per head, during the ten years ending 1879. But the Famine Commissioners declare that 'any native of India who does not trade or own land, and who chooses to drink no spirituous liquor, and to use no English cloth or iron, need pay in taxation only about sevenpence a year on account of the salt he consumes. On a family of three persons, the charge amounts to 1s. 9d., or about four days' wages of a labouring man and his wife.'

The weak point of our financial position in India is not that we take more from the people than their Native rulers did, but that what we take barely suffices for the cost of our administration. Each petty provincial prince under the Mughal Empire spent as much on his personal pomp and luxury, as now suffices for all the expense of the British Viceroy of India and his Council. But our Government, although less magnificent, rests upon a more costly basis. For the treasures, which under the Mughal dynasties were concentrated upon the palaces and harems of the rulers, are by us scattered broadcast in securing protection to the ruled. No previous Government of India ever kept up an army on such a scale of efficiency as to render invasion and piratical devastation impossible from without, and to absolutely put down internecine wars and the predatory nations within. Those invasions and depredations ruined thousands of homesteads every year. But the idea of such an army, paid like ours from the Imperial ex-

chequer, would have been dismissed as an impossible dream by the most powerful of the Mughal emperors. Well, we keep up such an army, and it does its work at an average cost of 1s. 8d. a head of the Indian population. This may seem a moderate sum. It is not one-twentieth part of the 40s. per head paid by the population of the United Kingdom ; but it represents nearly one-half of the whole actual taxation which we take from the Indian people. No Native dynasty ever attempted to develop the resources of India by a network of communications. Some of the emperors constructed great military highways, but the idea of systematically opening out every district of India by commercial trade-routes, by roads, railways, and navigable canals, is a purely British idea. The outlay will reimburse the Indian tax-payer a hundredfold, but meanwhile the railways alone have saddled him with a debt of 120 millions sterling ; while many public works are profitable rather by their indirect consequences on trade or agriculture, than by any direct yield to the revenues.

No Mughal emperor ever mapped out India for judicial purposes, assigning to each small district a court of justice maintained from the Imperial exchequer. The district records show that when we obtained the country, the people had simply to settle their disputes among themselves ; which the landholders did very profitably by bands of *lathials* or club-men, and the peasantry with the aid of trial by ordeal, the divining rod, and boiling oil. Where a law officer existed in the rural districts, he was not a salaried

judge drawing his monthly pay from the Treasury, and watched by superior courts, but a mere seller of decisions dependent for his livelihood on the payments of the litigants. The police of the Mughal Empire were an undisciplined, half-starved soldiery, who lived upon the people. The officer in charge of the local troops was also the chief magistrate of his district; and the criminal courts of the East India Company long retained their old Mughal appellation of the Faujdárl, or 'army department.' The idea of prison as a place of reformatory discipline never entered the minds of these soldier-magistrates. Our early officers found the Muhammadan jails crowded with wretched men whose sole sentence was 'to remain during pleasure,'—a legal formula which, translated into honest English, meant until the harpies of the court had squeezed the prisoner's friends of their uttermost farthing. The prisons themselves were ruinous hovels, whose inmates had to be kept in stocks and fetters, or were held down flat under bamboos, not on account of their crimes, but, to use the words of an official report of 1792, 'because from the insecurity of the jails, the jailor had no other means of preventing their escape.' No Mughal emperor ever conceived the idea of giving public instruction as a State duty to all his subjects. He might raise a marble mosque in honour of God and himself, lavish millions on a favourite lady's tomb, or grant lands to learned men of his own religion; but the task of educating the whole Indian people, rich and poor,

314 *The Fabric of a Civilised Government.*

of whatever race, or caste, or creed, was, never attempted.

In these, as in other departments, the English have had to build up, from the very foundations, the fabric of a civilised government. The material framework for such a government, its court-houses, public buildings, barracks, jails, hospitals, and schools, have cost not less than a hundred millions sterling. But the revolution in the inward spirit of the administration has involved a far greater and more permanent expenditure than this reconstruction of its outward and material fabric. We have had to re-organize a government, conceived in the interests of the pomp and luxury of the few, into a government conceived in the interests of the well-being and security of the many. The vast outlay thus involved may be realized from three items—justice, police, and education. As regards the dispensing of justice, rural tribunals, maintained by the State, scarcely existed when we obtained the country in the last century. One of the earliest acts of the East India Company was to create such tribunals. Well, I have taken six districts at hazard from my Statistical Account of Bengal, and I find that the Company allowed about the end of the last century 19 courts of justice for these six districts.* The Queen's Government of India in 1870 maintained 161 courts of justice in those six districts. The demand for accessible justice constantly becomes more exacting. Thus, in eight districts, for which in 1850 the Company allowed 176 courts of justice, 288 courts had to be provided in

1870, and* further additions have since been made. Justice has been brought very near to the door of the peasant. But it has cost the Government many millions sterling to do so; and the gross outlay has risen from under $1\frac{3}{4}$ millions in 1857, during the last year of the Company, to over $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions during the present year 1880, or twofold.

The police of India has, in like manner, been completely re-organized since the Government passed under the Crown. The general force was reconstructed on a new basis by Act V. of 1861. The Muhammadans bequeathed to us in the previous century a police which I have described from the manuscript records as 'an enormous ragged army who ate up the industry of the province.'* The Company had improved this police so far as to spend a million sterling upon it in its last year, 1857. The re-organized police of India now costs, in 1880, a gross sum exceeding $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling, or more than twofold. As regards education, no system of public instruction existed either under the Mughal emperors or under the East India Company. Sir Charles Wood's justly famous despatch, which laid the foundation of the enlightenment of India, was only penned in 1854. The Company had not time to give effect to that despatch before its rule disappeared; and the vast system of public instruction which is now educating two millions of our eastern fellow-subjects, is the work of the Queen's Government in India. It is a noble work, but it has cost money. In going over

the items of Indian expenditure, the single one which I find steadily increases from year to year is the expenditure on education. It now exceeds a gross sum of a million sterling per annum from the Imperial revenues, with perhaps double that sum from fees and local sources. I cite only three examples of the increased cost of a Government conducted according to European standards of efficiency, but from those three items you may not unfairly judge of the increased cost of every other department.

Take Justice, Police, and Education, and you will find that the East India Company in 1857 gave less than 3 millions worth of these commodities to its subjects in the last year of its rule, while the Queen's Government now spends a gross sum of nearly 7 millions sterling upon them. No one will grudge a rupee of the extra 4 millions sterling thus spent in educating the people of India, in protecting their persons and property, and in hearing their complaints. Nor, I think, can any of us grudge another large item of expenditure, almost unknown in the time of the Company, but which is now estimated at an annual charge of 1½ millions sterling, namely, the relief of the peasantry during famine. The truth is, that we have suddenly applied our own English ideas of what a good government should do, to an Asiatic country where the people pay not one-tenth per head of the English rate of taxation. It is easy to govern efficiently at a cost of forty shillings per head as in England; but the problem in India is how to attain the same standard of efficiency at a cost of

3s. 8d. a head. That is the sum in proportion which one finance minister after another is called to work out. Every year the Indian finance minister has to provide for more schools, more police, more courts, more hospitals, more roads, more railways, more canals. In short, every year he has to spend more money in bringing up the Indian administration to the English standard of efficiency. The money is well spent, but it has to be found, and there are only two ways by which a finance minister can find it.

He must either cut down existing expenditure, or he must increase the taxation. As a matter of fact, the finance ministers of India have done both. During the twenty-two years since India passed to the Crown, they have abolished one highly-paid place after another. Under the Company, the civil and military services of India were regarded as roads to an assured fortune. Those services now yield very little more than suffices for a man to discharge the duties of the position in which he may be placed. While the higher salaries have been curtailed or lopped off, the purchasing power of money has decreased, and the Indian civilian or soldier now looks forward to scarcely anything besides his hard-earned pension after a service of 25 to 35 years. Of that pension, the civilian is compelled by Government to contribute fully one-half by monthly subscriptions throughout his service. If he dies, his subscriptions lapse; and it is estimated that the nominal pension of £1000 a year paid to covenanted civil servants, represents a net outlay to Government of under £400

per annum. This cutting down of high salaries is perfectly justified by the modern conditions of Indian service. India is much nearer to England than it was under the Company. An Indian career no longer means a life-long banishment, and Indian officers cannot now expect to be paid for the miseries of an exile which they no longer endure.

I myself believe that if we are to give a really efficient administration to India, many services must be paid for at lower rates even than at present. For those rates are regulated in the higher branches of the administration by the cost of officers brought from England. You cannot work with imported labour as cheaply as you can with native labour, and I regard the more extended employment of the natives not only as an act of justice, but as a financial necessity. Fifty years ago, the natives of India were not capable of conducting an administration according to our English ideas of honesty. During centuries of Mughal rule, almost every rural officer was paid by fees, and every official act had to be purchased. It is difficult to discriminate between fees and bribes, and such a system was in itself sufficient to corrupt the whole administration. It has taken two generations to eradicate this old taint from the Native official mind. But a generation has now sprung up from whose minds it has been eradicated, and who are therefore fitted to take a much larger share in the administration than the Hindus of fifty years ago. I believe that it will be impossible to deny them a larger share in the administration. There are departments, conspicuously those of

Law and Justice, and Finance, in which the natives will more and more supplant the highly-paid imported officials from England. There are other departments, such as the Medical, the Customs, the Telegraph, and the Post Office, in which the working establishments now consist of natives of India, and for which the superintending staff will in a constantly-increasing degree be also recruited from them. The appointment of a few natives annually to the Covenanted Civil Service will not solve the problem. By all means give the natives every facility for entering that service. But the salaries of the Covenanted Service are regulated, not by the rates for local labour, but by the cost of imported officials. If we are to govern the Indian people efficiently and cheaply, we must govern them by means of themselves, and pay for the administration at the market rates for native labour.

We must, however, not only realize this great change which has taken place in the native standard of official morality, we must also realize the great change which has taken place in the physical aspects of administration. Fifty years ago, distance played a much more important part in the government of the country than it can now be allowed to play. Each district was as far separated from its neighbours as the three Presidencies are now from one another; and the three Presidencies were practically different countries, requiring completely distinct establishments for their administration. Railways and steamboats have now drawn every part of India closer together, and rendered it possible to control the whole with a

smaller superintending staff. For example, the troops in each of the three Presidencies had to be organized as separate armies. This means that there are not only three Commanders-in-Chief in India, but three headquarters' establishments, three Adjutants-General, three Quarter-Masters General, three Surgeons-General, etc., each with his own separate establishment of supervision, and his own separate budget of expenditure. This large outlay was unavoidable when Madras and Bombay were 70 days' march distant from Bengal. But Bombay is now only a 60 hours' railway journey from Calcutta, and steamers leave the Húgli almost daily for Madras. The telegraph connects every part of India, and flashes news in half an hour which formerly would have taken weeks in transmission. The necessity for separate headquarters' establishments for each of the three Presidencies is, therefore, becoming a thing of the past, and economies are now proposed by the Indian Army Commission in this respect.

But while reductions can thus be effected both in the civil administration by the larger employment of natives, and in the military expenditure by re-organizing the three armies in accordance with the altered physical facts of the country, such reductions will not alone suffice to meet the constantly-increasing demands for expenditure. I have shown how the cost of Police, Justice, and Education have more than doubled since the last year of the Company in 1857. The civil administration, as a whole, discloses an equal increase; and, in spite of reductions in certain departments, has

risen from $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling in 1857 to $13\frac{1}{2}$ millions net in 1880. The same causes which have led to this increase of expenditure in the past 23 years, will compel a yet further increase in the next 20 years. We now educate 2 millions of pupils in our Indian schools. Before the end of the century, I hope we shall be educating 4 millions. For every square mile now protected by irrigation works, there will then be nearer two square miles. For every native doctor and schoolmaster, there will probably be three. No severity of retrenchment in the civil expenditure, no re-organization of the military establishments, will suffice to meet the outlay thus involved. In India there is a necessity for a steadily increasing revenue, and there is no use in shirking the fact.

How is the additional revenue to be raised? Indian finance ministers have already answered this question. They have shown that it is possible, through the agency of local government, to increase the revenue by means which they would have found it difficult, and perhaps dangerous, to enforce as parts of an Imperial central policy. A great department of Provincial Finance has thus been created since the country passed to the Crown, and now yields a revenue of several millions. As the local demands for improvements in the administration increase, these demands will be met to some extent by local taxation. A tax is a tax, however it may be levied; but in India, as in England, it is possible to do by local rates what it would be very difficult to do by a general impost. In this way, local government in India

has obtained an importance which no one would have ventured to predict twenty years ago, and may, before twenty years are over, have become a financial necessity.

While additional resources may thus be hoped for from local taxation, the Imperial revenues have not stood still. Many of their items increase from natural causes. Thus, the land revenue has risen from under 15 millions in 1857 to 18½ millions net in 1880. As the population multiplies they consume more salt, more excisable commodities of every sort; and as the trade of the country develops, the revenue from stamps and miscellaneous items increases with it. The revenues of India are by no means stationary, but they do not augment with the same rapidity as the increased demands upon them. Under the Company, almost the whole revenues were supplied by indirect taxation; the Queen's Government has been forced to introduce direct taxation. Forty years ago, a permanent income-tax would have been regarded as a cruel and an unrighteous impost by the British nation. In England, we have only learned to bear an income-tax by slow degrees. Year after year, our fathers were assured that the income-tax was only temporary: we have been constrained to recognise it as one of the most permanent items in our national revenues. The Indian people are now learning the same lesson with equal difficulty. Twenty years ago, the income-tax was introduced into India as a purely temporary measure. Its temporary character has again and again been reasserted; various disguises have been substituted for it;

but it has now become an established source of Indian revenue. It is an unpopular tax everywhere, but it is especially unpopular in India, where the average income is very small; and where the lower officials, through whom such a tax must be levied, still lie under suspicion of corrupt practices. I believe it is possible to free that taxation from much of its present unpopularity. For its vexatiousness has to a large extent proceeded from its temporary character, and from the necessity of a fresh inquisition into the private affairs of the people on each occasion of its renewal. You cannot expect a host of native underlings to be very honest, when they know that their employment will cease in a few years. But while something may be done to render the income-tax less unpopular, the fact remains that the people of India are now brought face to face with direct taxation.

It may be said that, after all, we take much less revenue than the Native dynasties did. Surely, if the State demands averaged 60 millions sterling during the tumultuous centuries of the Mughal Empire, the country could be made to pay the same amount under our peaceful rule. Yet the actual taxation during the ten years ending 1879 has averaged just 35 millions, and at the present moment, including the new Provincial Rates, it stands at 40 millions. If we were to levy the 80 millions of taxation which Aurangzeb demanded, India would be, financially, the most prosperous country in the world. But she would be, morally and socially, the most miserable. The Mughal Empire wrung its

vast revenue out of the people by oppressions which no English minister would dare to imitate. The technical terms of the Native revenue system form themselves a record of extortion and pillage. Among the Marhattas, to collect revenue and to make war was synonymous. Better the poverty of the British Government of India than the Imperial splendours of the Mughals, or the military magnificence of the Marhattas, reared upon the misery of the peasant. In a country where the people are poor, the Government ought to be poor: for it must either be poor or oppressive. The poverty of the Indian people lies at the root of the poverty of the Indian Government.

No financial dexterity will get rid of this fundamental fact. I sometimes see devices proposed for making the Indian Government rich without rendering the Indian people miserable. One of the latest is to relax the so-called rigidity of our finance. This means that we are to calculate the cost of administration over a period of twenty years, and to allow the annual collections to fluctuate according to the harvests; relaxing, when necessary, the demand for individual years, and spreading the deficit over the whole period of twenty years. Such a system is impracticable, for two distinct reasons. In the first place, the tax-payer would never know exactly how much he would have to pay in any year. Revenue-collecting in India would resolve itself into an annual wrangle between the Government officers and the people. This was the state of things under the Mughal Empire. The peasant protested and cried out; the revenue-officer

insisted and squeezed ; and the victory rested with the most clamorous on the one side, or with the most pitiless on the other. But even after the annual wrangle was over, there would still be an annual necessity of collecting the balance of previous years. It would simply be impossible to collect such balances without the severities which disgraced the early days of the Company, when it took over the Native revenue system and administered by Native officers. The second objection to relaxing the uniformity of the yearly demand, arises from the fact that it would be impossible to vary the uniformity of the yearly expenditure. Punctuality in defraying the charges of Government involves, also, punctuality in realizing its revenues. Under the Mughal Empire, as under the Turkish Empire at present, no large class of officials ever expected to receive regular salaries. They got their pay when they could, and those who threatened loudest got most. When the Treasury ran dry, the officials could always fall back upon the plunder of the people. This irregularity of payment was so deeply impressed upon the Native revenue system, that years after the Company took over Bengal, it ordered as a matter of course, during a time of financial difficulty, that all payments from the Treasury should be suspended, except the cost of dieting the prisoners and the rewards for killing tigers. If the Government of India were now to get six months into arrears with the payment of its servants, it would open the old flood-gates of official extortion, bribery, and fee-levying which it has taken a hundred years of honest rule to dam up. Rigid punctu-

ality in paying one's debts is only possible by means of rigid punctuality in collecting one's dues. Apart from the evils of constant borrowing to meet current outlay, incident to such a plan of relaxing the current taxation, it would strike at the root of the first essential of a good revenue system ; namely, the certainty which each man has, as to the amount which he can be called to pay. In place of a regular demand from the tax-payers and regular salaries to the public servants, it would substitute an annual wrangle with the tax-payers, and an annual scramble among the officials.

The rigidity of our Indian system of finance is only one of many difficulties which a Government that tries to do right has to encounter in India. Such an administration is based upon the equality of all its subjects ; it has to work among a people steeped in the ideas of caste and of the inequality of races. I shall cite only two illustrations. Twenty-five years ago we were told that railways could never pay in India, because no man of respectable position would sit in the same carriage with a man of low caste. We open our schools to all our Indian subjects, of whatever creed or birth. The Hindus, with their practical genius for adapting themselves to the facts around them, have prospered by a frank acceptance of this system of education. But the upper classes of the Muhammadans, with their pride of race and disdainful creed, have stood aloof, and so fail to qualify themselves for the administration of a country which not long ago they ruled. • Ten years ago, in my *Indian Muslims*, I pointed out that among 418 gazetted

judicial Native officers in Bengal, 341 were Hindus, while only 77 were Muhammadans. The Government took measures to remedy this inequality, and went so far as to supplement its general system of public instruction with sectarian schools and colleges for Muhammadans. But the Musalmán still isolates himself, and out of 504 similar appointments now held by natives, only 53 are filled by Muhammadans. This practically means that while one-third of the population of Lower Bengal are Musalmáns, only one-tenth of the Government patronage falls to them; the other nine-tenths are monopolized by the Hindus. It thus follows that a system of education based upon the equality of the subject results in the practical exclusion of a large section of the population from public employ.

You will now understand how unsafe are those guides who see only the anomalies of our rule without having penetrated into their causes. Such writers tell you that the people of India are very poor, therefore they conclude the Government is to blame. I also tell you that the people of India are very poor, because the population has increased at such a rate as to outstrip, in some parts, the food-producing powers of the land; because every square mile of Bengal has now to support three times as many families as it had to support a hundred years ago; because every square mile of British India, deducting the outlying provinces of Burma and Assam, has to feed nearly three times as many mouths as each square mile of the Native States. Such writers tell you that the soil of India is being exhausted, and that

therefore the Government is to blame; that the expenditure is increasing; that the revenues are inelastic; that the rigidity of our taxation bears heavily on the people; and that for each of these and all our other difficulties, the simple and invariable explanation is, that the Government is to blame. I also tell you that the soil is being exhausted; that the requirements for additional expenditure are incessant, while the revenues can with difficulty be increased; and I have tried in each case to tell you honestly the reason why. Such writers tell you, or would tell you if they knew it, that in a single province, under our system of State education, twenty millions of Musalmáns, the former rulers of the country, are practically ousted from public employment, and that therefore the Government must be to blame. Let me answer them in the words in which the leader of the Muhammadan community of Calcutta sums up his most able pamphlet on this exclusion of his countrymen: 'For these figures, however lamentable, I certainly do not lay the blame at the door of Government. The real cause of this unhappy state of things is to be found in the backwardness of the Muhammadans in conforming themselves to the requirements of the times, and thus remaining behind in the race of competition with other nations.'

I only wish that the gentlemen were right who think that all our Indian difficulties are due to the shortcomings of the Government. For if they were right, then I feel sure that England, in the discharge of her high duty, would swiftly sweep away her culpable

representatives in India. But, alas! our difficulties there are not susceptible of so easy a cure. Every year England sends to India a picked body of young men from her public schools and universities to recruit the Indian administration. There is not a master in the country, who does not feel honoured when his pupils are thus chosen. For, although the old pecuniary advantages of the Indian Civil Service have very properly been curtailed, that service still forms one of the noblest and most useful careers open to our youth. To an administration thus composed, England sends out, as heads, the ablest statesmen who can be tempted by the emoluments and honours of high Indian office. She supplies India with trained Parliamentary financiers like Mr. James Wilson; with jurists and legislators like Sir Fitzjames Stephen and Sir Henry Sumner Maine; with Governors-General like the iron Dalhousie and the beloved Mayo, from one of her great national parties, and like the wise Minto and the just Northbrook, from the other. I do not see how to improve the English materials of an administration thus selected and thus led. But I do know that, if the easy explanation of all our Indian difficulties were that the Indian Government is to blame, the British nation would very soon substitute a better government for it.

I believe that, in dealing with the difficulties which now confront it, the Government of India must look round for new allies. Those allies will be found among the natives. So long as the administration proceeded upon the English political maxim of *laissez faire* in

India, it was possible to conduct its higher branches, at any rate, by Englishmen. The Company's administration, thus composed, did much. It secured India from external enemies, created internal protection for person and property, and took the first steps in the development of the country. But the good work thus commenced has assumed such dimensions under the Queen's Government of India, that it can no longer be carried on, or even supervised, by imported labour from England, except at a cost which India cannot sustain. While the old duties have extended, new ones have been added. As soon as the English nation began really to interest itself in India, it found that the Government must there take on itself several functions which in England may well be left to private enterprise. In a country where the Government is the sole great capitalist, railways, canals, docks, and commercial works of many sorts had either to be initiated by the Government, or to be left unattempted. The principle of *laissez faire* can, in fact, be safely applied only to self-governing nations. The English in India are now called upon, either to stand by and witness the pitiless overcrowding of masses of hungry human beings, or to aid the people in increasing the food-supply to meet their growing wants. The problem is a difficult one; but I have shown why I believe it capable of solution. Forty years ago, the political economists would have told us that a Government had no right to enter on such problems at all; and forty years hereafter we should have had an Indian Ireland, multiplied fiftyfold, on our

hands. The condition of things in India compels the Government to enter on these problems. Their solution, and the constant demand for improvement in the general executive, will require an increasing amount of administrative labour. India cannot afford to pay for that labour at the English rates, which are the highest in the world for official service. But she can afford to pay for it at her own Native rates, which are perhaps the lowest in the world for such employment.

It may be well, therefore, to know what the natives themselves think about the situation. A petition presented to Parliament last session by the British Indian Association sets forth their programme of reform. It asks for a more independent share in the legislative councils of India; and it is certain that at no distant date such a share must be conceded to the Indian people. It urges the necessity of military retrenchments, and the injustice of dealing with the Indian finances in the party interests of England rather than in the sole interest of the Indian tax-payer. At this moment, retrenchments to the extent of, I am told, 1½ millions are being proposed by the Indian Army Commission; and there is no doubt that Indian finance has been sometimes handled with an eye to English rather than to Indian interests. It asks, to touch only on the principal heads, for the more extended employment of the natives; and I believe a more extended employment of them to be not only an act of justice, but a financial necessity. The number of Europeans employed in the higher civil offices had been reduced in all the provinces

of the Bengal Presidency from 929 in 1874 to 838 in 1879, and the Government has now a scheme under consideration for further reducing them to 571.

The Native petition asks for a Commission of Enquiry, similar to those great Parliamentary Committees which sat every twentieth year in the time of the Company to examine into its administration. I am compelled as a student of Indian history, to acknowledge that each successive period of improvement under the Company took its rise from one of these inquiries. The Parliamentary Enquiry of 1813 abolished the Company's Indian trade, and compelled it to direct its whole energies in India to the good government of the people. The Charter Act of 1833 opened up that government to the natives of India irrespective of caste, creed, or race. The Act of 1853 abolished the patronage by which the Company filled up the higher branches of its service, and laid down the principle that the administration of India was too national a concern to be left to the chances of benevolent nepotism; and that England's representatives in India must be chosen openly and without favour from the youth of England. The natives now desire that a similar enquiry should be held into the administration of India during the two-and-twenty years since it passed to the Crown. It may perhaps be deemed expedient to postpone such an enquiry till after the next census. Remember we have only had one enumeration of the Indian people. A single census forms, as I have keenly felt while writing these chapters, a very slender basis for the economical problems with

which a Commission would have to deal. The Indian administration has nothing to fear, and it may have much to learn, from an enquiry into its work. It is, perhaps, the only administration in the world which has no interest in perpetuating itself. No Indian civilian has the smallest power to secure for son or nephew a place in the service to which he himself belongs. And I feel sure that, if it were found that India could be better administered on some new system, the Indian Civil Service would give its utmost energies to carry out the change.

The Native petition also asks that the recent restrictions on the liberty of the Press should be removed. 'The Indian Press spoke out the truth,' Mr. Gladstone said in Mid-Lothian, 'what was the true mind of the people of India; so that while the freedom of the vernacular Press is recommended in India by all the considerations which recommend it in England, there are other considerations besides. We can get at the minds of people here by other means than the Press. They can meet and petition, and a certain number of them can vote. But in India their meetings and petitioning are comparatively ineffective, while the power of voting is there unknown. The Press was the only means the Government had of getting at the sentiments of the Indian people.'

There is one thing more for which the natives ask, and that is representative institutions for India. I believe that such institutions will, before long, not only be possible but necessary, and that at this moment an

electoral body is being developed in India by the municipalities and local district boards. There are already 1163 elected members in the municipal bodies of the Bengal and Madras Presidencies alone. The legislative councils of the Imperial and local Governments have each a Native element in their composition, which although nominated, is fairly chosen so as to represent the various leading classes of the people. Thus of the ten members of the Bengal Council, three are covenanted civilians, one is a Crown lawyer, two are non-official Europeans, and four natives. Of the natives, the first is the editor of the *Hindu Patriot*, the chief Native paper in India; the second is the head of the Muhammadan community in Calcutta; the other two represent the landed and important rural interests. It will not be easy to work representative institutions, and it will be very easy to be misled by them. In the first place, England must make up her mind that, in granting such institutions to the Indian people, she is parting to some extent with her control over India. In the second place, we must proceed upon Native lines, rather than on those paper constitutions for India which English writers love to manufacture. What we want at the present stage, is a recognition of the end to be attained, not an unanimity as to any particular scheme for attaining it.

We must carefully consider the Native solutions for the problem; and I think we may learn a lesson from the practical and moderate character of the Native demands. The *Hindu Patriot* lately expressed those

demands in three feasible proposals. First, the extension of the elective principle to all first-class municipalities of British India. Second, the concession to the municipal boards of the three Presidency towns, and a few other great Indian cities, of the right to elect members to the Legislative Councils. Third, the extension of the scope of those Councils, so as to include questions of finance. There would still be the representation of rural India to be provided for by nomination or otherwise. It has taken ten centuries to make the British Constitution, and we must not try to build up one for India in a day. Meanwhile, I can only repeat what I said in 1879 at Birmingham on this point:—‘I do not believe that a people numbering one-sixth of the whole inhabitants of the globe, and whose aspirations have been nourished from their earliest youth on the strong food of English liberty, can be permanently denied a voice in the government of their country. I do not believe that races, among whom we raise a taxation of 35 millions sterling, and into whom we have instilled the maxim of “No taxation without representation,” as a fundamental right of a people, can be permanently excluded from a share in the management of their finances. I do not believe it practicable to curtail, for long, the right of the freest criticism on their rulers, to 191 millions of British subjects, who have the speeches of our great English statesmen at this moment ringing in their ears.’

Administrative improvements can do much, but the Indian people themselves can do more. The poverty

of certain parts of India is the direct and inevitable result of the over-population of those parts of India. The mass of the husbandmen are living in defiance of economic laws. A people of small cultivators cannot be prosperous if they marry irrespective of the means of subsistence, and allow their numbers to outstrip the food-producing powers of the soil. Now that the sword is no longer allowed to do its old work, they must submit to prudential restraints on marriage, or they must suffer hunger. Such restraints have been imperative upon races of small cultivators since the days when Plato wrote his *Republic*. The natives must also equalize the pressure on the soil, by distributing themselves more equally over the country. There is plenty of fertile land in India still awaiting the plough. The Indian husbandman must learn to mobilize himself, and to migrate from the overcrowded provinces to the under-peopled ones. But prudential restraints upon marriage and migration, or emigration, are repugnant alike to the religious customs, and to the most deeply-seated feelings of the Indian husbandman. Any general improvement in these respects must be a work of time. All we can do is to shorten that time by giving the amplest facilities for labour-transport, for education, for manufactures, mining enterprise, and trade. Meanwhile, Government must throw itself into the breach, by grappling with the necessity for an increased and a better distributed food-supply. Changes in the marriage customs, and migrations to new provinces, now opposed by all the traditions of the past, will be forced by the pressure of circumstances

upon no distant generation of the Indian people. Every year, thousands of new pupils are gathered into our schools, those pestles and mortars for the superstitions and priestcraft of India. English writers who tell our Indian fellow-subjects to look to the Government for every improvement in their lot, are doing a very great dis-service to the Indian races. The permanent remedies for the poverty of India rest with the people themselves.

But while the Indian Government can do much, and the Indian people can do more, there are some unfulfilled functions which Englishmen in England must with greater fidelity perform. They must realize that the responsibility for India has passed into the hands of Parliament, and through Parliament to the electoral body of Great Britain. They must realize that if, through ignorance or indifference, they fail to discharge that responsibility, they are acting as bad citizens. They must therefore set themselves to learn more about India; they must act in a spirit of absolute honesty towards the Indian finances; and they must deal with Indian questions sent home for their decision, not in the interests of powerful classes or political parties in England, but in the sole interest of the Indian people. I believe that important questions of this sort will before long be submitted to Parliament. When that time comes, if any remembrance of this little book lingers among my countrymen, I hope it may make them more alive to their responsibilities to India, and the more earnest to do their duty by the Indian people.

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