

# BRAHMINS AND PARIAHS.

## AN APPEAL

BY THE

Indigo Manufacturers of Bengal

TO THE

BRITISH GOVERNMENT, PARLIAMENT, AND PEOPLE,

FOR

PROTECTION

AGAINST THE

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR OF BENGAL;

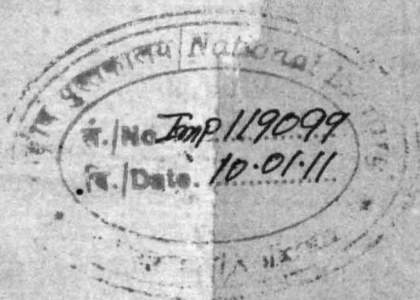
SETTING FORTH THE PROCEEDINGS BY WHICH THIS HIGH OFFICER  
HAS INTERFERED WITH THE FREE COURSE OF JUSTICE, HAS  
DESTROYED CAPITAL AND TRADE OF BRITISH SETTLERS IN  
INDIA, AND HAS CREATED THE PRESENT DISASTROUS CON-  
DITION OF HINDU ENDIARISM AND INSURRECTION NOW SPREADING  
IN THE RURAL DISTRICTS OF BENGAL.

*E* "Every country is held by men pledged to oppose the settlement of  
*fr* country, and they are able to make their own statements."—Letter  
*ll* from Calcutta Co-respondent," dated from Calcutta, 8th December,  
published in the Times of 14th January, 1861.

LONDON:

JAMES RINGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY, W.

1861.



172 A. 269.

# BRAHMINS AND PARIAHS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### A CONTRAST.

Two of the principal staples which India produces for exportation are opium and indigo.

In one respect, and in one respect only, opium and indigo resemble each other. They are both cultivated by "a system of advances, which presents some features absolutely identical."\*

In all other respects these vegetable products can only be compared to be contrasted.

Opium is a drug which is grown for traffic with China, and is that "foreign medicine" which now passes through the Chinese custom houses at a settled duty; indigo is a harmless dye, which is very welcome at Manchester, and exercises only beneficial effects upon our relations with the rest of the world. Opium is the result of "a system of poppy cultivation under a Government monopoly."† Indigo is produced by independent "British settlers, in whose future increase lies the only permanent prosperity of British India."‡ Opium is produced under a coercive

\* Report of Indigo Commission of 1860, par. 14.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Opinions of Lord William Bentinck and Lord Metcalfe, quoted and adopted in the Report of the Colonization Committee, 1859.

system which is of such an unrelaxing character that the remuneration to the Ryot has in a quarter of a century scarcely varied, while the remuneration for indigo has kept pace with the increased value of labour, which it has itself tended to create, and is now three times the amount which it was thirty-five years ago.\* Indigo has cleared the jungle and turned the wilderness into corn-fields, and the lair of the wild beast into villages; while opium has only covered rich arable lands with poppies, and fixed a system of forced labour akin to slavery upon the people.

In other respects the contrast is still more remarkable. Opium has always been the object of the most tender care to the Government, while the manufacture of indigo has always been a thing to be discouraged, and, if possible, destroyed.† The system by which opium has been produced has always been veiled from the public eye and excluded from all public inquiries; while the system by which indigo is produced has always been made to bear the onus of every passing disturbance, and has been, as State Papers now prove, industriously calumniated by the agents of the governing Company.‡ The obligation of the Ryots to cultivate opium has been enforced by remedies so summary and by punishments so stringent, that neglect or opposition is almost unheard of; while the contracts to cultivate indigo have been denuded of all practical legal remedy, and the planter has been, in this respect, a mere outlaw, left to right himself or to suffer wrong, watched

\* In 1825 the Ryot received a rupee for twelve bundles of indigo plants, then it rose to a rupee for ten bundles, then to eight and to six. It is now at four bundles the rupee; and as the price of labour increases, the price of the plant will still further rise.

† Evidence of Mr. C. Hollings, Indigo Commissioner, 1860. Evidence.

‡ Report of Indigo Commission, 1860.



by a police which, as the late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal complains,\* are the most corrupt body of officials which the world has ever seen, and at the mercy of the Bengal secretariat, whose policy has ever been to harass and oppress those who, in the language of the covenanted servants of the Company, were "interlopers" in India.†

Opium is popular in the public offices of Calcutta; and to any suggestion of the grinding slavery it fastens upon the Ryot, the present Lieut.-Governor of Bengal would doubtless reply by some phrase of contempt, such as those he has recently addressed to the indigo planters, or by some bold flight of the imagination, such as those which make up the last Minute he has published. Indigo, on the other hand, after fifty years struggle against the officers of the Civil Service when in its plenitude of power, seems to be at last upon the verge of extinction. In the present Lieut.-Governor of Bengal, the Honourable John Peter Grant, it has found an enemy who unites those qualities in his public functions which are necessary to destroy the constant object of the hostility of the Secretariat of Bengal. At this man's will, and as would appear to us, for no other object than to satisfy the instincts of a traditional hatred,‡ eight millions of

\* Sir F. Halliday's Minute on the Police.

† See Minute upon the Complaint of the Bengal Indigo Planters' Association *passim*

‡ "2692. Mr. CAMPBELL] What may be the annual value of the indigo produced in India?—The value of the indigo produced in Bengal and the Upper Provinces may be from £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 per annum, varying with the extent of the crops and the market price of the article.

"2693. Is that all produced by English capital and skill, and enterprise? Nineteen-twentieths of it is produced by British capital and skill.

"2694. You have stated that the annual value of indigo produced is from £2,000,000 to £3,000,000: what may be the value of the proper-

British capital are to be destroyed ; an annual trade of £2,000,000 is to cease out of India ; a population of at least a million native labourers are to be cast out of employ ; \* and the whole class of planters, who are now reclaiming the wilderness, civilizing the people, curing the sick, relieving the starving, upholding the falling, and accustoming the suspicious native to associate all these blessings with employment under an European—all this class is to be ruined and driven forth, while Mr. J. P. Grant, like a Russian general superintending the deportation of Tartars from the Crimea, affects to weep over the ruins and to deplore the necessity.

This is, in a few words, the complaint which the planters of Bengal make to their countrymen in England. The present Lieut.-Governor of Bengal has sent forth the word for their annihilation. In a country where capital is so scarce that every payment must always be made beforehand—in a country where Government is a despotism, and the native looks upon the ruler for the moment as supreme and irresistible,—the Lieut.-Governor has caused the people to understand, that in all matters connected with the growth of indigo he will abide by the Ryots, and will hold them harmless against the planter ;

ties producing this indigo, and do they belong entirely to English capitalists ? — The value of the properties, including the Putnees, talooks, and zemindaries throughout India, may be from £7,000,000 to £8,000,000 varying with the value of money and price of indigo, and entirely held by English settlers and capitalists.

“ 2695. Has this capital and property been acquired by men who have gone to India with nothing but that capital which a European carries everywhere, namely, perseverance, industry, and skill ? — Yes—*Evidence of Mr. J. P. Wise, Colonization Committee, 2nd Report*, p. 41.

\* In the ploughing season of 1859, before the interference of the present Lieut.-Governor, the indigo factories of R. Watson and Co. had 17,000 ploughs at work, and upwards of 100,000 men engaged in the cultivation and manufactures incident to their concerns. This is the return of one firm alone.

that when his own magistrates shall decide in favour of the planter, he will set aside their decisions; and that even Acts of Council shall be to him no impediment to the pursuit of his own policy, for that he will cause his magistrates to give them what interpretation he may please. In a country where there is no law to compel the observance of a multitude of small indigo contracts; where the native courts are costly, dilatory, and corrupt, and the police are admitted, even by their employers, to be an organized gang of extortioners; where the planter can rely only upon his moral influence for obtaining his own, and the subtle Hindoo and more crafty Mussulman who have pocketed the price of their labour, are eager to seize any excuse for avoiding their obligations;—in such a country, and in such a condition of circumstances as these, the Lieut.-Governor causes, or wilfully suffers the belief to go forth, that Government is desirous that the cultivation of indigo shall cease.\* When the natural result happens, and his victims complain, Mr. Grant replies with sneers and by insolent reference to the publicly disproved slanders which were cast upon a former gene-

\* In dealing with their own opium ryots, the Government has been very careful to avoid the course which they have adopted with the indigo ryots. So far from exciting them by proclamations, they have ever sedulously refrained from any enquiry as to their grievances. When the opium ryots murmured and almost rebelled, Mr. Farquharson did not issue Commissions or indite Perwannahs. He reported: "I am averse to call for general information from the Districts without absolute necessity. There is no keeping such calls secret, and their spread always does harm in exciting hope or encouraging vain expectation. There can be no doubt in the mind of any one of the fact my simple statement conveys, every sort of country produce being now nearly double what it was three years ago, and labour proportionately high."

A very trifling increase was given, and the rising storm was hushed. This was how the discontents of the opium ryots were met. We shall see, presently, how Mr. Grant interfered, not to quench, but to fan into flame a similar smouldering discontent among the indigo ryots.

ration of planters; and when he is charged with absolute ignorance of the industry with which he is mischievously meddling, he replies that he knows the subject well, and that his knowledge is derived from having, *twenty-five years ago*, digested a series of *ex parte* charges made by the civilians against the planters.\*

This great public officer has produced an effect which cannot be comprehended in England. If an English minister could be found so insane as to declare that debtors had much to complain of in the obduracy of their creditors, and that the law ought not to give facilities to make labourers complete contracts for which they have received the stipulated remuneration, such a declaration would cause a very modified mischief. The minister would disappear before the indignation of the public, and the debtors, and repudiating labourers would soon come to learn that the law is stronger than the word of the minister. But in India there are no courts that can meet these cases in the Mofussil, and Mr. Grant has laboured that there shall be none. Mr. Grant's hint was taken all over the country. The Ryots firmly believe that Government is averse to indigo cultivation, and will support them in the repudiation of their contracts. An extensive *jaquerie* has been the consequence. The Ryots arose tumultuously, and not only refused to sow indigo, but,

\* See Minute upon the Complaint of the Indigo Planters' Association, par. 14. Mr. Grant says—"I remember saying that I had never had any experience in an indigo district; and I have no doubt that I disclaimed all knowledge on the subject of indigo from personal observation. But I am sure that I did not say that I had no knowledge on the subject derived from others. I knew perfectly well native opinion on the subject; and I had had a peculiar opportunity of becoming more fully acquainted than most public servants with the common abuses in connexion with indigo, in all districts, so far back as in 1835, when I was employed in digesting a mass of reports from every indigo district in Bengal."

persuaded that they had the Government at their back, attacked the planters. It has always been found easy to arouse debtors against creditors, whether at Rome, where the plebeians were always ready to wipe off their scores with the patricians; or in England, where not much rhetoric was necessary to persuade an assault upon the Jews; or at Hobra, where the Mahometan Ryots felt no great distaste to attack the house of the one European who lived among them, to cancel their obligations to him, and to plunder his property. Alarmed at the rising against Europeans which this Lieut.-Governor had produced, the Government sent soldiers into the districts, which, even during the mutinies, had remained in unbroken tranquillity, and the Legislative Council of India passed a law to give, for six months, a summary remedy in case of breaches of contract. The Lieut.-Governor again interfered to prevent the action of this law. He appointed magistrates to carry it out who were of his own bias; and when even these magistrates, in the presence of the danger, and impressed by the circumstances which surrounded them, passed sentences upon the ringleaders of this social revolution, he interfered with the course of justice, revoked the sentences of his own magistrates, and released the convicted offenders. Prompt ruin has followed this conduct. Thus protected, of course the Ryots will not sow, and they will not permit others to sow, and they will destroy all that has been sown. They have been taught their power of resistance. They have learned from Mr. Grant how to repudiate their contracts to sow indigo. That they should have stopped here would have been contrary to human nature, or, at least, such natures as we are dealing with. They are now acquiring of themselves the knowledge of the

difficulty of recovering rents. The last news is, that they are refusing to pay rents to the factory holders even for the rice lands they hold under them. And this wise act of throwing all the rural districts of Bengal into confusion is taken by the Government at a time when we are introducing new taxes, and when the Government officials are making overtures to the country gentlemen of India, to the indigo planters dwelling in the Mofussil, to aid them—for without their aid it can never be done—in the assessment of the income tax. Meanwhile Mr. J. P. Grant looks on with a pleasant chuckle, gently impels the whole class of “interlopers” towards the inevitable precipice, sees with the eye of hope the re-installation of his class in its old exclusiveness of power and supremacy, and pharisaically deplores the necessity of destroying so beneficial a body of traders.

This is the charge which, before the people of England, we bring against the Honourable John Peter Grant, and which we ask the Ministry, the Houses of Parliament, and the Country, to entertain and inquire into.

We are now to prove these allegations.

It will be necessary, for this purpose, to inform the public mind upon many matters with which it is not familiar, and to make our countrymen feel, if possible, some touch of the social atmosphere of our Eastern empire. To pile together mere facts and figures without arrangement or illustration, would only be to produce a statement of intolerable tediousness, which few would read, and by which no one, who does not already know India, could be instructed. We will attempt, by dividing our subject into headings, to lead the reader more easily up, step by step, to the height from which he may overlook the whole iniquity.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE COVENANTED SERVANT AND THE "INTERLOPER."

IT is very difficult for any Englishman to quite realize to himself what a covenanted servant was, and, indeed, still is, in India. We insist upon taking our notion of these men from what we see of them in this country. We adopt the nabob in "Gilbert Gurney," with his indolence and ductility, and his pet rattlesnakes, as a type of the class; or we fix in our memory some club bore, whose irritable temper and imperious manner to the servants make the room which he chooses to infest uninhabitable to the quiet members of the club. Or we imagine a testy old gentleman wrapped up in flannel, in a house in Baker Street, and scolding a trembling but expectant half-score of nephews and nieces. But with notions like these in our heads we shall never arrive at an understanding of this indigo question. It has, we believe, happened that a retired civilian was rather cut among his English acquaintances because he had boasted proudly that he had been "a collector" in the East. His ignorant friends imagined, that instead of having been a despotic and practically irresponsible sovereign over a country larger than England, he had gone about with a book and an ink-bottle collecting dues from door to door. We must, however, have a better idea than this of the "pucka civilian" before we can have the least inkling of any Eastern question. The worn and decrepit

invalid whom we see about London is no more like the Civil servant of the East, in his pride and in his power, than is the lion of the forests of the Atlas, reposing in his strength, or crushing in his spring, like the harmless, and rather mangy beast who does duty as the type of his race in an English menagerie. In the early days of the Indian empire our civilian went out from England a mere boy, and he found himself at once a member of a dominant and privileged class. The millions of Hindustan all bowed themselves to the dust before him. He was taught—and how soon is such a lesson learnt—to consider himself a superior being to those around him. As the common phrase in India runs, he was one of the heaven-born :\* as a recent official report expresses it, he was one of “the nobility of India.” After a few years of subordinate office, with a salary greater than that of grey-headed barristers in judicial positions at home, he became, in some far-away province, the pro-consul of the great sovereign Company. He had no knowledge of law, either in its principles or its practice, yet he sat in judgment on ten millions of mankind, and Indian princes were his suitors. He knew little, if any thing, of the principles of finance, yet he administered the finances as well as the judicial functions of his province. He was ignorant of the habits and customs of the people, and he had a bare smattering of their language, yet his fiat was practically without appeal in all cases, from a contest between two farmers to the confiscation of the possessions of an ancient line of princes. He was irresponsible. No

\* This term should have been “heaven-taught,” for, as we learn from old letters, it was adopted in sneering allusion to the facility with which civilians passed from the functions of clerks to those of judges, governors, legislators, and financiers, without any special education for any of these duties. The system, however, is now in a transition state.

crime, however great, could ever be proved against him. In the history of the Company there is scarcely an instance of a "senior merchant," or a "collector," having been publicly or privately dismissed the service. If he failed to make satisfactory financial returns he was removed to a less lucrative province, but this was the only crime known to the Company. If he provoked an expensive insurrection he was censured; but mere acts of despotism followed by no pecuniary loss to the Company had no guilt in their eyes. The press was gagged; there was no European public opinion; the echoes of great atrocities waxed faint, as they came across the ocean and vaguely fell upon the ears of Englishmen at home: he was a great despot for good or for bad as the case might happen. There was a general notion here that the returned "nabob's" life had been a series of crimes and horrors, but no one ever knew any particulars. Lord Clive, whose most conspicuous civil quality was the disgust with which he looked upon the corruption by which he was surrounded, was called "the wicked Lord Clive;" other less famous old Indians also had their evil reputations; but the mere "senior merchant" or "collector" was safe in his insignificance when he had reached this country—a Verres of this degree was too obscure to call forth a Cicero.

To tell how this power was abused is unnecessary. As a rule, such absolute power never yet was obtained without being abused. Exceptions there doubtless were of honourable men, who, so far as their imperfect information enabled them to do so, used their tremendous power only to do what they believed to be justice. India is even now filled with traditions of enormities which, seen through the medium of great distance, are remem-

bered only in a ludicrous sense, the wickedness being sunk in the absurdity. Those "nabobs" were but too often extortionate governors and corrupt judges. They shook the pagoda tree as violently as they could, and they made haste to become rich and to quit the country. But they were "the nobility of India." The natives, from the Nawab to the Coolie, were in the language of those days "niggers:" the king's army, and even the king's judges, were an inferior class to themselves;\* but the few straggling settlers who had found their way from England without being decorated with the Company's covenant were very far beneath the "niggers." They were Pariahs, the lowest of the low.

Why do we go back to those days anterior to 1814? Not, certainly, to fasten the crimes of those early tyrants upon the civilians of the present day. We would not disgrace ourselves or our cause by following the example of our Lieut.-Governor, who in his apology, insinuates what he dares not assert, by taunting the planters in a sneering way with the disturbances which sometimes happened in a former generation, but which, as his own Commissioners have shewn, have very long since been obsolete.† Nor do we seek to cast any suspicion upon

It is only within a few weeks that the Judges of the Supreme Court have been obliged to protest in their places against the insolent and contemptuous terms applied to them by Mr. Eden before the Indigo Commission.

† "There are," says Mr. Grant in his Minute, "no affrays, no forcible entries, and unlawful carrying off of crops and cattle, no ploughing up of other men's lands, no destruction of trees and houses, no unlawful flogging and confinement in godowns, now reported. Even the offence of kidnapping Ryots seems almost arrested."

Now let us contrast this with the report of Mr. Grant's own Secretary, who, looking back for thirty years to recapitulate all the rural crimes that have happened among 20,000,000 of people, drew that "Report of the Indigo Commission" which has just reached England.

the Civil service, *as a body*, that they are actuated by any sordid views, or by any worse motives than those of

Mr. Seton Karr and a Missionary, and another Civil servant, and a native, thus report upon these calumnies (pars. 85 to 88) :—

“Of actual destruction of human life, comparatively few cases of late years have been brought to our knowledge, as proved; and we have no wish to lay great stress on a list of *forty-nine serious cases* which are shewn to have occurred over a period of *thirty years* in different parts of the country, because violent affrays, ending in homicide or wounding, are, we are happy to say, of *not nearly such frequent occurrence as they used to be*; and affrays are *not peculiar to indigo planting*. *They occur equally where the plant is not grown.*”

“From the returns supplied by the magistrates of some of the most important districts for the last five years, some of which are entirely blank, it is quite clear that investigations into those fights *between the adherents of Zemindar [not Ryot] and planter*, which used to carry desolation, terror, and demoralization into a dozen villages at a time, no longer disfigure our criminal annals to the extent they used to do. Even in Nuddea, as will be seen from the return, the cases were few *in the years preceding 1859 and 1860.*” [When Mr. Grant’s proclamations began to excite the populace.] “Some of this good result is, no doubt, due to the working of Act IV. of 1840, for giving summary possession of lands; to the law for the exaction of recognizances and security against apprehended breaches of the peace, namely Act V. of 1848; and to the establishment of subdivisions with convenient circles of jurisdiction. A good deal is owing also to the acquisition by planters of rights in lands, and to the peace and quiet which usually follow such acquisition, as far as affrays and fights are concerned; but something also is due to the better skill and management of factories generally, and, we doubt not, to the good sense and good feeling of the most influential planters.”

“Affrays carried out with premeditation, on a large scale, by means of hired clubmen, we are thus happy to pronounce *rare in some districts, and in others unknown.*”

“Then, as to the burning of bazaars and houses, we have a clear admission from a gentleman whose character entitles him to great respect (A. 670), that he ‘has known of such acts;’ but no well-proved instance of this sort has been brought to our notice in any oral evidence. In one or two instances mentioned to us, when a fire took place, it was a matter of doubt whether its origin was not accidental; and we cannot, therefore, but acquit the planters, as a *body*, of any practice of the sort, though we do not mean to say that cases of arson do not occur in Lower Bengal, in consequence of indigo disputes. A crime of this kind would, from its very openness, attract attention, and should be susceptible of the clearest proof.”

After finding that only one case of “knocking down houses” had

prejudice, and class-arrogance; but we are trying to make the English public understand the traditional antagonism of the Civil Service to all European settlers, and we must, for that purpose, refer to the Civil servant as he was when the Company was absolute.

It is easy to comprehend how a despot of this kind, whether using his power for good or for ill, would detest the appearance of an European in his kingdom. In effect, nothing was more dreaded, either by civilian or by the Company. The records of early days have now been published, and they are full of the anxiety of the Civil Service to keep European eyes and ears far away from them. In 1775, Mr. Francis declared, in a formal Minute, "that Europeans in Bengal, beyond the number the services of Government required, are an useless weight and embarrassment to the Government, and an injury to the country, and that they are people to whom no encouragement should be given." In 1792 the Company assured Lord Cornwallis that the licences to go to India should "not exceed five or six, or, at the utmost, ten" every year. In 1818, "John Jebb and James Pattison, Esquires," on the part of the Company, made an elaborate remonstrance to Mr. Canning against the

been brought forward, and that that had been taken into court, and the sentence of the magistrate reversed in the Sudder in favour of the planters, the report proceeds—

"As to outrages on women, which, more than any other act, might offend the prejudice and arouse the vindictiveness of a people notoriously sensitive as to the honour of their families, we are happy to declare that our most rigid inquiries could bring to light only one case of the kind. And when we came to examine into its foundation, so seriously affecting the character of one planter, and, through him, the body of the planters in a whole district, or as affording any clue to the excitement of the past season, we discovered that there were very reasonable grounds for supposing that no outrage on the person of the woman had ever taken place."



grant by the Government of licenses to go to India, and, among other grievances arising from these licences, these gentlemen complain that "among the British residents in India, there is a strong disposition to assert *what they conceive to be* their constitutional and indefeasible rights, a general leaning towards each other, and a common jealousy of the authority of Government.

Strange to say, this remonstrance was lost upon Mr. Canning, who answered that Parliament, when it gave the Board of Control power to grant these licences, "was led to apprehend the existence in the Court of Directors of a disposition in respect of the granting of these permissions the very reverse of facility and profusion."

It was in vain that men of statesmanlike minds attempted to overcome the small trading views of the Company, and to overrule the objections of the distant proconsuls; in vain that Sir Charles Metcalfe, in 1829, minuted that "he had long lamented that our countrymen in India were excluded from the possession of land and other ordinary rights of peaceable subjects;,"\* and further that "he was convinced that our possession of India must always be precarious unless we take root by having an influential portion of the population attached to our Government by common interests and sympathies." It was in vain, also, that Lord William Bentinck, in a Minute of three months' later date, said, "The sentiments expressed by Sir Charles Metcalfe have my entire concurrence.† The Company continued to oppose all coloni-

\* To see this terror of "interlopers" fully portrayed, the reader should refer to a volume published by Messrs. Thacker, Spink, and Co., of Calcutta (1854), under the title of "Papers relating to the Settlement of Europeans in India," where all the correspondence cited above is set forth.

\*† "Papers relating to Settlement of Europeans in India," p. 39. We cannot afford to omit the testimony of this great Governor-General to

zation in India, using this word "colonization" as a posterous figment, as they did indeed to the last, and as

the usefulness of the planters, even in that early day, and to their general innocence of the charges calumniously brought against them by the Company and its servants. It occurs in the same Minute quoted above. Lord William Bentinck says—

"It has been supposed that many of the indigo planters, resident in the interior, have misconducted themselves, acting oppressively towards the natives, and with violence and outrage towards each other. Had the case been so, I must still have thought it just to make large allowances for the peculiar position in which they stood. They have been denied permission to hold lands in their own names. They have been driven to evasion, which has rendered it difficult for them to establish their just claims by legal means, as they have had to procure the plant required by them through a system of advances, which, in all branches of trade, is known to occasion much embarrassment, and to lead to much fraud. They have possessed no sufficient means of preventing the encroachment of rival establishments, still less of recovering their dues from needy and improvident Ryots. Further, we must not forget that the restrictions imposed upon the resort of Europeans to this country have operated to compel the houses of business often to employ persons in the management of their concerns in the interior whom they would not have employed if they had had a wider scope of choice. It would not be wonderful if abuses should be found to have prevailed under such circumstances, or if the weakness of the law should have sometimes led to violence in the assertion of real or supposed rights. But under all the above circumstances of disadvantages, the result of my inquiries is, a firm persuasion (contrary to the conclusions I had previously been disposed to draw) that the occasional misconduct of the planters is as nothing when contrasted with the sum of good they have diffused around them. In this, as in other cases, the exceptions have so attracted attention, as to be mistaken for a fair index of the general course of things. Breaches of the peace being necessarily brought to public notice, the individual instances of misconduct appear under the most aggravated colours; but the numerous nameless acts, by which the prudent and orderly, while quietly pursuing their own interests, have contributed to the national wealth, and to the comfort of those around them, are unnoticed or unknown. I am assured that much of the agricultural improvement which many\* of our districts exhibit, may be directly traced to the indigo planters therein settled; and that, as a general truth, it may be stated (with the exceptions which in all general truths require to be made), that every factory is, in its degree, the centre of a circle of improvement, raising the persons employed in it and the inhabitants of the immediate vicinity, above the general level. The benefit in the individual cases may not be considerable, but it seems to be sufficient to shew what might be hoped from a more liberal and enlightened system."

the Civil Service does now. As to the Civil servants, no English squire ever looked with more disgust upon a notorious poacher walking through the preserves, his audacity legalized by a footpath, than did a "Civil servant" upon an "uncovenanted European" coming into the Mofussil protected by his licence. He was a new power. Not very formidable, indeed, was this poor interloper to the great aggregate mammon-worshipper, or to the despotic master of the surrounding population. In those early days he was only there by sufferance of the Government at Calcutta, for he could not go eleven miles from Calcutta for pleasure or business without a passport; his licence might at any time be withdrawn, and himself deported to England, because he had "incurred the displeasure of the Government," without further reason assigned. While dwelling in the Mofussil he was obliged to bribe the police annually to give him a character, and his only security was to keep as quiet as possible. But still he was to the "Civilian" a symbol of freedom, of criticism, and even of publicity. He always suspected in him "a strong disposition to assert what he must conceive to be his constitutional and indefeasible rights," and, even worse still, to tell the princes and peasants around of their rights. As time grew on, our civilian found himself under the eye of a man not so easily removable as before, who, when he was corrupt, could penetrate the corruption of his acts, and who, although he was certain not to be believed at Calcutta, would make a noise about them. Later still, when practically the planter could no longer be deported in a Company's ship, the "interloper" was found telling the natives that it was no part of their duty to find the collector gratis with bearers and refreshments when he

passed through their villages, like a monarch on a progress; and the Ryots round the indigo factory were even encouraged to tell the mighty lord that he must pay for his supplies like a common mortal. Mr. Dalrymple, a partner in, and for many years manager of, Messrs. Watson and Co.'s factories, recollects the first instance of this refusal.

It has happened in those more modern days, that a few years after some outrageously unjust sentence in a dispute between a planter and a neighbouring Zemindar, the planter came into the management of the Zemindar's property, acting for his heirs, and found among his papers a bond for a very large sum of money, given by the very judge who had delivered the iniquitous sentence. Both Zemindar and judge are dead, but the bond and the planter are still in existence.

This was the position of the civilian and the interloper in the Mofussil—a traditional state of antagonism. Thus it has been, broken, of course, by individual exceptions, to the present day. Even that eminent "pukka civilian," Mr. Hawkins, who has run the whole course of Indian offices, and has been magistrate, judge, collector, session-judge, commissioner of excise and revenue, and lastly, a Judge of the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut—even that eminent covenanted servant, in his evidence before the "Colonization of India Committee, 1858," acknowledges and regrets the estrangement of the settlers and the Company's officers, and attempts to account in a mild official way for the false opinions which each class has of the other. "I believe," he says, "that the indigo planters and the Civil servants do take a view of each other, which is perhaps forced upon them from the positions which they occupy, which is very unfortunate. The indigo planter

very often lives at a distance from the station, and is never heard of except he appears in court for doing something contrary to law; and the judge gets the idea that every indigo planter is an obstreperous gentleman. The indigo planter hears of the judge, not as the judge actually is, but as his agent reports him to the indigo planter, and he very often imposes upon both; he imposes upon the indigo planter, and gives as his reason for the dismissal of a case in court that the judge had acted unjustly, or that the judge did so and so, or that he wanted so and so; they are both represented to each other in false lights. But this kind of thing is forced upon us by the difficulties of our position."

Mr. Hawkins denies that the Company's officers have any prejudice against this "obstreperous gentleman," and he is so condescending as to admit, in opposition to what Calcutta believes to be the declared opinion of Mr. J. P. Grant, that "he has known a number of indigo planters who are perfect gentlemen, fit associates for anybody." He says, also, that of the grievances of the planters, "the chief is the police system, and the system of judicial administration,\* to which the settlers say they object."

\* "2654. Have you individually suffered from the consequences of administration such as you have described?—I have seriously suffered; and by way of illustrating the working of the system, I may proceed to narrate a few instances. In the year 1833-4 the estate of Buldakal, in the Tipperah district, was put up for sale for arrears of revenue. I became the purchaser, and deposited the amount required by the law in bank notes and Company's paper, pending the commissioner of revenue's approval of the sale; and on that officer's doing so, I paid into the Treasury of Commillah the whole amount, 1,15,000 rupees, and received the collector's order to take possession of the estate. I may observe, at that time the law permitting Europeans to hold lands in India had not been promulgated, but it had passed all the preliminary stages, so I was obliged to get the permission of Government in anticipation to hold the estate: this was immediately granted by Sir Charles Metcalfe, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The ex-Zemindar appealed

That is to say, the judge's police persecute him, and extort from him, and his court affords him no remedy ; yet the judge is not the enemy of the planter ! The feeling of the Civil Service of India, with regard to the settler, is apparent in this, that an eminent civilian, one of the best and most liberal-minded of his class, speaks of it as no special discouragement to British settlers, that they should live under the pest of a set of protected native extortioners, and that they should be practically outlawed in

to the Board of Revenue against the sale, and the Board had the power to reverse it upon any legal grounds : the petition was sent by the Board back to the commissioner for his opinion, and that commissioner was not the same who had previously upheld the sale, but the collector of Chittagong, temporarily put in charge of the commissioner's office, and he recommended the reversal of the sale, upon grounds utterly unfounded, and in contravention of the law. First, he said the estate had been sold without making it known that the subordinate tenures had lapsed : this was not required, as the Permanent Settlement Laws of 1793 declare this ; and every tenant knows it, and one instance of such a notice before a sale could not be shewn. Secondly, because the petition stated the estate had been sold at or towards sunset : this was purely false, as the sale took place in open cutcherry, about 12 o'clock. Thirdly, that the collector was a relative of mine, and had favoured me by accepting Company's paper as security for my bid : this, again, was incorrect ; but the acting commissioner did not give himself the trouble of duly inquiring. His thoughts turned upon benefitting the Government, for he reported that it would be fair to the under tenants to give greater publicity : and that, as the estate was a very valuable one, he would, in recommending the reversal of this sale, advise the purchase of it on behalf of Government at the next sale. The Board adopted the recommendation, and illegally dispossessed me of a valuable property, and purchased it on the next sale-day, and that estate is now held by Government.

" 2655. *Sir Erskine Parry.*] What did they purchase it at ?—Merely the difference of the increased revenue up to the date of sale.

" 2656. *Chairman.*] Have you suffered in any other case besides that which you have mentioned ?—I have suffered, in connexion with other matters in several ways. \* \* \* Europeans of education and character have not been encouraged to take the appointments of deputy magistrates ; natives of family, and fortune, and respectability, have not been selected, but worn-out darogahs, of doubtful reputation, and others physically unfit, have been chosen for these most important situations."  
—*Evidence of Mr. M'Nair.*



all civil cases. Mr. Hawkins cannot help dropping into the track of thought in which his ideas have flowed all his life. He is too wise to say, "The network of corruption is good enough for the nigger, and what is good enough for the nigger is good enough for these settlers;" and perhaps he does not acknowledge to himself that he thinks so, but this peeps out as the active spirit of his evidence.

One authenticated anecdote is better than a thousand general propositions, but unfortunately we cannot expand our proofs, as the Colonization Committee has done, into four folio volumes. We must again throw into a foot note Mr. Dalrymple's account of his dealings with the police and with a district magistrate.\*

\* Mr. J. R. Dalrymple is asked by the Committee—

"3194. On what grounds, from your experience, do you complain of the state of the police at present?—They are extortionate; they are corrupt in every sense of the word; they extort from all classes, and get up false cases; they instigate quarrels; they instigate both the lower orders, over whom they have great power, and also the Zemindars, to quarrel, and principally with Europeans.

"3195. Have you had personal experience of that extortion and corruption?—I have.

"3196. Could you briefly and clearly give us a specimen of such corruption and extortion which you yourself have undergone?—Yes, in the case of a darogah: he applied to me for allowance, which he said he had been in the habit of receiving from the former proprietor of a concern that we had just purchased. It was on our taking possession the man came to me for money. I refused to give it him, and he was dissatisfied. Shortly afterwards he left the district; but before the manufacturing season commenced, *the most particular time of the whole year for an indigo planter, when the river is rising*, he was re-appointed to the station. He again applied for the money, and I still refused: we had only worked a few days when he shut the factories, by preventing the people from working. He came to me in the evening and asked for his money again, and after much consideration, and seeing that the concerns were stopped through his opposition, I gave him a certain sum of money, the sum of £60. We got on very well till the manufacturing was about closing again, when he demanded the balance of what he said was due to him, and I again positively refused; *he completely shut the factories, and*

Hearing such cases as these, well might a Committee of the House of Commons wonder at the continued sur-

*we did not work another day after that : the plant went all under water, and I had only recourse to a magistrate, 54 miles distant. I went to the magistrate, and he happened to be from home: he was out in the district. It was ten days before I had a hearing. After hearing me, he called for the darogah. The darogah came to the station, accompanied by the working people and small cultivators, and presented a petition as from them against me, accusing me of murder, arson, rape, and every offence that could be committed, and the magistrate took up the case ; but, on allowing me to cross-examine them, they got confused, and said they did not even know what was in the body of their petition, and they acknowledged that the petition had been written by one of the lower officers of the thannah. For 18 months my case against the darogah for extortion was undecided, and I had several trips to Kishnagur, being called in by the magistrate, and no hearing was given, and the magistrate was shortly after removed ; and a new magistrate came, and he called up the case, and decided it, without giving me any notice or calling for any of the witnesses. He exculpated the darogah, re-appointed him to another station, and recommended the Government that I should be severely punished for having acknowledged bribing the darogah. We lost a very large sum from not being able to work off the plant.*

"3197. Was it the original sum of £60 which you gave the darogah, to which the magistrate referred?—Yes ; that was the money I gave him to allow the workmen to come to the factories: we lost many thousand rupees besides that, in being unable to work off the plant.

"3198. How was the darogah exculpated?—Merely that the magistrate disbelieved the statement, and said that I should not have bribed a policeman.

"3199. On what ground did the magistrate find you guilty of bribing the darogah?—On my own acknowledgment that I had given him the £60. I made a statement of the whole of the facts as they took place.

"3200. Supposing you had not given the £60, what loss would you probably have incurred?—We lost about £2000 eventually.

"3201. What would have been the loss if you had not paid that £60?—About £6000.

"3202. *Mr. W. Vansittart.*] In fact you bribed the darogah exactly one year's salary : they get 50 rupees a month?—No, they got 30 rupees at that time.

"3203. Then you gave him two years' salary?—It may be : I know that he was in the habit of receiving 150 rupees a month from the factories before we purchased them.

"3204. *Chairman*] In what year did this happen?—It is some twenty years ago ; but it is a common thing to this day.

"3205. Do you give this case as a solitary instance, or as a general

vival of any British capital and industry against such odds.

"Nothing," say the Committee in their Report, "more strongly impresses an inquirer into the foundation and progress of our Indian Empire than the contrast which, as regards British residence, it presents to our other dependencies. While free settlement, as in the neighbouring island of Ceylon, has formed the basis of our colonial system, and the cause of its prosperity, the exclusion of free settlers has marked the origin and the progress of our Indian Government. Statesmen, indeed, like Lord William Bentinck and Lord Metcalfe, saw, in the future increase of British settlers, the only permanent prosperity of British India; and English, and even Indian opinion, has gradually followed in the track of those more observant and profounder minds. Even now, although the principle of free settlement has been recognised by British legislation, *traces of the old exclusive system are said to linger still. Though they may be removed in fact, they are stated to exist in feeling.* Thus we are told by a very competent witness, that a 'cold shade is thrown over European adventurers in India;' and by another, that a feeling of 'dislike to settlers' exists among civilians; that the civilians, as distinguished from the settlers, are 'too much of a caste;' and that the covenanted service is, 'as it were, the nobility of India.' "

Such have been the British Brahmins of India and the

specimen of what may occur to a gentleman situated as you have been, in the part of Bengal with which you are familiar?—I have known many such cases.

"3206.—Up to the present time?—*Up to the present time.*

"3207. In the long time you have been in the country have you marked any improvement in the state of the police?—No, not generally.

British Pariahs of India. as, after long inquiry, their conditions have been developed by the impartial judgment of a Committee of English gentlemen.

The unceasing effort of the white Brahmin has been to exterminate the white Pariah. In the last century he shut him out from India altogether. When he could no longer keep the door entirely closed against him, he still openly avowed his dislike of him, and placed every impediment to his winning his way into the Mofussil.\* When he had made good his position in the Mofussil, the Brahmin ignored him as much as possible, refused him all legal remedies, and surrounded him with Brahmin myrmidons, in the shape of a hungry police, and with native assistant-magistrates, who were, for the most part, promoted policemen. When even these strong measures would not kill this tenacious caste, the white Brahmins proposed to make the existence in India of the objects of their dislike impossible, by subjecting their lives and property to native judges and native juries—they themselves, the white Brahmins, being specially exempted from any such jurisdiction. More recently still, the white Brahmins have proposed to disarm these white Pariahs, and to leave them alone in the wilds of India, without means of defence against any wandering band of robbers, and a temptation to the cupidity of the surrounding natives. When foiled in these malevolent and, indeed, remembering the isolated position of the European, horrible attempts, the white Brahmin caste has at length found an effective instrument for its purpose. The present high-priest of the Civil

\* "It appears even now to be doubted by legal authorities whether Europeans can enter, without a licence, those parts of India which have been acquired within the present century. Your Committee recommend the removal of this doubt by legislative enactment." (Report of Colonization Committee, 1859)

Service Juggernaut has revived against the white Pariah the old calumnies which were invented and refuted in years past. He has, whether in ignorance or in prejudice, abused the influence of high official station to ruin the only real English interest grown to adult strength in the plains of Bengal. He has attempted, vainly, as we believe, to poison the minds of the European public against their countrymen. He has succeeded in making the natives discontented, dishonest, and insurgent. He has detorted the streams of justice, and brought Government pressure to bear upon the judgment-seat. He has threatened, dismissed, and promoted magistrates according as they gave him satisfaction by their judgments. He has set his favourites to the work of meddling with the business of the planter, with strong instances before them of promotion given for zeal in similar employment. And while enforcing, with most stringent energy, the special laws which give summary remedies against the Ryot who may refuse to cultivate opium or salt for his masters, he has by his proclamations excited the indigo Ryot to rise against his planter creditor, to ruin his trade, and to destroy the security of his person.

How Mr. John Peter Grant has done this we shall proceed to tell in the following pages.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE INDIGO PLANTER.

As a general proposition there are no roads in India. It was the policy of the Civil Service, and of the masters of the Civil Service, to keep the land as impenetrable as possible, except to the gatherer of revenue.\*

The traveller who, upon elephant-back or horse-back, or carried by bearers, shall travel over the broad flats and wide-spread rice-fields of Bengal, will, from time to time, light upon a comfortable European built house, situated in a pleasant park or a carefully cultivated flower garden. All around it are swarthy villages, half hidden by their invariable belt of trees. There are Mussulmans and

\* The Colonization Committee, 1859, in their Report, say—"It has been truly said by one of the earliest witnesses examined, that one of the first wants of a settler is facility of access to the interior of the country. The Indian Government, however, held the country the greater part of a century before a main line of road was commenced even through the most populous parts of India. This is a neglect which even those witnesses who have been connected with the Government of India acknowledge and deplore. It was justly considered one of the principal causes of the want of a due supply of cotton from India by the Committee on Cotton Cultivation, presided over by Mr. Bright in 1848. The Grand Trunk Road was not begun before the days of Lord William Bentinck in 1836. It is stated that Mr. Halliday had complained in a Minute to Government of the wretched state of the roads near the seat of government itself. One witness asserts, that at a distance of forty miles from Calcutta there are no roads practicable for carts. It is stated by another witness recently there, that even now a road from Calcutta to Jessore is only just being made. 'Between Calcutta and Dacca,' says Mr. Underhill, 'the bridges are broken down, and the road is in perfect disrepair.' This was so late as the year 1854." We may add, that it is the same at this day.



Hindoos lying about languidly in the shade, and a few children driving bullocks over the plain, or passing to and fro up to the European house. If it be early spring, when the rice is not growing, there is no labour going on;\* perhaps a couple of Hindoos may be repairing a broken cart, but, generally speaking, the male population will be squat inside their mud and bamboo huts, or recumbent under the shadow of the trees, and you may advance unimpeded towards the house. That villa is the metropolis of the encircling villages. It is not like the abode of a Hill Rajah or even of a Bengal Zemindar, a half-fortified building with armed retainers about it: it is an open Eastern house, with its verandahs and broad windows, and unclosed doors,\* something much more unprotected than an English villa. As you approach it, you will probably see European children playing on the greensward, or riding on horses led by syces, watched by their mother from the verandah, and accompanied by native nurses.† There is a crowd issuing from the cut-

\* The Ryot never works more than three hours a day upon an average, and generally in the cool of the morning. The weeding of the indigo is chiefly done by the women and children, for it is done at a time when there is no other labour for them.

† Mr. Seton Karr corroborates our statement in his earlier writings. He says, in an article in the *Calcutta Review*, whereof he is the putative parent:—

“We leave it to such as have seen the ins and outs of the Mofussil to descant on the style of life led by a planter at the head of a large concern, with rights long established, and therefore secure, his generous hospitality, his frank and open deportment, his ready reception of the European traveller, his kindness to those Ryots who ask his aid or advice. But there is one feature in his present life on which we dwell with peculiar pleasure, and which we cannot pass over now. Isolated from his fellow-men, and surrounded by those of different colour and creed, the Indian of the “old school,” the Indian so easily satirized in by-gone novels and short-lived farces, was seldom without one of those wretched incumbrances which here and there still usurp the place of the wife. The practice once so common even in Calcutta and other

cherry, where the master of the house is sitting in a self-established court of arbitration, and later in the evening you may see a larger crowd of Bonooa women, to whom the European lady is giving advice and medicine, and tending the multiform maladies of their children. It is an Eastern patriarchal scene; but you are convinced, as you look upon it, how utterly impossible it must be for that European to live thus alone—one single English family among thousands of Asiatics—if he had not acquired a moral influence over the natives, and if his presence were not felt to be a benefit to the population.\* That any man should commit violence and rapine, and should live thus open and unprotected, with his domestic ties about him, is a self-evident absurdity which no man who has ever been in India can honestly assert, or can otherwise than dishonestly insinuate.

The sustenance of this house, and of all the comforts

large stations naturally ceased there, as soon as unmarried ladies began to "come out" from England, but lingered more tenaciously in out-districts and isolated factories. Its traces are now fainter and fainter; and the planter's home is often adorned by the presence of the pure English wife, and the amiable English daughter, with feelings and tastes as genuine as those of residents in the country at home, and wanting only in the bright glow of English health to make the parallel complete."—*Calcutta Review*, vol. ii. p. 217.

\* Mr. Walters, the magistrate of the city of Dacca, who has dwelt with especial severity upon a few instances of bad men in troubled times, some of which will always be found, in any body of men, in his return to the Governor-General's Circular of the 29th December, 1829, says—

"That some of the planters are held in much estimation by the natives; that they are constantly called upon to arbitrate disputes between relatives or neighbours; that they are the frequent dispensers of medicine to the sick, of advice to those in difficulty, of pecuniary aid to those in need, on the occasion of family events, which would otherwise involve them for life with native money-lenders; and that their never-failing acquiescence in the wants and wishes of their poor neighbours has thus tended, in some measure, to exalt the British name and character, I can vouch from my own knowledge of the fact."

that surround it, depend upon the vats and drying-house which lie contiguously to it, like the barns and beast-houses of an English homestead.

How did all this arise in such an out of the world spot?

It is all the work of one of that despised and hated pariah class of British settlers—that class which all the statesmen of India and of England seek to increase, and which the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, is now destroying.†

It is now many years since the present proprietor of

\* We are careful to advance nothing in this statement which cannot be proved by living testimony, or by state documents.

The Colonization Committee, 1839, in their Report, say—

"It is stated by witnesses generally, that 'wherever Europeans have settled, a marked improvement in the country has followed;' the various products of the land have been developed. Settlers have taken the lead in introducing steam navigation, and in discovering its indispensable auxiliaries, coal and iron; in the extension of roads, and in generally lowering the cost of production.

"It is justly observed by Mr. Marsham, that from their intercourse with the people, settlers must naturally 'know more what is passing in their minds' than the agents of the Government; the position of the settlers rendering them vigilant and interested observers of the tendency of native opinion.

"Where they reside, the rate of interest, often exorbitantly high, becomes reduced. The circulation of ready money is extended, and a steady rise takes place in the rate of wages.

"Another good effect of settlement is its tendency to promote the maintenance of order. A large extension of the number of settlers over India would be a considerable guarantee against any future insurrection, and would tend to lessen the necessity for maintaining our expensive army."

† When we speak of the hostility of the Civil Service, we mean, of course, that spirit of hostility which actuates the body, and which is manifested conspicuously and disastrously in the acts of the fanatics of the class. We shall see hereafter that many individuals of the caste do not resist the evidence of their senses; and, under Lieut.-Governors other than Mr. Grant, have dared to tell the truth. There is as much difference between civilians like Mr. Hawkins or Sir F. Halliday and Mr. J. P. Grant, as there is between an ordinary Brahmin and a Nana Sahib.

this house and factory, or his predecessor, came alone into this district, to employ his energy and his capital in the manufacture of indigo. He was not allowed to buy or lease land when he came there. There was a native Zemindar, or feudal land-owner, who held over the land and the Ryots the same sort of power of indefinite exaction which our old feudal lords held over their villeins. There was also a judge, who was perhaps, in those days of corruption, in the Zemindar's pay. The new settler wanted to buy indigo—that is to have an immediate necessity for a perishable article. In a hundred days the crop of indigo is grown, and cut, and manufactured. When once ripe, it must be cut; when once cut, it must be carried straight to the vat. It will not keep,—“*Le vin est tiré il faut le boire.*”

How was he to get the natives to procure him the vegetable he had come so far and spent so much to obtain in order to manufacture into dye? He soon found that the whole system of the country was to pay beforehand. The little farmers (Ryots) were, in effect, paupers. They had no capital. They could not afford to buy the seed, nor to subsist till the indigo would grow. All their rice crops were mortgaged over and over again to the native money-lender, who had made them advances at from 60 to 100 per cent. interest upon them.

This is the case all over India. Industry insists upon mortgaging itself to capital. Every artificer works upon advances, and these advances, when made by the native usurers, is never at less than 60 per cent.

Our new settler bowed to the custom of the country, called his neighbours together, and offered them advances “*without interest*,” to give him indigo next season at a stipulated price. The money was taken eagerly. It

was also necessary to supply seed, and the seed was added at a nominal charge. Perhaps the Ryot was honest, and sowed, perhaps he did not; but we will assume that he did.

At the proper season the vats were ready, and the indigo was ripe for cutting. But now began the planter's difficulty. When he went to cut and carry his indigo there were other claimants on the ground. The Zemindar wished to claim it for some feudal service, or under some pretence of landlord's dues. Perhaps the cunning Ryot—a very common occurrence—had taken advances and seed for the same piece of land from some other planter in the neighbourhood. What was to be done? There was law to be had. The planter might sue the Zemindar before the Zemindar's debtor, the judge, or he might sue the Ryot, and give occasion to some civilian to insult him, and to his police to victimize him. If he fell in with an independent and impartial judge he might even get a judgment in his favour. In the "Robert Watson and Co.'s Factories" there are, at this moment, 36,000 contracts for indigo, upon which advances have been made, the bulk of which vary from ten to twenty rupees. A pretty mass for the lengthy and technical operation of the old Company's courts, and a pretty harvest in the shape of stamp duties! Of course, recourse to law to recover advances, or enforce contracts, was never seriously thought of. But he had 20,000 of these contracts, and perhaps at least 5000 disputed cases. Even if he got a judgment it would be after fifteen months litigation, and in twenty-four hours the article in dispute would be perished. What did he do? He did what men at all times have done when the law afforded them no protec-

tion. He seized his right with a strong arm.\* The planter and the Zemindar fought it out over the indigo patch. In those days there were men, called bludgeon men (lattials), maintained by the Zemindars to fight their quarrels. It was a profession which the planter found established, and again he fell into the habit of the country.

This is the plain truth concerning a scandal of other days, which existed about the same time as corruption existed in the Civil Service. A planter would now be ashamed to speak of *general* corruption in connection with the Civil Service, but Mr. Grant, with that exquisite taste for which he is so remarkable, does not fail to draw a sneer against the planters from those old lattial stories in his last Minute.

But if it were, even at the present day, as rife as it has been proved to be unknown—as rife as corruption and extortion at this moment confessedly are among the Government Police—whose fault would it be? Whose but that of the Government, which, by renouncing the first duties of government, that of protecting property, had remitted their Mofussil subjects to their natural rights?

Be it remembered, however, that with all these disputes the Ryot had nothing whatever to do. The fight

\* The natives have two well known phrases for “doing oneself right by the strong arm” and “doing wrong by the strong arm.” It is impossible to eradicate from the mind of the Bengali that the first is his indefeasible right, and we must always take this into consideration when we are judging of any rural conflict in India. All this is very graphically told by Mr. Seton Karr, in the article in the “Calcutta Review” for 1847, already cited; and wherein the young civilian’s prejudices against the civil outlaw seem to contend against the young Englishman’s sympathy with his own energetic and enterprising countryman. But Mr. Seton Karr had not then fallen into the jog-trot of office. In those days he had not learned to look for truth only through the refracting medium of the Civil Service.

was between Zemindars—native lords of manors—and Planters. The Ryot had his advances and his price, and grew his indigo: the contest was, who should have the plant when grown.

The Ryot had his grievances no doubt, as all people have their grievances under a bad Government. Just as the judge had and has, as he himself will be the first to confess and deplore—a corrupt set of officers (Omlah), who took bribes, and did with the ignorant judge as they listed; just as the police exacted black mail from native cultivators and European settlers alike; so the planter had his servants who cheated the Ryot, or cheated the planter, according to the capacity or willingness of the Ryot to make it worth their while to do so. But this is, and has been, the normal condition of India under the Company's system, and there is nothing exceptional in the matter.

It was under these discouragements that the factory we have been examining rose; when the factor was the competitor of the Zemindar, the victim of the civilian, and a prey to the police. But time passed on, and, by the aid of the interference of the English nation, he was at last empowered to lease the rights of the Zemindar, to purchase and to hold land, to have legal rights, to buy the Zemindar out, to take leases of manors, to stand in the Zemindar's place. From that moment he became a more dangerous victim and a more difficult prey.

To understand this change, we must shortly recapitulate a few general facts.

The East India Company had the exclusive monopoly of the trade with India until 1814, notwithstanding many efforts to open the trade previous to that year.

The people of England were, in the ignorance which then prevailed, strangely persuaded by the Company, that if the trade to India were thrown open the price of goods in India would be so much enhanced by the competition of different traders, and their price in England would be so much diminished, that the freedom of the trade would end in the ruin of all who might adventure in it.

The rule of the Company was never very satisfactory to the British nation. Lord Cornwallis said, in 1789, that one-third of the Company's territory was a jungle for wild beasts. It was owing to this dissatisfaction that Mr. Fox brought forward his celebrated India Bill, which was lost. This failure was followed by the Bill of Mr. Pitt, which was carried, creating the Board of Control, but continuing the superintendence of all commercial matters, as formerly, in the hands of the Directors. The Company's Charter was prolonged until 1st March, 1814.

In Mr. Pitt's Act a kind of opening of the trade was made for private individuals, or "free merchants," who were allowed to export and import certain goods *in the Company's ships*, for carrying on which the Company were bound to provide 3000 tons annually, at a fixed scale per ton.

Few availed themselves of the privilege, exposed as they were to the ruinous competition of the Company, whose great object ever was—as we have already seen in their official correspondence—to keep the "interloper" out of India.

The Company's enemies did not increase to any extent. In 1807-8 the private imports into India, by private hands, were only £300,000.

The people of England at last moved with some



vigour, previous to the expiry of the Charter in 1814, to put an end to the trade monopoly; and they succeeded as regarded the trade with India, but the monopoly was continued as regarded the trade with China.

The chief conditions of the opening of the trade to India were that private individuals should confine themselves to the Presidencies of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, and Penang, in vessels of a certain tonnage, and that they were to be excluded from the ordinary trade, and the trade with China.

Thus emancipated, the private traders were not long in gaining the ascendancy: they, in a very few years, trebled the trade which the East India Company declared could not be extended, although, both in exports and imports, they were constantly subjected to heavy losses from the fitful competition and commercial speculations of the Company, who had Residents in all the principal towns, with a large staff of servants intended for coercive measures, when any interloper's interest clashed with the operations of the Company. Lord Wellesley then wrote "that the intimation of a wish from the Company's Resident is always received as a command by the native manufacturers and producers." And this holds true in India to this very day; and in such a case the unfortunate interloper must still go to the wall. It is now only on questions of official jealousy, or in the acquisition of land, that these parties can clash, for the Government is no longer a trader, and except in the unpopular, we may say hated, monopolies of opium and salt, it is no longer a manufacturer.

The capricious dealings of the old Company in commercial matters, after it had become exposed to competition, shewed heavy losses. When the Charter came to

be renewed, in 1833, Parliament had therefore no hesitation in depriving the Company of its commercial character altogether, and in confining its government, for the future, to the territorial and political management of the country.

The new Charter extended to 1854, and, under it, any natural-born subject of England was entitled to proceed by sea to any port or place within the limit of the Company's Charter, having a custom-house establishment, and to reside thereat, or pass through any part of the Company's territories, to reside thereat.

Thus was the interloper gradually, and to a certain extent, emancipated.

We have already abundantly shewn that the Civil Service have as a body never ceased to throw every impediment in the way of settlers in the country. They latterly had not the same power of interference and annoyance to the interlopers who carried on commercial pursuits in the towns, but they had, and have, this power in the case of all Europeans who settle in the interior for the purpose of indigo planting. Indigo was the only agricultural produce in which European capital was embarked anterior to 1834, when the monopoly of the Company ceased, and when their silk filatures were sold, and their factories put up for sale.

*In all these downward steps of the East India Company the British settler bore his part; ever crying aloud in England against the cruelty, rapacity, and oppression of the Company's rule; helping the agitators in England, and verifying the notion of Mr. Hawkins and the Civil Service generally, that the Planter was "an obstreperous gentleman."*

The European settlers were not satisfied with a mere

theoretical victory. Day by day they became more active, more successful, and more hateful. They gained strength and independence as they increased at the Presidency towns and in the interior, and they necessarily became more obnoxious to the Civil Service, who found that the objects of their previous contempt had been the destroyers of their undivided supremacy. The "interlopers" were the first to move for the abolition of the Company in 1857, when the mutiny broke out. It was the interlopers who made so notorious in England the incompetency of the administration of the Company. The part taken by the indigo planters, and the other interlopers, in the agitation which resulted in the abolition of the Company, is still remembered. It certainly never will be forgiven by the old Directors of the defunct Company, or by the Civil Service, who, since then, have looked upon their exclusive privileges as doomed, and their dynasty as passing away. The bitter feud between them and the interloper is now, when public opinion runs against public castes, carefully disguised in words; and we gladly acknowledge that there are numerous instances of large minded men in that service who have overcome all their class prejudices and have opened their eyes to see the true interests of the country in which their lot has been thrown. But the old feud is burnt in upon the souls of fanatical civilians, such as Mr. Grant, and has become a yearning for a great revenge.

Such has been the progress of the owner of the house which we some pages back attempted to picture to the English reader. Thirty or forty years ago, when he first set foot in the country, he was nothing more than a Civil outlaw, seeking a spot whereon to fix an almost illicit manufacture.\* He bought a *potta* of 100 beegahs (33

acres), and built a factory, with vats, godowns, and machinery. But he could not buy it or hold it in his own name: he was an uncovenanted Englishman, and therefore *civiliter exlex*. It was bought in the name of his native agent. The world was all against him: the Ryot was his only friend. How different is his position now! Allied with the Ryot, the European outlaw has been victorious. He has established his factory, he has bought out the Zemindar, he has become a rival consequence and in influence to the Civil servant. By his own energy and perseverance, and by the support of the people of England, he has done this.

But the Indigo planter is become more than a planter. He is become a great landowner and a great reclainer of the wastes. In 1829 there was a vehement contest between Lord William Bentinck and Sir C. Metcalfe, and the Directors of the Company, upon the question whether the planter should be allowed to hold land. We should much like to quote those state papers, but unhappily this, like all other Indian subjects, is too vast for the patience of the English public. The arguments used by the statesmen, and the quérulous, and sometimes insolent replies of the Directors, are all extant in the volume to which we have already so often referred. It ended, however, in public opinion at home coming in to aid the Governor-General; and the planter was, in 1833, permitted to take the lands in his own name. v

From that time forward the planter changed his character altogether. He was no longer only a planter: he was the lord of the manor, the landowner of the district. He either held direct from the Government, or rented of the native lord, the Zemindar, all his rents and feudal rights. In the latter case he paid the Zemindar much

more than the current value, and he never enforced, or even asked for, those little feudal exactions upon marriages, births, deaths, and changes of occupancy, and other items, which amounted to a considerable sum in an aggregate of several thousand holdings.\* He made his

\* Again we cite the testimony of Mr. Seton Karr, when he had not to draw a damnatory Indigo Report. He then wrote, when indigo abuses were only just dying out:—

“Nowhere has the contrast between European energy and Asiatic torpor been so signally displayed. Year after year the Zemindar, following obsequiously in the path of his ancestors, had seen the same patch of jungle growing up, which at best could only furnish materials for mats, or a cottage thatch. In some cases he had looked on where Nature had even advanced and cultivation receded from her empire; but when the native gazed in apathy, the new settler began to clear away. We could mention numerous instances where the rule of the planter has been attended with the extension of agriculture, and consequent benefit to the Ryot; but one example will suffice, as it illustrates most clearly the difference between the Oriental and British character. A ravine, or rather the bend of a river, had in process of time been filled up by a yearly alluvial deposit, and as new and fertile land was immediately claimed by two old belligerents. After the usual amount of disputes the quarrel was terminated by the authorities: a boundary line was drawn exactly down the middle of the old bed of the river, and an equal half thus secured to both. But now came the difference in the use made of the acquisition. The Zemindar had been as anxious in the pursuit of his object as the most ardent European: he had contested every point, and given up nothing, even to the last. But he had no intention of deriving benefit himself, or allowing others to derive any from what it had cost him so much to gain. Months and months the land lay fallow, and the increasing jungle sprung up. But the planter, in the course of two years, had nearly the whole in cultivation, and when we last visited the place it was already sprouting with the promise of an excellent crop. It seemed as if the boundary-line drawn by the Deputy-Collector had realized the old story of the knife, which on one side was impregnated with poison and withered all it touched, on the other bestowed healing juices and the vigorous sap of life.”—*Calcutta Review*, vol. vii. p. 27.

“The leaseholder, or the ‘*putnidar*,’ forbears to put in force the power derived by him to measure and assess the lands of the Ryots to the full amount legally permissible; and he also never calls on the Ryots for those various payments which some of the native Zemindars, on some one pretext or other, constantly demand from the tenants on births, marriages, religious festivals, and similar events, or on pressing necessities. Mr. J. P. Wise asserted his belief that he could double the rent

profit, however, by clearing the jungle, and bringing whole plains of wilderness into cultivation. A certain portion, perhaps one-twentieth of the whole, he kept for indigo cultivation, or let upon that condition; the rest he let to the natives upon moderate rents. In all probability the factory town which we have described was, twenty-five years ago, upon the edge of a wild-beast covert. It is a matter of universal notoriety among the dwellers in the present district of Nudde~~o~~ or Kishnaghur, that, twenty-five years ago, one-third of that great indigo district was jungle. The chief factory-house in another district is even now called by a name which indicates the abundance of wild beasts in the neighbourhood, being formed from the Bengali word "to hunt."\*

The planter is now just in the position of a lessee of church lands in England, except that the Zemindar is very generally engaged in intriguing among the Ryots, and using his hereditary influence among them to thwart his European lessor, generally with one object—to extort a bribe. He is often successful, for he knows very well that indigo is the planter's weak point, and that there are a hundred days in every year when the planter is at every one's mercy; when Lieutenant-Governor, Zemindar, Civil servant, and policeman, must all be propitiated in their own different ways; and when a cessation of labour for twenty-four hours is ruin.

We have already quoted the opinion of Lord William Bentinck, after inquiry made, as to the manner in which

of his Ryots; and Mr. Forlong said that he allowed the Ryots to sit at as easy a rate as possible. Mr. Larmour, in Mulnath alone, has released 17,000 beegahs of land, held rent free, on the production by the holder of certain papers, called the toidad, endorsed by the collector of revenue."—*Report of the Indigo Committee*, 1860, par 17.

\* This factory is in Rajshahye, and called "Shikarpore."

the planter, even in his day, used the influence his position gave him. We have also quoted the unwilling testimony of Mr. Walters, the magistrate of Dacca, to the fact that the planters are held in much estimation by the natives, are called upon to arbitrate disputes, are dispensers of medicine to the sick, are advisers of those in difficulty, advance money to those in need on the occasion of family events which would otherwise involve them for life with native money-lenders, and are constantly attending to the wants and wishes of their poor neighbours. The same facts are grudgingly admitted even by this Indigo Commission. In fact, every inquiry made, by either friend or enemy, has eventuated in the same admission, that the planter in his district performs the same offices in his neighbourhood that an English landed proprietor does upon his estate. "No thanks to him," say men like Mr. J. P. Grant. "It is to his interest to do so: if he did not, he would not get his indigo." This is true: the law gives him no protection. What would an English landlord or contractor think if he was told that the law was open to him for breaches of contract, and found that this "law" consisted of a right to file 36,000 Bills in Chancery against 36,000 cottagers who had been incited by the executive authorities of the country to violate their contracts and to strike work? It is true, as the white Brahmin caste insists, that benevolence is the planter's interest. But how complete an answer is this to all other general charges? and what can savour more of the age of gold in these degenerate days than that a trade should flourish upon moral influence alone, and that it should be made a charge against the trader that he works up this moral influence by means of acts of benevolence?

We should like to see Mr. J. P. Grant left to "moral

influence" to manufacture his opium, or to work his salt monopoly. We would look indulgently upon his doing so by any acts of benevolence which his policy might dictate.

And yet Mr. Grant, as a man of the world, wonders that while the majority of the planter class act thus, there sometimes occurs the exception of a foolish planter, who, in the absence of law, will right himself by force, rather than by what was, before Mr. Grant came upon the scene, the far more effectual and more common means of acts of good neighbourship !

Before we proceed to notice the business arrangements between the planters and the Ryots, it will be well to say a few words upon the value and quantity of the indigo produced in India.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE INDIGO PRODUCE OF INDIA.

LET us now contemplate for a moment the quantity and value of the produce which factories like those we have been examining turn out annually.

Indigo planting in Bengal is an old child of the Company. Before the renewal of the Charter, in 1834, the private adventurer, in his eagerness to take shelter in the shadow of some potent civilian, associated himself with some fortunate mortal who was covenanted to the Company. The civilian lent money to the planter, either at interest or on condition of his having a certain share in the profits. At one time civilians openly carried on factories in their own names. Being the official of the district they carried every thing their own way with the Ryots.

This explains why the production of indigo in Bengal has so greatly varied from time to time. The capricious operations of the Company when they came into the Calcutta market as buyers in competition with private traders ran up prices so high on several occasions, that the planters were induced to extend their cultivation, forgetting that the article was one of limited demand or consumption, and that, when the supply exceeded what is called the effectual demand, lower prices must be the consequence, according to the laws of trade.

The production of indigo in Bengal (including Tirhoot and the North-West indigo districts), in 1819, 1820, and

1822, was on an average about 70,000 maunds (of 72 lbs.), and in 1826 the production rose to 144,000 maunds, which was the largest crop during the period of the existence of the Company's commercial monopoly. In the following year, 1827, the crop in Bengal was only 90,000 maunds. The largest crops of indigo ever known were in 1843 and 1844, when Bengal produced 165,000, and 172,050 maunds. In 1846 the crop was 90,000 maunds, and for the last five years the average crop may be taken at 105,000 maunds.

Madras, which in former years produced little or no indigo, has been exporting largely of the dye of late years, its annual exports being now, on an average of the last five years, say 28,000 maunds.

Taking the average exports

From Bengal at . . .	105,000 maunds.
And from Madras . . .	28,000 „
<hr/>	
The total exports were . .	133,000 „

They send a few maunds of coarse indigo from Bombay not worth taking into calculation.

So much for quantity. Now for value.

The prices of indigo have been very fluctuating in the markets of India and Europe. Not many years ago fine Bengal indigo sold as low as 140 and 150 rupees per maund, the same quality of indigo which has been selling in Calcutta, for the last two or three years, at 220 to 240 rupees per maund; and this year fine Bengal indigo may realize about the former figure. There are many circumstances to affect prices up or down; the quantity produced yearly; the consumption and stock in the markets to which the article is exported; and the condition of trade

and the money market, as well as the aspect from time to time of European politics.

The price in England in 1826 was 12s, and in 1827 13s per pound for fine Bengal indigo.

In 1846 it fell to 5s 6d, and in 1848 and 1849 was 5s 9d per pound.

Since 1852 prices have gradually risen. In 1858 fine indigo fetched as high as 9s 6d per pound. But the same quality may now be had at 7s 6d to 8s per pound.

The value of the block of the indigo concerns in Bengal, or the price at which they stand in the books of the planters or proprietors, is estimated, as we have already seen, at seven or eight millions sterling.

The annual outlay for the cultivation of indigo in Bengal varies from one-and-half to two millions, *all of which is circulated in the indigo districts.*

In the Indigo Commission Report it is stated that the value of the block belonging to Messrs. I. and R. Watson and the Bengal Indigo Company is £500,000, or half-a-million sterling.

In further proof of the value of this manufacture to the district where it exists, we find it stated, in the same Report, that *in one district* the money annually expended on indigo cultivation is £60,000, in excess of the total land rent which the same district yields annually to Government: and this, let it be remembered, is only one of the articles\* produced from the soil, from an area, as the Report states, not exceeding *one-sixteenth to one-twentieth* of the average cultivation of every Ryot in the district; the rest of his land, to the extent of fifteen-sixteenths or nineteen-twentieths, being under other crops, and he has the use of the indigo lands, unless he keeps them for indigo-seed, after the plant is cut in June and July.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE PLANTER AND THE RYOTS.

WITHIN two years of the present date, nothing in India was so comfortable as the relations between an indigo-planter and his Ryots. In India, where nothing is true and every thing is in dispute, it is wonderful how this fact stands out conspicuous in the midst of every inquiry, and emerges from every report. We do not mean to say that this course of true love was without any ripple. Just as every native, and even every Civil servant, has for many years been complaining that the Company's judge is surrounded by an "omlah," or set of subordinate officers, who cheat and extort and environ the most well-intentioned civilian with an impenetrable fortification of corrupt underlings—making the judicature of India one atmosphere of perjury and bribery—so the planter is obliged to have his "omlah," who make the most of their opportunities. Just as the "omlah" of the Government collectors in the Presidency of Madras have been proved to have committed acts of torture, so the native collectors of the planter may sometimes have been guilty, not of any such acts as these—God forbid! but of acts of fraud and violence to obtain what was their master's right. The planter cannot pretend to be free from a vice of Indian society from which the Governor-General himself can claim no immunity. The native servants of the factory *will* take bribes. They will for a bribe measure out land for indigo which is useless for that or for any other pur-

pose, and they will, in revenge for not receiving a bribe, measure out the land most disadvantageous to the Ryot to part with, and most disadvantageous to the planter to receive. They will for a bribe put the measuring-cord round the expanded heads of the Indigo bundles, or, in revenge for not receiving a bribe, round the waists of the bundles. They will, when it is possible, note down some of the bundles of the man who has not bribed them to the score of another man who has. They will favour all sorts of tricks against their employer, or they will invent frauds which do not exist. The planter is an energetic, active man, aware of all these dangers, and always on the watch for them, and he has usually an European assistant as watchful as himself: yet they will occur,—not constantly and habitually as they do in the Court of the trusting and uninformed civilian, but they will sometimes occur.

Allowing, however, as men of common sense will always allow, for the surrounding circumstances, the relation between the planter and the Ryots was the most satisfactory of any relation between Europeans and natives in India.

After the close of the manufacturing season the planter's object is to make sure of his indigo. He is surrounded by swarms of little farmers with their small "jummas"—a sort of copyholds or customary freeholds—of from five to fifty acres, who have come to settle accounts and to take fresh advances for the ensuing season. Thousands are ready to take the money. Perhaps, as the report of Mr. Grant's secretary, sitting as president of the Indigo Commissioners, 1860, admits, "it is a season of the year when the Ryot is in want of money for rent and for the annual festival of Doorga. Advances are in some instances willingly and even greedily accepted.

Some men are in debt; others want to spend money, and all like money without interest.\* Some, also, are doubtless in debt to the factory. It is a debt they never intend to pay; but it will happen in India, as in other places, that a debt occasions a certain state of obligation, and, as the planter is well aware that it is useless to ask for his debt, and equally useless to expect his indigo without advancing the usual money and seed, the debtor agrees for a certain quantity of indigo, and goes and enjoys himself at his Doorga feast; † acting pretty much, as Macaulay says the second Pitt acted when, being in debt to his coachmaker, he ordered another carriage.

How much better it would be if there were no feast of Doorga, and if the Ryots wanted no advances, and if the Ryots would grow the indigo, and then at the proper time offer it to the competing planters. So say certain intensely wise men, simpletons of the first order, who are half inclined to think with Alfonso the Wise—that conceited blasphemer, who remarked that it was rather a pity he had not been present at the creation; for that he might have given a hint or two which would have prevented many incongruities. Mr. Grant is also quite of opinion that the Ryot and the planter are very wrong, and that the Ryot ought to grow and sell, and get the full market price for his produce.‡ Among the barren

\* Report, par. 57.

† "On all domestic occurrences, births, deaths and marriages, a native is put to a great expense, and cannot get on without the aid of a banker—and this from the Rajah to the lowest peasant. And they prefer dealing with the indigo manufacturer, who charges no interest, to any other person.

‡ "If the planter had paid, in cash, such a price for indigo-plant as would have made it more profitable to the Ryot to grow that crop than any other, abstaining also from all molestation of the Ryot by himself, or his servants, no one pretends that the planter would not have got, year after year, as much indigo-plant as he could pay for."—*Mr. Grant's Minute upon the Indigo Planter's petition against him.*