

Exhaustion of the Crop-Lands and Forests. 45

multiplied under our rule, they had to bring into tillage these inferior lands, and so by degrees they have had to expend a larger amount of labour in order to raise the same quantity of food. As the increase of the population went on, they could no longer allow the soil any rest, and many thousands of acres have to produce two crops each year. Moreover, the surrounding jungle was gradually ploughed up, and the people had to fall back upon the cow-dung for fuel. In this way both the two great sources of manure were cut off—namely, the ashes from the wood which they formerly burned, and the ammonia and other volatile parts of the cow-dung which they now burn in place of timber.

Many careful observers believe, indeed, that the clearing and cultivation of the jungles have been carried to such an excess in some parts of India as to seriously alter the climate. For forests, and the undergrowth which they foster, not only husband the rainfall, but they appear to attract it. A hill covered with forest is a reservoir of moisture; the same hill stripped of its woods becomes hard, arid ground, down whose bare surface the tropical rains rush off in destructive torrents, instead of sinking into the subsoil, or being stored up in the vegetation. It is alleged that the risk of drought and famine has increased in many parts of India from this cause; and whereas the great object of the ancient native dynasties was to get the cultivators to clear the jungle, the British Government finds a costly Department necessary to conserve the forests which still remain.

The pasture grounds of the villages have also, to a

large extent, been brought under the plough, and the cattle in many districts have degenerated from insufficient food. The same number of oxen can no longer put the same amount of work into the soil. Terrible outbreaks of the cow epidemic and the foot-and-mouth disease sweep across Bengal, and some years ago necessitated the appointment of a Cattle Plague Commission. While, therefore, the husbandman has now to wring a subsistence out of inferior lands which he would not have touched a hundred years ago, the good lands have deteriorated for want of manure and from want of rest, and the cattle have degenerated from lack of pasture. This sad description does not apply, as I shall presently show, to all India, but it represents the state of things in large and increasing areas where the population has outgrown the food-producing powers of the land. It explains, and to some extent justifies, the mournful forebodings of those who warn us that our real danger in India is not any temporary insolvency of the finances, but a permanent bankruptcy of the soil.

Of the smaller crops which the husbandman thus extracts from the soil, he has to give a larger share to the landlord; for rent represents, fundamentally, the difference in value between^v the most profitable and the least profitable land^k under cultivation. This is the economical theory, and in spite of every effort at limitation by custom or law, the economical theory constantly tends to assert itself in the actual facts. As the peasantry in Bengal have been forced back upon the poorer lands, the natural rent of all the

other lands has risen. A large and prosperous body of proprietors has grown up under our rule. Their prosperity has resulted partly from their own good management, but chiefly from the husbandmen having been forced by their growing numbers to bring into tillage the inferior lands, and from the natural increase of rent to which that process gives rise as regards the superior soils.

We may realize the revolution thus silently effected in the rural economy of India from two facts—a historical fact and a legal one. The historical fact is that when the English obtained Bengal in the last century, they found two classes of tenants—the *tháni* or ‘stationary’ husbandman, with occupancy rights in the soil, and the *páikásht* or floating rural population, without such rights. At that time, so great was the surplus of land, that the proprietors were glad to attract the floating population to their estates by giving them farms at lower rates than those paid by the stationary tenants. The latter had built their own homesteads, dug wells or tanks, and would submit to a higher rent rather than abandon their holdings, and lose the capital and labour invested in them. It thus resulted that rack-rents, that is to say, the rents paid by tenants without leases or occupancy rights, were, in parts of Bengal, lower than the rents paid by tenants with occupancy rights. This state of things is now reversed. The ever-increasing rack-rents exacted by the landlords from the tenants without leases or occupancy rights form the great complaint of the rural population, and

one of the most difficult problems with which the Government has to deal.

The legal fact is that the enhancement of rent, which never came within the contemplation of the law-makers of the last century in Bengal, is now the vital question of legislation. Our first attempt to ascertain and define the land law of Bengal is embodied in the Cornwallis Code of 1793. The difficulty at that time was where to get tenants, not how to raise their rent. Enhancement finds no mention in the Code. So far as can be inferred from the spirit of its provisions, the Indian Legislature seems to have assumed that the proprietors were thenceforward to pay the same land-tax for ever to the Government, and that the tenants were thenceforward to pay the same rates of rent for ever to the proprietors. But before the middle of the present century, rents had been enhanced to such a degree as to threaten an agrarian dead-lock. It was found absolutely necessary to revise the land law; and 1859, the year after the country passed under the Crown, is memorable in Bengal for the second great Land Code. Restraints upon the enhancement of rents form the most important features of this Land Code of 1859. But in spite of its provisions, the increase of the people and the natural operation of economic laws have led to a still further rise in rent. The peasantry resisted by every legal means, and in some parts combined to ruin the landlords by refusing to pay rent. Their attitude was in certain respects similar to the position of the Irish peasantry. The Indian husbandman has,

however, a power of pacific combination, and of patient, passive resistance, which the Irish cotters have not yet developed. The most peaceful district of Bengal, Pabna, was for some time in a state of agrarian revolt. But it was a revolt conducted, as a rule, according to the strict forms of law. With the exception of a few quite insignificant ebullitions, the husbandmen simply said: 'We shall not fight, but we shall not pay. We shall claim occupancy rights; and every single rent which you landlords collect shall cost you a law-suit. This we shall contest at each stage, from the institution of the plaint to the final order for selling us up, by every delay, appeal, and other weapon of chicanery known to the law. You will get your decree in the long-run; but in the meantime you will be ruined. For ourselves, we are as badly off as we can be, and it is better for us to sell our last cow to fight you in the courts than to pay your rent with it.' In Bengal, 6 millions, or two-thirds of the whole tenantry, pay rents of less than ten shillings a year. Among such a nation of small cultivators, it is simply impossible to collect every petty rent by a law-suit, and their combination really did mean ruin to many of the landlords. The Government, while it declared that it would maintain public order, counselled private concessions. Some sort of compromise was arrived at, and the Legislature obtained a breathing-space to again consider the whole questions involved. The result is a new Land Code, the draft of which has just reached England. In this Code, the most prominent question is again the enhancement

of rent, and its provisions are more stringent than ever in favour of the tenant.

‘Where the subdivision of land among tenants-at-will is extreme,’ write the Famine Commissioners in 1880, ‘and in a country where agriculture is almost the only possible employment for large classes of the people, the competition is so keen that rents can be forced up to a ruinous height, and men will crowd each other till the space left to each is barely sufficient to support a family.’ If they relax their grasp on their holding, they sink into the landless class.

Such is the state of things in Bengal, where landlordism and great proprietors chiefly prevail. But in other parts of India, the British Government has retained the land in its own hands, as it was kept by the previous native dynasties, and deals directly with the cultivators. The Government is the landlord itself, and it is necessary to see how it has behaved to its tenants. Bengal forms the most typical representative of the former system, and Madras is usually taken as the most typical representative of the latter. But even in Madras, the British rulers have made over a large part of their territory (paying about one-eighth of the land revenue), to private proprietors; and my remarks will be confined to the remaining seven-eighths, which remain in the hands of the Government. The population has here also increased, and the people have been forced back upon inferior soils. The figures have been worked out only for the past quarter of a century, that is, from 1853 to 1878. They show the following results.

In 1853, the general population was estimated at 22 millions; in 1878, at 31½ millions, showing an increase of 43 per cent., or nearly one-half. The cultivated land, held by husbandmen direct from the State, had increased from 12 to 20 millions of acres, or 66 per cent., exactly two-thirds. The area of tillage had, therefore, not only kept pace with the increase of population, but had extended at a rate of 50 per cent. more rapidly. This resulted partly from the fact that the inferior lands, now reclaimed, could not support so large an average of people as the superior lands which were already in cultivation at the commencement of the period. The Government recognised this, and has accordingly increased its rental only from 3 millions to 3½ millions sterling; being only 26 per cent., or one-fourth, while the area of cultivation has increased by 66 per cent. The Government, in fact, has reduced its average rental over the total area of cultivation from 5s. an acre in 1853 to 3s. 10d. an acre in 1878, or over 23 per cent., say one-fourth. According to the ordinary theory of rent, rates should have risen enormously during that period; and they have risen enormously wherever the land is held by private proprietors. As regards the Madras Presidency, therefore, the facts may be recapitulated thus. During the 25 years the area of cultivation has increased by 66 per cent., or two-thirds; the population by 43 per cent., or nearly one-half; and the Government rental by only 26 per cent., or one-fourth; while the average rates of rent per acre have been actually reduced by over 23 per cent., or nearly one-fourth, from

5s. an acre in 1853 to 3s. 10d. an acre in 1878. Instead of taking advantage of the increase of population to enhance the rental, the Madras Government has realized the fact that the increase in numbers means a harder struggle for life, and has reduced instead of enhancing, according to the economic laws of rent, the average rates throughout its domains.

But a crowded population of small cultivators, without capital, and with no restraints on marriage, everywhere is, has been, and must be, poor. Remember that each Hindu marries as a religious duty, and that marriage takes place at the close of childhood, quite irrespective of there being any means of subsistence for the young couple. That is the root of the evil. In districts where the soil is poor, or the rainfall uncertain, the people have always had to depend upon village money-lenders for the capital necessary to feed them till the next harvest. Amid the tumults of native rule, the usurers lent comparatively small sums. If the peasant failed to pay, they could not evict him or sell his holding; because, among other reasons, there was more land than there were people to till it. The native Government, moreover, could not afford to lose a tenant. Accordingly the bankrupt peasant went on, year after year, paying as much interest as the money-lender could squeeze out of him; until the next Mahrattá invasion or Muhammadan rebellion swept away the whole generation of usurers, and so cleared up the account. Under our rule there is no chance of such relief for insolvent debtors; and our rigid enforcement of contracts, together

with the increase of the population, has armed the creditor with powers formerly unknown. For the peasant's holding under the British Government has become a valuable property, and he can be readily sold out, as there are always plenty of husbandmen anxious to buy in. The result is twofold. In the first place, the village banker lends larger sums, for the security is increased ; and in the second place, he can push the peasantry to extremities by eviction, which was economically impossible under native rule.

In certain districts of Southern India, the people are sometimes driven by misery to take the law into their own hands. They kill the village usurer, or burn down his house with his account-books, and perhaps himself in it. But this offence, which was a common and venial one under native rule, now brings upon the perpetrators the inflexible arm of the British law. Of late years there has been an agrarian agitation in Southern India, similar in some respects to the agrarian agitation in Bengal. But in the south, where the Government as proprietor has granted peasant tenures, the revolt has been against the usurers, while in Bengal it has been against the landlords. In Southern India the demand is for legislative restraints on selling out the husbandman for debt ; in Bengal it is for legislative restraints on the enhancement of his rent.

The sad result seems to be, that whether we give over the land to a proprietary class, as in Bengal, or keep it in our own hands, as in Southern India, the struggle for life grows harder to large sections of the people. But those sections, although numbered by millions, fortu-

nately do not make up the whole population. Throughout wide tracts where land is still plentiful, the peace and security of British rule produce a permanent prosperity never before reached in India. I have tried to look with my own eyes into the condition of the tillers of the soil in almost every country of Europe, from Norway to the Black Sea, but I know of no peasantry so well off as the husbandmen in Eastern Bengal and many other parts of India. Vast trading classes have also been developed under our Government, who enjoy a degree of comfort which no considerable body of the people possessed when the country passed into our hands. But the comfortable classes, whether husbandmen or traders, keep silence. The uncomfortable classes very properly make themselves heard.

You now know what I mean by the poverty of the Indian people. More food is raised from the land than ever was raised before; but the population has increased at even a more rapid rate than the food-supply. We are compelled to stand by and watch the pitiless operation of economic laws, whose force no man can stay. Those laws decree that a population of small husbandmen which marries and multiplies irrespective of the means of subsistence, shall suffer a constantly increasing struggle for existence. But while it is important to clearly realize this evil, it is necessary to calmly gauge its proportions. Nothing is more dangerous to a government than ignorance, and few things are so terrifying as half-knowledge. However great may be the pressure upon certain classes of the

people, India produces each harvest more food than she consumes. She exported during the last five years an average of over 23 million cwts. of food-grains alone, capable of feeding her whole population for ten days, or an additional $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions of people for the entire year. This makes no allowance for the other edible seeds, oils, and condiments which she exports. We may put it in another way. * During the past five years, India has sold an average of under 8 millions worth of food-grains to other nations. This sum is rather more than equal to the balance of over 7 millions sterling which she receives in cash for her exports ; after paying for all her imports, for the interest on money raised in England, and for all the home charges of the Government. With these 8 millions sterling she could, if she pleased, pay for another 23 million cwts of food. In either case, we find that the Indian harvest produces a surplus equal to the whole consumpt of her population during ten days, or to the support of an extra $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions of people during an entire year.

It may, however, be alleged with some truth, that if the whole population ate as much as they could, this surplus would not exist. The grain exports of India represent many hungry stomachs in India. On the one hand, it is incorrect to say that those exports of food are compulsory in order to pay for the English charges of the Government. For the value of the whole food exports of India only slightly exceeds the 7 millions sterling which she yearly hoards in gold and silver, after paying for her imports, for interest on English

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capital, and for all home charges of the Government. Those expenses would be defrayed by her other exports, even if she did not send out a bag of grain from her harbours. On the other hand, if all the poorer classes in India ate two full meals every day, the surplus for export would be much less than at present. That surplus only proves that the yearly supply of food in India is greater than the effective demand for it.

There is, however, another way of approaching the question. I have taken all the provinces for which returns exist, and endeavoured to find out what amount of food they yield per head of the population. Our experience in famines shows that $1\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. of grain a day, or say 450 lbs. per annum, will keep a working adult male in health. That allowance becomes a comfortable one if granted for a whole population of men, women, and children; supplemented as it is in the Indian homesteads, by milk, oils, condiments, fruits, vegetables, and occasionally fish. From the statement on the next page, it will be seen that in every province for which returns exist, the average produce of the local crops is over 600 lbs. per person, while 450 lbs. is the average required to maintain the people in health. That table does not include the acreage under other crops, which go to pay the rent. Even Burma, where the peasantry have enough and to spare, only consumes 507 lbs. per head. According to the Famine Commissioners, Burma raises a total of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million tons, or 1087 lbs. per head. But, deducting exports, etc., she only consumes for ordinary purposes, 700,000 tons, or 507 lbs. per head. This shows

AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW THE FOOD-SUPPLY OF BRITISH INDIA*

Province.	Population.	Total Area in Sq. Miles.	Cultivated Area in Sq. Miles.	Cultivable Waste.	Uncultivable and Balance.	Area under Food Crops, in Million Acres.	Total Produce of Food, in Million Tons.	Produce of Food per Acre, in lbs.	Pressure of Pop. on whole Land, per Sq. Mile.	Pressure of Pop. on Cultivated Land, per Sq. Mile.	Annual Food-Supply per Person, in lbs.
I.	II.	III.	IV.	V	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	X.	XI.	XII.
Bengal,	60,738,217	156,286	85,000	No returns.	No returns.	48.5	17.20	806	388	716	634
Assam,	4,124,972	45,303	7,500	18,000?	19,803	No	retur ns		91	560	No returns.
N. W. Provinces,	30,781,204	81,778	51,000	19,600	35,391	31	11.25	813	976	824	602
Oudh,	11,224,095	24,213							163		
Punjab,	17,611,498	107,010	35,000	30,000	42,010	18.5	5.25	675	163	503	611
Central Provinces,**	9,223,534	113,320**	30,000	40,000	43,320	13	2.75	470	83	307	667
Berar,	2,227,654	17,711	10,156	No returns.	No returns.	3.75	.62	369	126	220	621
Mysore,	5,055,412	29,633	3,600	No returns.	No returns.	5	1.50	672	170	588	664
British Burma,	3,098,902	87,464	5,000	37,000	45,464	2.70	1.50	1244	35	617	1087
Madras,	31,385,820	138,856	50,000	No returns.	No returns.	29	8.50	658	228	627	607
Bombay (parts of), ††		50,000	30,000	8,000	12,000	19.25	3.80	415	132		

* Cols. I, II, III, and X. are reproduced from Statement No. I. Statistical Abstract relating to British India, presented to Parliament, 14th Nov. 1890.

† Cols. IV. and V. are taken from the Report of the Indian Famine Commission, Part ii. pp. 75-77. Col. VI. gives the balance between them and Col. III.

‡ Cols. VII., VIII., and IX. are taken from the Famine Commission Report, Part ii. pp. 71-75. For various reasons, Col. IX. will not work out exactly from Cols. VII., and VIII., and is simply reproduced from the F. C. Report.

§ Col. XI. is worked from Cols. II. and IV.

¶ Col. XII. is worked from Cols. II. and VIII.

** The figures for the Central Provinces include the Native States attached to them.

†† I have returns for only 50,000 square miles, out of the total of 124,105 square miles in the Presidency of Bombay, with Sind. Nor are any returns available for Ajmere—area, 2711 square miles, population, 396,889; or for Coorg—area, 1572 square miles; population 168,312. Total excluded British area, about 78,000 square miles; population, about 7 millions. On the other hand, 29,112 square miles, and a population of 1,049,710, are included under the Central Provinces for the attached Native States.

that one of the best-fed provinces in the world, where there is still more land than there are husbandmen to till it, and abundance of fish, cannot consume much more grain, than the rate I have allowed of 450 lbs. per head.

If, therefore, the food supply of India were equally distributed, there would be plenty for all. But, owing to the pressure of the increasing population on the soil, and the extreme subdivision of holdings, it is not equally distributed. For example, of the 63 millions of Bengal, including the protected States, 40 millions, as nearly as I can estimate, are well fed; 10 millions suffer hunger when the harvest falls short; and 13 millions are always badly off—in fact, do not know the feeling of a full stomach except in the mango season. An acre of food crops produces, under ordinary circumstances, from 600 to 900 lbs., or much more than is required to feed a man for a year. A Bengal peasant, holding five acres or upwards of land, is reckoned well off, for he can support an average family of four or five persons, and have enough over to pay his rent. But anything under two acres leaves a perilously small margin for a family of four persons. Half an acre yields about 400 lbs. of food in Bengal, and less in other provinces; while the allowance for health and comfort is 450 lbs. per head, besides the rent, clothing, seed, and interest to the village money-lender. Now, there are 24 millions of people in Bengal, who live off 15 millions of acres; and of these, not less than 10 millions, with 3 millions of the worst-off among the landless classes, make up the 13 millions of Bengal, who, notwithstanding the ample food-supply of

634 lb. per head, scarcely ever lose the sensation of hunger.

The ratio of the permanently hungry population is somewhat smaller in other provinces. Thus, while in Bengal two-thirds of the entire holdings pay less than 10s. of rent, and average about $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, in Bombay only one-third of the holdings are under 5 acres; while in Madras, one-half the entire holdings pay over 20s. rent at lower rates per acre than those current in Bengal. The pressure of the people on each square mile of Bengal is double the average pressure in Madras and Bombay (including Sind); the holdings are necessarily smaller, and the poverty is more intense. 'A square mile of land in England,' says Mr. Caird, 'highly cultivated, gives employment to 50 persons, in the proportion, 25 men, young and old, and 25 women and boys,' or at the rate of 51 acres to 4 persons. France, with its 180 persons to the square mile, is considered a densely-peopled country, and ten acres of plough land would be reckoned a small holding. Well, there is not a single district in India with only 180 persons to the square mile which is not exceedingly well off; and not a Bengal peasant with ten acres to a family of ten persons who would not be regarded as a fortunate man. An acre of crop-land, under plough cultivation, suffices to keep a human being in comfort; but anything under half an acre means a struggle for life.

• The extent of the evil may be thus stated. Two-fifths of the people of British India enjoy a prosperity unknown under native rule; other two-fifths earn a fair

but diminishing subsistence; but the remaining fifth, or 40 millions, go through life on insufficient food. It is these underfed 40 millions who form the problem of over-population in India. The difficulty of solving it is intensified by the fact, that in spite of the hard struggle for life, their numbers rapidly increase. 'In ten years,' says Mr. Caird, 'at the present rate of growth, there will be 20 millions more people to feed.'

It may help us to understand the precise dimensions of the problem if we express it in figures. Mr. Caird estimates that the Indian population increases at the rate of 2 millions per annum. If the lot of the people is to be really improved, additional supplies must be provided not only to feed these new mouths, but to furnish a more adequate diet for the already existing ones. This latter task means an annual increase of food sufficient to entirely feed at least half a million, or to double the rations of 1 million of the poorer classes. In this way the lot of ten millions of these classes would be ameliorated in the course of ten years; and the condition of the whole would be gradually improved in the course of a generation. The initial problem, therefore, is to increase the means of subsistence in India so as to annually feed $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions more people: 2 millions representing the actual increase in numbers, and the $\frac{1}{2}$ million representing a double diet for at least a million of the poorer classes. But figures can only express one aspect of this great social problem. For after providing the additional means of subsistence, it is necessary, if it is to ameliorate the common lot, that it should reach the mouths which most urgently

need it. The problem therefore is not only one of supply, but of distribution.

I do not, however, agree with those who think the problem insoluble. The permanent cure for over-population rests with the people themselves, and consists in those restraints upon marriage, to which all nations of small husbandmen have sooner or later to submit. But we cannot wait till that compulsory lesson is learned; for meanwhile, millions will perish. Over-population in India is the direct product of British rule. We have taken on ourselves the responsibility by removing the previous checks upon the increase of the people—checks which, however cruel, are the natural and inevitable ones in Asia, and which take the place of the prudential restraints practised by the peasant-farming races of Europe. We must now discharge that responsibility, and as our own civilised rule has created the difficulty, we must meet it by the resources of civilisation. These resources may lighten the pressure of the population on the soil in three ways,—first, by withdrawing large numbers to non-agricultural industries; second, by distributing the pressure over new or under-populated tracts; third, by increasing the produce of the existing area of cultivation.

In the first direction, something has already been achieved. The new industrial life of India described in the last chapter is already feeding millions of mouths, and before ten years are over it will feed many millions more. India can command the cheapest and most dexterous manufacturing labour in the world

England can supply the cheapest capital in the world. The household manufactures which were crushed by the co-operation of coal, labour, and capital in England, are now being revived by the co-operation of coal, labour, and capital in India. I believe that we are there at the commencement of a period of manufacturing enterprise which will form an epoch in the history of commerce. We are also apparently on the eve of great mining enterprises. Apart from the gold of Southern India, from the tin, antimony, lead, and mineral oils of Burma; we only await a process for profitably smelting iron with coal having 15 per cent. of ash, in order to create a new industry. No one would have predicted in 1855 that our Indian exports would rise from 20 to close on 70 millions during twenty-five years; and no wise man will now venture to predict the limits of the industrial development of India before the close of this century. But we may with safety assume that the commercial industries of India, for export and home consumption, will distribute, in wages to the labouring classes and in profits to the husbandman, a yearly increase of a million sterling. Now those classes can live well at the rate of £2 a year, for old and young. A million sterling of increased wages and peasant-profits, would therefore represent a comfortable subsistence for an annual increase of half a million of people.

In the second direction, also, something has been done to lighten the pressure of the people on the soil. The emigrants by sea are indeed few, averaging only 18,000 per annum. But there is a tendency for the

people to spontaneously spread themselves out to the less thickly-peopled districts. We have only had one census in India, and it will not be possible to gauge the extent of such movements till the next census in 1881. From Column IV. of the table on page 77, it will be seen that a great balance exists of cultivable land not yet brought under the plough. This uncultivated land consists of two classes,—of large blocks or even extensive tracts in sparsely peopled provinces such as Assam, the Punjab, and the central plateau; and of small patches of pasture, jungle, or reclaimable waste interspersed among the closely cultivated districts. The first class opens up a field for migration on a large scale. Hitherto such migrations, although carefully watched by Government, cannot be said to have been fostered by it. A labour-transport department exists, but its object is to secure a high scale of comfort to the coolies *en route*, at the cost of the tea-planters, rather than to encourage both capitalists and labourers in the work of transferring the population from the overcrowded to the underpeopled provinces. The Government is now reconsidering the question in the latter aspect. The transport of labour has, so far, only paid for undertakings yielding a high return, such as tea-planting. That industry now employs 300,000 natives, and feeds about half a million; a large proportion of whom have been brought from densely inhabited tracts to the distant tea-districts.

•The problem before Government is how to render labour-transport a paying enterprise for the staple operations of husbandry. It is conceivable that such

facilities might be given as would make it profitable for capitalists and land companies to found agricultural settlements in Assam and the Central Provinces. If the landholders of Bengal were thus to turn captains of industry, they would vindicate their position and render it inexpugnable. Thus, among the most thickly peopled parts of India are Bardwán and Darbhanga, each of them held by a Mahárájá. The incomes of these two magnates are popularly reckoned to make a total of over half a million sterling. Well, if the Mahárájá of Bardwán and the Mahárájá of Darbhanga were to obtain suitable facilities from the Government, and to lead forth a colony, each from his own crowded district, by ten days' easy journey to Assam or the Central Provinces, he would not only add to the fortunes of his house, but would set a noble example which other great proprietors in Bengal would not be slow to follow.

Such enterprises already yield a good profit on the hilly outskirts of Bengal and in marshy districts. Half a million of acres have been reclaimed by immigrant colonies in the Sundarbans during the present generation. From personal examination of these clearings, and of the reclaimed tracts in Assam, I am able to say that the task is a lighter one in the latter province. But it requires a capitalist, and above all a native capitalist. A *fakír*, or spiritual person, accompanies each party to pray against the tigers; and receives 1s. 3d. per 100 logs removed in safety. A simple ecclesiastical policy of this sort is found to give confidence and coherence to the immigrants. The Bengal landholder delights to trace

his origin to some remote ancestor who came from the north and cut down the jungle. The eponymous village hero is still the man who dug the tank and ploughed up the adjacent fields. Well, the landed gentlemen of Bengal have now a chance of illustrating their families, not by a Brahman-invented pedigree, but by themselves doing what they love to think that their ancestors did—by founding agricultural colonies, and by giving their names to new districts.

• The landholders of Bengal are the class which has profited by the increase of population which now forms the great difficulty of Bengal. Many of them have a high sense of their duties; many of them are at present apprehensive that their privileges will be curtailed. Whatever may be the legal basis for those privileges, they have no foundation in the sympathies of their countrymen; and there is a tendency to question that basis among Englishmen both in India and at home. If the great landholders could co-operate with the Government in equalizing the pressure of the population on the soil, they would remove the principal cause which has led to their privileges being challenged. But Government should remember that, in such enterprises, the undertaker risks his capital, and the labourers must be content to risk their health. Hitherto the one object of our labour-transport laws has been to reduce the labourer's risk at the cost of the capitalist. Fifteen years ago, it was my duty to administer those laws in the principal seat of river-embarkation for Assam. The Acts were framed in favour of the coolie, and I

administered them, as I was bound to do, in favour of the coolie. At a later period, I had to inquire into the whole operation and spirit of these laws. I came to two conclusions—first, that labour-transport was practicable in Bengal, not only for special industries like tea, but on a great scale for agricultural settlements; second, that if the system were to be re-organized on this new basis, Government must legislate with an eye to the money-risks of the capitalist, as well as to the health-risks of the labourer.

The other class of unoccupied land consists not of large blocks, but of patches interspersed among closely cultivated districts. A glance at the table on page 77 will show how vast an aggregate must exist of this class. 'There is,' write the Famine Commissioners, 'in most villages, scope for a slow and gradual extension of cultivation by the breaking-up of uncultivated land; and outside the village areas there is an immense extent which is more or less fit for cultivation.' How rapidly the process goes on, may be realized from the fact that the Madras peasantry increased their cultivated fields from 12 to 20 millions of acres, in the quarter of a century ending 1878. In truth, the process goes on too rapidly. For the cultivable waste comprises the pasture lands on which the village herds graze, and the patches of jungle on which the people depend for fuel. Now, as we have seen, the lack of pasture and the substitution of cow-manure for firewood, are main factors in the exhaustion of the Indian soil.

While, therefore, much may be done by migration

to unoccupied tracts, and by the tillage of waste patches of land, the latter process drives us back upon the third means of augmenting the food-supply, mentioned at p. 81, namely by increasing the produce of the existing area of cultivation. And here we are met at the outset by a statement often repeated, and which the *Hindu Patriot* lately put in very pithy words: 'The native cultivators have nothing to learn so far as non-scientific agriculture is concerned, and the adoption of scientific agriculture is wholly beyond their means.' I had the good fortune, in my youth, to work during two years in the laboratory of the greatest agricultural chemist of that day. If the only alternative lay between a strictly scientific and an altogether unscientific husbandry, I should have to concur in the *Hindu Patriot's* conclusion. But the choice is not thus limited. I have compared the high farming of the Lothians with the primitive tillage of the Argyleshire glens, and I find that both these extremes are essentially local. The husbandry of England and of Europe occupies a shifting position between the two. One little improvement takes place in one district, another small change for the better in another. Every one knows that strictly scientific farming trebles the produce; that a field which produces 780 lbs. of wheat without manure can be made to yield 2342 lbs. by manure. But every one also knows that the native of India has neither the capital nor the knowledge required to attain this result. If, therefore, the problem before him was to increase his crops three-fold, I should despair of his success. But, as I shall now

show, the problem is not to increase the food-supply of India by 300 per cent. at a stroke, but by 1½ per cent. a year.

Wheat-land in the North-Western provinces, which now gives only 840 lbs. an acre, yielded 1140 lbs. In the time of Akbar, and would be made to produce 1800 lbs. in East Norfolk. The average return of food-grains in India shows about 700 lbs. per acre; in England, wheat averages over 1700 lbs. The Secretary to the Government of India, in its late Department of Agriculture, declares, 'that with proper manuring and proper tillage, every acre, broadly speaking, of land in the country can be made to yield 30, 50, or 70 per cent. more of every kind of crop than it at present produces; and with a fully corresponding increase in the profits of cultivation.' But, as I shall now show, a yearly increase of 1½ per cent. would suffice.

The food-supply of India must be augmented so as to allow of an annual increase of 2½ millions of people. This rate, as explained at p. 80, will not only feed the new mouths, but will ameliorate the condition of the existing population. Now 2½ millions are less than 1½ per cent. of the present population, and the present food-supply is more than that population consumes. If, therefore, we add 1½ per cent. yearly to the food-production, the supply will more than keep pace with the increased demand upon it, so far as the internal wants of India are concerned. I shall specify four out of many considerations which make me believe that, without attempting any flights in scientific farming

it is possible to steadily increase the Indian food supply to the extent of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum.

The first impediment to better husbandry is the fewness and weakness of the cattle. 'Over a great portion of the Empire,' writes the Secretary to the late Agricultural Department in India, 'the mass of the cattle are starved for six weeks every year. The hot winds roar, every green thing has disappeared, no hot-weather forage is grown; the last year's fodder has generally been consumed in keeping the well-bullocks on their legs during the irrigation of the spring crops; and all the husbandman can do is just to keep his poor brutes alive on the chopped leaves of the few trees and shrubs he has access to, the roots of grass and herbs that he digs out of the edges of fields, and the like. In good years he just succeeds; in bad years the weakly ones die of starvation. But then come the rains. Within the week, as though by magic, the burning sands are carpeted with rank, luscious herbage, the cattle will eat and over-eat, and millions die of one form or other of cattle disease, springing out of this starvation followed by sudden repletion with rank, juicy, immature herbage.' He estimates 'the average annual loss of cattle in India by preventable disease' at 10 million beasts, worth $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling. He complains that no real attempt has been made either to bring veterinary knowledge within reach of the people, or to organize a system of village plantation which would feed their cattle through the summer.

The second impediment to improved husbandry is

the want of manure. If there were more stock, there would be more manure, and the absence of firewood compels the people to use even the scanty droppings of their existing cattle for fuel. Under such circumstances agriculture ceases to be the manufacture of food, and becomes a mere spoliation of the soil. Forage crops, such as lucerne, guinea-grass, and the great stemmed millets, might furnish an immense weight to the acre. Government is now considering whether their cultivation could not be promoted by reducing the irrigation rate on green fodder crops. A system of village plantations would not only supply firewood, but would yield leaves and an undergrowth of fodder sufficient to tide the cattle over their six weeks' struggle for life each summer. In some districts Government has land of its own which it could thus plant; in others it is only a sleeping partner in the soil. The system would have to be considerably organized on a legislative basis, but Mr. Hume, the highest authority on such a subject, declares the system perfectly practicable. For the details I refer the reader to his valuable pamphlet on 'Agricultural Reform in India.' In Switzerland, I found that the occupiers of *allmends*, or communal lands, have at least in some cantons to keep up a certain number of trees. It seems a fair question whether plantations ought not in many parts of India to be now made an incident of the land-tenure; they would go far to solve the two fundamental difficulties of Indian agriculture—the loss of cattle, and the want of manure.

Meanwhile, the natives set an increasing value on

manure. The great cities are being converted from centres of disease into sources of food-supply. For a time, caste prejudices stood in the way of utilizing the night-soil. ‘‘ Five years ago,’ writes the Secretary to the Poona Municipality, ‘ agriculturists would not touch the *poudrette* when prepared, and could not be induced to take it away at even a nominal charge. At present the out-turn of manure is not enough to keep pace with the demand, and the peasants buy it up from four to six months in advance.’ At Amritsar, in the Punjab, 30,000 donkey-loads were sold in one year. A great margin still exists for economy, both in the towns and villages; but the husbandman is becoming more alive to the utilization of every source of manure, and his prejudices are gradually giving way under the stern pressure of facts.

The third impediment to improved agriculture in India is the want of water. Mr. Caird, the chief English authority who has inquired into the subject, believes that if only one-third of the cultivated area were irrigated, India would be secure against famine. At any rate, an extension of irrigation would alone suffice to raise the food-supply by more than 1½ per cent. during many years. Since India passed to the Crown, great progress has been made in this direction. Money has been invested by millions of pounds; 200 millions of acres were in 1880 under cultivation; and in the five British provinces which require it most, 28 per cent. of the area, or say one-third, is artificially supplied with water. Those Provinces are the Punjab, the North-

West, Oudh, Sind, and Madras. Looking to what has of late years been done, and to what yet remains to be done by wells and petty works with the aid⁶ of loans from the State, I think we may reckon on a vast increase of food from irrigation.

I shall mention only one more means of improving Indian tillage. The Indian Government is the greatest landed proprietor in the world; it is, I think, the only Government of a people of husbandmen which has no Agricultural Department. From the first, it concentrated its attention on its own share of the crops, and interested itself too little in their cultivation. Ten years ago, Lord Mayo, the only Indian Viceroy who had ever farmed for a livelihood, founded an Agricultural Department in India. But the traditions of Indian administration were too strong for him. His Agricultural Department soon became a Revenue Department, and before long was abolished. I do not think that any official *deus ex machinâ* can bring down an *avatâr* of steam ploughs and chemical manures upon India. But I watched the operations of the late Agricultural Department, and I have studied the practical work done at its model farms. I believe it capable, by continuous effort, of slowly but surely effecting great improvements in Indian husbandry. Food production depends on three elements—labour, land, and capital. We have abundance of labour in India: there is still enough land if the population could be equally distributed over it; and the Government has unlimited cheap capital at its command, if it had only the knowledge and supervision requisite for its safe

application to the soil. India has entered on the inevitable change which takes place in all countries from 'extensive' to 'intensive' husbandry, as the population increases. It has been my duty to find out precisely what amount of information exists with regard to the agriculture of India; and to compare that information with the facts which the Governments of Europe and America supply on the same points. I have come to the conclusion that no central Government stands more in need of agricultural knowledge than the Government of India, and that no Government has a smaller stock of such knowledge within its central body. I rejoice, therefore, that the Famine Commissioners urge the re-establishment of an Agricultural Department in India.

I have now set forth the problem of an increased food-supply for India; endeavoured to state its exact dimensions; and shown that, while it demands organized efforts on a great scale, it is quite capable of solution. The problem, however, is not only one of supply, but of distribution. By one set of efforts the food must be increased; another set of efforts must secure a fair share of that food to the actual tiller of the soil. In Southern India, as I have mentioned, the cry of the peasantry is for protection against the money-lenders. After a careful inquiry, the Government determined to respond to that cry. It has practically said to the village bankers: A state of things has grown up under British rule which enables you to push the cultivators, by means of our Courts, to extremities unknown under the native

dynasties, and repugnant to the customs of India. Henceforth, in considering the security on which you lend money, please to know that the peasant cannot be imprisoned or sold out of his farm to satisfy your claims; and we shall free him from the life-long burden of those claims by a mild bankruptcy law.' Such is the gist of the Southern India Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1879.

It provides, in the first place, for small rural debtors of £5 and under. If the Court is satisfied that such a debtor is really unable to pay the whole sum, it may direct the payment of such portion as it considers that he can pay, and grant him a discharge for the balance. To debtors for larger amounts, it gives the protection of an Insolvency Act. No agriculturist shall henceforth be arrested or imprisoned in execution of a decree for money. In addition to the old provisions against the sale of the necessary implements of his trade, no agriculturist's immoveable property shall be attached or sold in execution of any decree, unless it has been specifically mortgaged for the debt to which such decree relates. But even when it has been specifically mortgaged, the Court may order the debtor's holding to be cultivated, for a period not exceeding seven years, on behalf of the creditor, after allowing a sufficient portion of it for the support of the debtor and his family. At the end of the seven years the debtor is discharged. If the debtor himself applies for relief, under the Insolvency clauses, the procedure is as follows:—His moveable property, less the implements of his trade, are liable to sale for his debts. His immoveable pro-

perty, or farm, is divided into two parts, one of which is set aside as 'required for the support of the insolvent and members of his family dependent on him,' while the remainder is to be managed on behalf of his creditors. But nothing in this section shall authorize the Court to take into possession any houses or other buildings belonging to, and occupied by, an agriculturist.' Village arbitrators or 'conciliators' are appointed by the same Act, and every creditor must first try to settle his claims before them. If the effort at arbitration fails, the 'conciliator' shall give the applicant a certificate to that effect. No suit to which an agriculturist (residing within any local area to which a 'conciliator' has been appointed) is a party, shall be entertained by any Civil Court, unless the plaintiff produces a certificate from the 'conciliator' that arbitration has been attempted and failed.

Much may be said on general principles against this Act, and much also may be said for it under the special conditions in which the South Indian peasant now finds himself placed. On the one hand, it gives a protection to the ignorant cultivator such as he practically enjoyed under Native rule, when the money-lender could not sell his holding, because there was more land than there were husbandmen to till it. But on the other hand, it increases the risks in the application of capital to land. It secures the idle or extravagant cultivator from the consequence of his own acts, and thus tends to arrest that process of riddling out the thriftless members of the population, which, however cruel in its action.

results in bringing the soil into the hands able to make the most of it.

While in Southern India the demand is thus for restraints upon the money-lender, in Bengal the cry of the peasantry is for protection against the landlord. Accordingly, in 1859, the Government practically said to the landholders: 'We created you as a proprietary body in 1793 by our own act. In doing so, we made over to you valuable rights which up to that time were vested in the State, but we carefully reserved the rights of the cultivators. We shall now ascertain and define the rights of the cultivators; and we shall settle your relations with them on the basis of those rights.' The result was embodied in the famous Land Law of 1859, which divided the cultivators of Bengal into four classes:—First, those who had held their holdings at the same rates since 1793, and whose rents could not be raised at all. Second, those who had held their land at the same rent for twenty years, and were therefore presumed by law to have held since 1793, unless the contrary was proved. Third, those who had held for twelve years. Such tenants had a right of occupancy, and their rents could be raised only for certain specified reasons by a suit at law. Fourth, those who had held for less than twelve years, and were left to make what bargain they could with the landlords.

Further experience, since 1859, has taught the Government that even these provisions are inadequate to avert the wholesale enhancement of rents in Bengal. It accordingly issued a Commission in 1879 to inquire into

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, now 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.

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 landholders 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 is £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 Afghan conqueror, Ahmad

REVENUES OF THE MUGHAL EMPERORS AT THIRTEEN VARIOUS PERIODS FROM 1593 TO 1761,*
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>bámt</i>),†	£32,000,000 10,000,000†
				nett £42,000,000
2	" 1594, ...	Abul Fazl Mss.: not for all India, }	nett £16,574,388	...
3	" " ...	Official Documents: not for all India, }	nett 16,582,440	...
4	" 1605, ...	Indian Authorities quoted by De Læet, ...	nett 17,450,000	...
5	Jahángír, 1609-11, ...	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 *Bámt* 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 nett 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 $35\frac{1}{2}$ 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	2,403,232	2,523,045	2,457,075	2,619,349
Assessed Taxes,	1,110,224	2,072,025	825,241	580,139	20,136	2,747	510	310	86,110	900,920
Provincial Rates,									238,504	2,038,835
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	2,826,561
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	2,963,483	3,110,540
Total, £	55,149,106	56,296,698	54,733,605	55,690,628	54,623,778	55,309,505	55,798,656	54,007,138	54,787,217	60,867,911

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).⁶ 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-Muhammadian 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 irrigator works. In Orissa, the Rája's share of the crops amounted, with dues,

* The evidence on which the statements are based, was published in my *Orissa*, vol. i., 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. 0d. 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 exploitation. '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 Rajputana, 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 seven pence 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 rations 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 or 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 *lathiáls* 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 Faujdári, 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,

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 those 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 1½ millions in 1857, during the last year of the Company, to over 3½ 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 2½ 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. It is going over

* *Annals of Rural Bengal*, 5th ed. p. 335.

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 these 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 $1\frac{1}{2}$ 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 can 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

[* In 1885 the number was 3,431,725.]

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 revenue. 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 re-asserted; 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 Musalmáns*, 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* is

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. ^a

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^obodies 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 circumstance,

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.