in-Chief of India, had been members, nominated as new Member for Military Supply, who was to deal in future with supply, contracts, military works, Remounts, and other departmental services, General Barrow, a very able officer, then commanding at Peshawar. The Secretary of State and the Cabinet at home, however, did not think that an officer occupying a high, and likely to occupy a higher, combatant command was likely to inaugurate the new system with an open mind, especially one who, from the appointment he had previously held in the Military Department, would naturally have a leaning towards one view of the controversial position which had been created. Lord Curzon insisted that he must have a colleague capable of giving advice to the Governor-General in Council on questions of general military policy, and it was evident he meant fully to avail himself of such advice. In short, he desired the new Member of Military Supply to be as much as possible like the old Military Member. The Government at home had another object in view and wanted to make the new policy as effectual as possible, and the situation in India resolved itself into a struggle between the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief—Lord Curzon having explicitly said in his telegram of 10th August 1905 that, "if the view of the Commander-in-Chief is to prevail it is useless for me to remain in India since I could not frame a scheme in accordance with it." In another telegram he truly said "that the question was not one of choice of an individual, but of principles underlying future change in the administration." There was only one issue. The Viceroy resigned, and at his request the telegraphic correspondence was published, to the surprise and regret of those who realised the effect it would

inevitably have upon the public mind in India. Into the technical questions at issue it is difficult for others than experts to probe. Lord Roberts had found the existing system cumbrous, dilatory, and complicated. Sir George White and Sir William Lockhart found the difficulties very great. Yet the Military Member had tended every year to become more of an expert adviser than a civil administrator, more and more a rival of the Commander-in-Chief, to whom he gave authoritatively independent opinions on purely military questions, and conveyed adverse decisions even without reference to the Governor-General in Council. Lord Kitchener's attitude met with the approval of professional opinion, and it remains to see how the new system works. It certainly was not rashly or lightly undertaken, and the Committee which reported to the India Office was one of unusual strength and ability, including the then Secretary of State, now Lord Middleton, Lords Roberts and Salisbury, Field-Marshal Sir George White, Sir James Mackay, Sir Edward Law, and General Sir John Gordon. At the same time it must be owned that opinion in India inclined to support Lord Curzon and the dissenting Members of Council. The one thing certain is that in the eyes of all India the Viceroy, hitherto regarded as the outward and visible expression of supreme power, engaged in an administrative battle with the Commander-in-Chief, and was beaten. It is not likely that the disaffected and agitator elements in the community failed to draw the obvious moral, and to regard the head of the Indian adminstration as a mere mortal after all. Mr Morley, who took office soon after Lord Minto became Viceroy, had to deal with the draft rules of business proposed by the Government of

India, in connection with which many of the largest questions of military organisation were, or could have been, raised, anew, or again. In a published despatch, the tactful and skilful character of which met with general approval, he amended the draft rules so as to provide that all matters before they reached the Commander-in-Chief, or member in charge of the Army Department, should pass through the Secretary to the Government of India in the Army Department. He went far to neutralise the serious effect upon India of this struggle and of its result, by safeguarding the fundamental principle that the Government of India in all its branches, aspects, and divisions, subject to the statutory powers of the Secretary of State, has been solemnly and deliberately confided by Parliament to the Governor-General in Council. That is to say that the army was no exception in this behalf.

Space will not allow of any detailed history of the army of India under the East India Company, of the armies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, and of the present unified Indian army. The first began with the enrolment of sepoys in 1748 in Madras by Major Stringer Lawrence, in order to enable us to fight the French, who in 1748 had captured the southern capital. Each Presidency army was originally separate and distinct, and it was the military genius of Robert Clive which made the native troops into good soldiers, and enlisted all the likely material which came to hand. The extension of the Company's rule after Plassey was accompanied by corresponding development in the military forces. In 1764 the Bengal sepoys mutinied for higher pay, and in 1768 the European officers conspired because camp allowances in cantonment were stopped. The armies

of native princes at this period were of huge dimensions, of little cohesion, and of less training. The Mahratta forces, which enjoyed great mobility and powers of endurance, were, however, organised by Sivaji into formidable foes, but even they were hardly professional soldiers, like the Sikhs, who, after the dissolution of their army, returned to the plough but have ever since supplied us with soldiers, than whom there are no better, serving any Power. The Presidency armies, after frequent trials of strength with loosely organised native levies, were themselves reorganised in 1796, after which, and in 1805, further vast territories were annexed, so that after the third Mahratta War the three Presidencial armies consisted of 24,500 British, and 130,000 native troops. Then in 1806 occurred the mutiny at Vellore, and afterwards Madras European officers in turn conspired for higher pay.

In 1824 there was another reorganisation, and in 1846 local corps, such as the Corps of Guides, and the Punjaub Irregular Forces, were enrolled for duty on the frontier. On the eve of the Mutiny, the army consisted of 39,500 British and 311,000 native troops, the latter out-numbering the former by nearly eight to one. During the great crisis the Punjaub frontier force, the Hyderabad contingent, and the Madras and Bombay armies remained loyal, and it is believed that dislike of the mutinous Bengal army, which finds an echo in the distrust with which the natives of other provinces regard Bengali pretensions at the present day, was at least one of the factors making for loyalty elsewhere. It is the opinion of an able writer in the Imperial Gazetteer of India, General Sir Edwin Collen, that among the causes of the Mutiny were measures political, domestic, and

military, which were carried out to satisfy the craving for improvement according to Western ideals, and if this were so in 1857, it is certainly not less so half-a-century later, when the outcry of a few denationalised extremists is accepted far too readily in many quarters as the voice of India. Not a fluent Bengali, who has broken with all the ideals and habits of his own country, and is regarded by the Hindoo masses with dislike and suspicion, but will prate about representative government, improvement and progress to willing, and easily deluded, ears in this country. Of course the annexation of Oudh was a great predisposing cause, and then again the Government of India proceeded upon the assumption that an administration which violated the received ideals of Western government must necessarily have been odious to the native population. There is very little proof, however, that this was the case, and it is quite certain that some of the very features of our rule of which we are most proud are those which are particularly unpopular with the natives. Brahmins thought they saw signs of the destruction of their influence in the suppression of suttee, and the legal remarriage granted to Hindoo widows, and of course the substance used for lubricating the cartridges was made of animal fat. It is a singular circumstance that, in spite of this, cotton goods for India continue to be sized with some such substance, though it is believed that a vegetable substitute might easily be devised. Last year a Bengali agitator addressed a meeting at Assansole saying that sugar was refined with pigs' and cows' blood. It is also notorious that British officers in India are less in touch with the natives than they were formerly. Many indeed are wholly dependent upon interpreters who fasten like

leeches upon men in authority and carefully keep all information from their ears, and this is true not merely of such travellers as are only too willing to believe evil of their fellow-countrymen, but even of well-disposed and moderate men who are like clay in the hands of the potter, when they fall into the clutches of astute and intriguing Babus, with axes to grind. Meanwhile, so little does the native of the country agree with the said Babu, that he would exclaim with the old Pindari:

> "I had rather be robbed by a tall man who showed me a yard of steel,
> Than fleeced by a sneaking babu with a belted knave at his heel."

One predisposing course towards the Mutiny in the opinion of good soldiers was the diminution in authority of the commanding officers, another was the all-pervading and all-powerful influence of the Brahmins in the Bengal army. Yet at the present moment an agitation is proceeding in India which is entirely caused by, and restricted to, Brahmins, and other high castes in sympathy with them, who even now have an immense and preponderating influence in the government of the country but would fain be rid of the impartial supervision of British officers, who refuse to let them plant their heels upon the necks of the lower castes and classes. Again, disaster in Afghanistan had broken the charm of invincibility, which had previously attached to our arms, just as at the present moment the pricking by Japan of the Russian bubble, which we had always shown an obvious reluctance to try to prick, has undoubtedly impaired the belief of the East in the natural and inevitable superiority of Western over Eastern arms, and just before the

Mutiny stories were in circulation in India about our difficulties in the Crimea, which had their counterpart quite recently in the alarmist rumours regarding our position in South Africa, nor was the existence of secret agents conspiring against the Government and endeavouring to debauch the Sepoys, wanting then, nor is it lacking at the present day. Nothing indeed was necessary to cause the unrest, which is now happily subsiding, to break out into overt acts of hostility but weakness and vacillation in high places, of which fortunately there has been none. Mr Morley has said that patience and firmness are the watchwords of the present situation, and he has shown himself not only able to formulate the right policy, but to carry it into effect. Fortunately, there is no doubt at all about the loyalty of the Sepoys at the present moment. Indeed, they treated the overtures of the agitators with the utmost contempt. None the less has the situation recently been one which cannot but inspire with grave misgivings those who are familiar with Indian conditions, and all must unite in thanking heaven that the crisis found a statesman at the helm. After the Mutiny, the European army of the East India Company was transferred to the Crown, and a Royal Commission advised that the European forces should be 80,000 strong and that the Indian troops should not exceed them by more than two to one in Bengal, and three to one in Madras and Bombay, recommendations which were adopted, and remain in force to the present day. The British troops serving in India are lent to, and paid for by, the Indian Government, from which a capitation grant of £7, 10s. has been levied since 1890. This represents the cost of enlisting and training the recruit, and certain other charges, but Sir Henry

Brackenbury and four other members of the Indian Expenditure Commission thought that no charge should be made on this account. Differences of opinion between the Home and Indian Governments regarding allocation of the charges have frequently been, and still are, under consideration. In 1893, Parliament passed an Act abolishing the offices of Commander-in-Chief in the Madras and Bombay armies, and withdrawing the power of military control from the governments of these Presidencies. Before this measure was carried out the Bengal army had become unwieldy, which was bad, and tended to become homogeneous, which was worse, and it was decided to divide India into the four territorial commands of the Punjaub, Bengal, Madras and Bombay, each under a lieutenant-general. It was subsequent to this date, in 1899-1900, that India despatched the force which saved Natal, the British infantry having been armed with the Lee-Metford rifle in the previous year. Since 1903, the army, consisting of five commands since the separation of Burma from Madras, is made up of 74,170 British and 157,941, native troops, and this brings the narrative down to the time of Lord Kitchener, who, besides initiating the important administrative changes, of which a full account has been given above, has also commenced to introduce a new scheme of military organisation, the leading features of which are recognition of the fact that the chief function of the army is the defence of the north-west frontier, and that the forces in time of peace should be organised and trained in units of command similar to those in which they will take the field in time of war. In pursuance of this policy, many small military stations are being abandoned and troops concentrated in large cantonments

in three Army Corps of ten Divisional Commands, each of which will supply a full division to take the field. Regiments are organised on the "class," or on the "class squadron," or "class company" system. The Gurkha regiments, for instance, are all Gurkhas, and in some cases four companies of a regiment may be Sikhs and four Mahomedans, and so on. Enlistment is for general service within or without British territory, and, if necessary, beyond the sea. The volunteers in India are now 34,000 strong, including reservists, and they may yet do, as they have done in the past, good work at critical times. Some of the native states maintain armies in addition to Imperial service troops, but though these levies number 93,000 men in all, they are not a very formidable force. Nepaul has an army of 45,000 men, and could raise many more if needed, while the standing army of Afghanistan numbers from 65,000 to 70,000 regular troops, organised more or less like those of the British Government, and 20,000 irregulars. All these troops are well armed, and every Afghan is a first-rate fighting man.

The above brief excursus upon the army arose out of the differences which occurred during Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty, and in like manner it would be difficult to appreciate the action taken by the Government of the same Viceroy, during his term of office, which extended to nearly twice that of the average holder, without briefly reviewing a few of the more salient events in the history of education. Under the old Hindoo system, advanced instruction was strictly confined to the upper castes, and under the Mahomedans education was inseparably connected with mosques and shrines. Early in the

last century a knowledge of English became a marketable acquirement, and missionaries and philanthropists at home and in India brought pressure to bear on the Government in favour of popular education. Two parties arose—the Anglicists and the Orientalists; the former contending that the knowledge and science of the Western world should be conveyed to the natives by the medium of English, and the Orientalists desiring that vernacular education should be supplemented by the study of the classical languages of the East. The Anglicists carried the day, led by Lord Macaulay, whose famous minute, which has been so frequently eulogised, in which seas of treacle and butter and kings thirty feet high are held up to ridicule, is really a very shallow piece of writing and reasoning. It would be equally easy to ridicule the beautiful mythology of the Greeks, whose influence upon the development of civilisation has been unequalled, and it is very unlikely that Macaulay had read the literature he professed to despise. The consequences of the decision at which the Government arrived have been, and will be still more, momentous, for it may be regarded as certain that Orientalism will never again have strength enough to raise its head. In 1854 Sir Charles Wood (Lord Halifax) directed the constitution in each province of Departments of Public Instruction, the creation of universities at Presidency towns, the establishment of training colleges, the multiplication of vernacular schools for elementary education, and the introduction of a system of grants in aid to schools maintained by private bodies or persons, English being prescribed as the medium of instruction in the higher branches. From this date

up to 1882 great progress was made, to review which, and to criticise the whole system, a commission was then appointed, with the result that the general principles of the Act of 1854 were reaffirmed, amended, and supplemented.

At the end of 1902, 4,000,000 students were under instruction, in twenty years the number of pupils in primary had increased by 49, and in secondary schools by 180, per cent. and more than 23,000 undergraduates and students of various professions were receiving instruction in 200 colleges, in spite of which, in 1901, only 98 per 1000 in the case of males, and 7 per 1000 in the case of females, were able to read and write.

Burma, the native states of Travancore and Baroda, Madras, Bombay, and Bengal is the order of merit for literacy, though claims, wholly unsustainable as the Census shows, are frequently made for Bengal that it is the most educated part of India. As a matter of fact, of the greater provinces, only two—the Punjaub and the United Provinces—occupy a lower position in the list, and it is not surprising that the more degraded, bloody, and immoral forms of Hindooism find their home in this province, to which fact, were proof needed, the writings of recent travellers and observers amply testify. It is not, however, only in Bengal that education somewhat lags behind the ideals set before the Government, for only one-sixth of the boys of school-going age were following the course of primary instruction in 1901-1902. Secondary, is more developed than primary, education, and a very valuable Resolution of the Government of India not long since was issued deprecating the undoubted sacrifice of the

vernacular languages to English in the secondary schools. Higher education, such as it is, has spread far and wide, and in 1901-1902 nearly 15,000 students became Bachelors of Arts, but it was admitted by the Indian Universities Commission that the acquirements of Indian graduates were in many cases inadequate and superficial. These youths live during their university course with their friends or in lodgings, with results which are admittedly unsatisfactory, and to remedy which the Indian Government is encouraging the hostel system.

Education has made less way amongst the Mahomedans, and in the case of females presents, of course, peculiar difficulties. The proportion of girls under instruction is highest in Madras, and the difference of the attitude towards this question in different provinces is illustrated by the fact that in Burma 74 and in Madras 52 per cent. of the girls at school are found in boys' schools, while in the Punjaub the like figure falls to 1 per cent.

Space does not allow of any consideration of the Chief's Colleges, the technical and industrial, the arts, engineering, medical, agricultural, veterinary and normal colleges and schools, but all are represented in the complete and complex educational system of India. Everywhere the State maintains a position of strict religious neutrality. No religious instruction is given in Government schools, and private institutions, provided their secular education is satisfactory, may give instruction in any religion whatsoever. The all-important question of moral training was considered in 1887-88, and suitable text-books, physical training, and athletic sports were recommended as an antidote to the want of reverence, respect, and

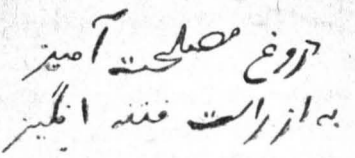
religious obedience, which merely secular education are said, and probably rightly said, to promote. Great care is taken in the selection of the text-books; a difficult matter where so many languages are spoken, but, in fact, the measures taken have not availed to scotch, much less kill, evils, the existence of which cannot be denied.

The educational situation called for the Viceroy's attention. Lord Curzon was not the man to pass by any nettle which needed to be grasped, and he himself presided over a conference of educational officers which he called together to consider the situation. He was under no illusion as to the delicate ground on which he was treading, nor indeed was he mistaken as to the necessity for reform. He appointed a Director-General of Education, and a University Commission, he further legislated upon the University question, and he had the courage to say that the vernacular languages were being neglected and degraded in the pursuit of English, and very often bad English, for the sake of the mercantile value of the latter language. He made primary education a charge upon provincial revenues, and supplemented these charges by permanent annual grants. He laid down tests for the official recognition of secondary education, and he realised that our higher instruction trained the memory at the expense of the mind. He also introduced important reforms into training colleges, and primary and industrial schools. The University legislation of his Government was the cause of his being overwhelmed with obloquy by the babus of Bengal. Here it should be observed in passing that "babu" is an honorific title which an educated Bengali gentleman gives to himself, and if it now connotes any other

significance, such can only be due to the chief characteristics of those who bear it. Five universities, founded on the model of London University, as it was in the beginning, control the instruction given in nearly 200 colleges, which, however, were practically under no inspection, and in respect of which no uniformity of standard or ideals were required. It was to the interest of the weaker colleges to lower the standard, nor were they checked in this aspiration by the governing bodies of the universities. The object, on the contrary, of the senate was to turn out the largest number of graduates, and Lord Curzon's Commission of 1902 having clearly brought to light the chief defects of the system, the Indian Government determined to provide all universities with new senates, mainly composed of teachers, and to leave each university to frame its own regulations and inspect its own colleges. The action taken was exceedingly unpopular, particularly with the Bengali babus, and with the Bengali press which represents them in such a full-blooded and uncompromising fashion.

The charge was that Lord Curzon desired to officialise the universities, and to insist upon a standard of efficiency so high that it would crush the weaker colleges which had been found so useful to the babu class in the manufacture of graduates. There is no reason for supposing that the reconstructed senates have dealt severely with the less satisfactory colleges, but there is no doubt that Lord Curzon has been overwhelmed with obloquy for action in itself praiseworthy. This feeling was intensified by the delivery of his Convocation Address in 1905, in which he stated that the highest ideal of truth is to a great

extent a Western conception, and that truth took a high place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East. This comprehensive and unnecessary generalisation naturally gave very great offence. Every Oriental scholar will remember the well-known lines of Sadi:



"Better to lie with good intent,
Than tell the truth, if harm is meant";

and in the Mahabharata falsehood is said to be permissible in five cases—marriage, love, danger to life, loss of property, or the benefit of a Brahmin. But it is a fact that those who are accustomed to associate with the natives of India in other than an official capacity by no means accuse them of being generally untruthful. Indeed, the Hindoos and Mahomedans, apart from the atmosphere of courts of all sorts, may fairly be described as truthful and straight-dealing people. The contrary impression would no doubt be created upon those who had had all association with them through interpreters, in whose case, the Italian proverb *Traduttori traditori* is peculiarly appropriate.

Since his arrival in India Lord Minto has issued a very important resolution on the subject of primary education, and the very serious problems to be solved are at present believed to be occupying the earnest attention of his Government.

CHAPTER III

THE LAND SYSTEM

Its Critics—Their Case—Permanent Settlement with Individual Holders desirable—Famines Past and Recent—Remedies

THE land revenue system of India, upon which, in recent years, many and great assaults have been delivered, was not invented by the British, but was inherited by them, like so many other systems which form an integral part of their administration, from their predecessors in title. In a former chapter passing reference has been made to the fact that, in the reign of the most moderate of all the great Moguls, the land-tax was so regulated that nothing was left to the cultivator beyond what sufficed for the subsistence of himself and his family, together with enough seed for sowing next season's crop. Passing reference was also made to what the earliest writers on India have recorded on this all-important subject. That it is all important, no one can doubt, seeing that two-thirds of the people of India are engaged directly or indirectly in agricultural pursuits, so that if our land policy is bad it would be difficult, indeed, to claim that our administration in general was good, The argument that the British grind the people down, and that the severity of the land system has led to the frequency of famines, is noticed in its proper place, though it is in itself not worthy to be answered.

Among the critics are Mr R. C. Dutt, C.I.E., and

others with more or less qualifications for expressing opinions upon this very technical subject. From time immemorial the Government has been entitled to a certain proportion of the produce of all land, the rights to which have not been limited, and the procedure by which that proportion is determined is called the settlement of the land revenue. Such settlements are of two kinds: permanent, by which the demand of the State is for ever fixed, and temporary, by which the State demand is revised at recurring periods. The permanent districts cover the greater part of Bengal, parts of the United Provinces and of Madras, and certain other isolated tracts. At one time, the extension of the permanent settlement throughout India was advocated, and critics of the school of which Mr Dutt may be regarded as an example urged that had this policy been carried into effect forty years ago, India would have been spared the worst famine of recent years. It is held by the same school, and this is a most important plank in the Congress platform, that in consequence of the permanent settlement the cultivators of Bengal are more prosperous than those of any other part of India. If it were a fact that the cultivators of Bengal enjoyed exceptional prosperity, there would, indeed, be some reason for the inference that the permanent settlement was the cause. But there is, in fact, no ground whatever for any such assertion. Bengal, as a whole, and particularly the new province of Eastern Bengal, possesses exceptional fertility and means of communication, a monopoly of the production of jute, and the possession of the greatest city in India as one of its capitals. Yet not all these advantages avail to save Bengal from serious drought whenever the monsoon failure reaches that

region. Noticing earlier famines in this province that of Behar in 1873-1874 cost the State 6,000,000 sterling, while in the famine of 1897 more than three-quarters of a million of the population were on relief. A careful consideration of the history of famines during British administration, and of such information as is available on the subject in ante-British days, lends no support whatever to the contention that Bengal has been saved from famine by the permanent settlement, or that its cultivators enjoyed any exceptional prosperity, over and above such as is due to the climate and geographical causes. Still less is there any ground for thinking that the cultivators and tenants of the State-created landlords in Bengal enjoy, owing to the permanent settlement, any exceptional prosperity. On the contrary, it was because they were especially impoverished and oppressed that the Government of India was compelled, by a series of legislative measures, to place them in the position of greater security which they now enjoy. This legislation has not only no connection with the permanent settlement, but has been designed to confer those benefits which that settlement has altogether failed to secure. Absentee landlordism, unsympathetic management, bad relations between landlord and tenant, the multiplication of middlemen and unhappy relations between owners and cultivators obtained in Bengal to a greater extent than elsewhere in India, and it is not in the land settlement, but in the new laws which have been passed to check these abuses, that the Bengal cultivator has found salvation.

That criticism has been more generally levelled against the temporarily settled districts is due to the fact that the agitation has been directed from Bengal,

whence also the sinews of war have been provided. It is in no way due to the fact that conditions in such districts are at all inferior. Of the two sub-divisions of this category, the Zemindari, Malguzari, or Talukdari tenure—in which the landlord pays the revenue to the State, whether he cultivates himself or through some rent-paying tenant — obtains in the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, and the Punjaub. The Government of India has always held, and has led the way in holding, that in such cases a limit should be placed to the rent the landlord may demand from his tenant, and it would indeed be little less than absurd to dwell upon the necessity for Government taking a moderate share when it deals directly with the tenant, and to ignore the necessity for equal moderation in the demands of the landlord. It is equally necessary to protect the cultivator whether he pays rent to the Indian landlord or revenue to the British Indian Government. In accordance with these principles, legislation has proceeded in Bengal, the Central, and the United Provinces, with little or no co-operation in this behalf on the part of those who are in a position to assist in carrying out this policy. It has further been argued that where the land revenue is paid to the State by the landlord the demand should be limited, as a fixed and invariable rule, to one-half of his rent or assets. It has been shown that the ruling power has always been entitled to a share in the produce of the soil. Indeed, this doctrine has been laid down in far stronger terms by the earlier writers upon India, who speak of the land as belonging to the State. In the regulation of 1793, the Government share was fixed by estimating the rent paid by the tenants, deducting therefrom the cost of collection,

allowing the landlords one-eleventh as their share, and appropriating the balance, or ten-elevenths, as the share of the State. The word landlord in this connection means the intermediary between the cultivators and the State, and the landlords in the sense in which we use the term in this country are the holders under the permanent settlement to which reference is made above, such as the landlords of Bengal, who, though not the natural leaders of the people, have been placed in a position of power and pre-eminence by the action of Lord Cornwallis's Government. The British Government, however, while necessarily adopting the principle that it was entitled to its share of the landlord's assets, began at once to moderate its severity, and in the middle of the last century the demand had been limited to two-thirds, while before the Mutiny it was laid down that about one-half and not two-thirds of the well-ascertained net assets should be the Government share. No Government, however, has any right to forego revenue the collection of which is conceded by immemorial custom, and by the universal consent of those who pay it, unless it can tap other sources with greater convenience to the tax-payer, and it need hardly be stated that of all countries in the world subject to a civilised and scientific administration of which we have knowledge India is that one in which new sources of revenue are most difficult to find, and in which the inhabitants, while it never enters their heads to question any customary payment, are most rapidly aroused by the imposition of any new tax. The Government, therefore, never bound itself to demand more than 50 per cent. of the actual rental of the landowner, and the settlement officers, in the

interests of the people, were under an obligation to take into consideration any prospective increases of income in determining what the net assets were. Nevertheless, the movement has steadily progressed in a downward direction and prospective assets have been included; allowances have been made for improvements, for vicissitudes of seasons, and for local circumstances. In the Central Provinces, the Government inherited assessments of 75 per cent. from the Mahrattas, but while the amounts landlords are allowed to demand from their tenants have been strictly limited, the amounts the Indian Government takes from the landlord have been progressively reduced.

The general tendency throughout temporarily settled Zemindari districts has been to reduce the Government share below 50 per cent. of the net assets, and it is not a little extraordinary that the Congress agitation, which is so intimately connected with the landlord interest, has persuaded the representatives of British democracy in Parliament that it is desirable that the Government should abandon the taxes to which it is entitled, which are levied from landlords, and spent in a great measure on the cultivator, the inevitable result of which would be that the amount remitted would have to be made up in some other way from the masses who are less able to pay.

Turning to the temporarily settled districts in which the peasant proprietor prevails, the cultivator paying directly to the State, the provinces which best illustrate this tenure are Madras, Bombay, Burma, and Assam. It has been urged by the critics of British rule that the Government share should be limited to 50 per cent. of the value of the net produce after liberal deductions for cultivation expenses, and

should not exceed one-fifth of the gross produce; even in those parts of the country where, in theory, one-half of the net, is assumed to approximate to one-third of the gross, produce.

Others contend that a definite and fixed share of the gross produce should be adopted as the State demand. Few, indeed, of those who have any personal acquaintance with this problem would approve the latter recommendation, for it is exceedingly difficult to estimate what the average produce is, depending as it does upon the industry and resources of the cultivator, the nature of the crop, the fertility of the holding, and the vicissitudes of seasons. In the Madras Presidency, it was found that the gross produce standard favoured the more, and prejudiced the less, fertile districts. In that Presidency and elsewhere, the net produce has been valued at rates far below the current prices, the out-turn per acre has been underestimated, and liberal deductions have been made for unprofitable cultivation, distance from markets, and vicissitudes of seasons, so that the actual rates used for assessment are far below the nominal share, in some cases falling 20 per cent. short of one quarter, not of one half, of the net produce. The one certain thing is that the introduction of the cast-iron system suggested by the critics would largely increase the burdens of the people, who themselves are naturally and notoriously unfavourable to any rigid rule of revenue administration. The adoption of the gross-produce standard put forward as an alleviation of the cultivator's burdens would lead to an all-round increase of assessments—indeed in Madras and the Central Provinces the exaction of one-fifth of the real gross produce would double the liabilities of the ryots. Turning to

Bengal, the figures, which have not been contested, show that rents are much below one-fifth of the gross produce, and this proves, were proof necessary, that the cultivators in Government temporarily settled estates are much better off than those under proprietors with permanent settlements. In regard to the Punjaub, grossly inaccurate statements have been circulated by those who have endeavoured to associate the people of this province with the agitation current in Bengal. In the peasant proprietary districts of the former province the Government demand nowhere exceeds one-fifth, and is often far lower, going down below an eighth of the gross produce. The last Famine Commission, presided over by Sir Antony MacDonnell, naturally paid special attention to this subject, and reported that the incidence of land revenue on the average value of the produce was less than 4 per cent. in the Central Provinces, 7 per cent. in Berar and most of the Punjaub, and in the Deccan from 7 to 8 per cent. Only in Gujerat, which suffered severely during the famine, but where the profits on cultivation are very high, did the incidence amount to the 20-per-cent. standard which was recommended in a certain memorial, which led to general inquiries in this behalf being made. A further recommendation has been pressed on the Government, to the effect that temporarily settled districts should never be settled for less that thirty years, the term which generally obtains, though in the Punjaub a shorter period of twenty years is the recognised rule, while in very backward districts, such as Burma, Assam, and Sind, even shorter periods are allowed. The criterion is, the more or less prosperous condition of agriculture in the particular province. Where there

is much waste land and fluctuating cultivation, where communications are being improved, population increasing and prices rising, postponement of resettlement may be unjust to the general tax-payer, but the interests of the masses invariably escape notice at the hands of critics who belong to the Brahmin and upper classes, who now administer India under our supervision, but who would have no objection whatever to governing altogether on their own account. It cannot be denied that the resettlement of provinces is a serious operation, disturbing and unsettling the minds of the cultivators concerned, and at the present moment the ryots of Orissa are dreading a resettlement of their province, which may be accompanied by an enhancement of revenue. The Government of India is of opinion that many of the objections urged to revision of settlement have become, or are fast becoming, obsolete. The process is now more rapidly completed, and the necessary records are more elaborate, though it may be contended that the people are not so appreciative as is the Government of the changes which operate in this direction. The mere possibility of enhancement is not pleasant to them, and it would be good policy not only to extend the term in all cases to thirty years, but also seriously to consider once more whether it would not be advisable to make a permanent settlement with each individual holder. Not only might this prove good revenue policy in the end, but it would infallibly attach every single peasant proprietor to the fortunes of the British Government, by the strongest possible tie. Nor is it possible to deny that the multiplication of cesses is regarded by the Indian cultivators as an injustice. They and their ancestors for thousands of years have

paid rent or revenue, but land-cesses for furthering the services of Western civilisation, such as sanitation and education, are altogether new imposts, the necessity for which they do not allow, and the imposition of which they bitterly resent. An increase in the land revenue may be borne—

> "The sirkar cannot send the rains,
> Although it hath to levy toll,
> And barren fields and empty wains
> Are bitter to the sirkar's soul—"

but cesses are a new and foreign thing, and hated accordingly. As a matter of fact the local rates are lower in the peasant proprietor provinces of Bombay and Madras than in the landlord province of Bengal, where they reach 6¼ per cent. on the rental. It may safely be affirmed that the average cultivator does not regard primary education as a proper subject for taxation, and he does hold with all his might that such taxation should be limited to objects directly connected with the land. These objections do not apply to cesses levied for the remuneration of village officers, such having been a charge on the community from time immemorial. In thus criticising the local cesses and rates imposed by the British Government, it must always be remembered that in the landlord districts numerous other unauthorised village cesses are habitually levied, notwithstanding the endeavours of the Government to put an end to the practice—efforts in which it is in no way supported by its critics, the most active of whom are closely connected with the landlord classes.

The principle of exempting from assessment the occupier's improvements has been adopted by the British Government, first of all the rulers of India;

and the profit arising from such improvements has been secured to the cultivators in perpetuity in Bombay and Madras, and for lengthy periods in Bengal, the Punjaub, the United, and the Central, Provinces. In spite, however, of the many and great advances made by the British Government, all in the direction of leniency of assessment, it is well not to forget that, in the eyes of those chiefly concerned, the object of a new settlement is to increase the payments previously made, and there is probably no measure that would be more popular with the masses than a permanent settlement, not such a settlement as was made in Bengal, with which indeed no serious statesman would now propose to interfere, but which none the less was conducted upon principles which benefit the classes at the expense of the masses, principles the exact opposite of which would be adopted in any such permanent settlement as is contemplated in these pages. It is, of course, the case that the principle that the State has a right to a share in the produce of the land carries with it a claim to a share in any increment of the produce or value, and it might fairly be argued that the State cannot be called upon to surrender increased values produced by the development of the country, the introduction of new staples, increase of population, or any rise in the productivity of the soil, due to expenditure upon irrigation and communications, incurred by the exchequer. It is, however, an important factor in the consideration of this matter that two-thirds of the people of India are engaged in agriculture, and that active efforts are being made by agitators to persuade the agricultural classes to adopt an attitude of hostility towards the British Government. Whether it is justifiable to

forego a prospective increase of revenue, which would benefit the general tax-payer, is ordinarily a question to be answered in the negative, but in India, by such surrender, not less than two-thirds of the population would be immediately and immensely benefited. It is indeed true that there is no precedent in native rule for any step of this nature, but it is also true that we have since 1835 been busily occupied in preaching a new dispensation from the West, in which Oriental customs, Oriental faiths, and Oriental principles of administration are treated with scant reverence, if not openly held up to the ridicule of the rising generation. The strongest objection would be taken by the Bengali critics of the Government to the introduction of a permanent settlement with individual peasant proprietors, without a similar concession being granted in temporarily settled Zemindari districts, wherein it is difficult to make prices the basis of assessment. It might, however, be urged with much weight that in ryot-wari, or peasant proprietary areas, the only ground for enhancement should be a rise in prices, and though the extension of this principle would involve the surrender of increment resulting from the construction of public works at the cost of the general tax-payer, it is by no means certain that such surrender would not be amply compensated by the general content on the part of individual proprietors, and by their greater attachment to our rule.

Not only have the Bengali critics asserted that the land revenue assessments are excessive, but they have not hesitated to allege that such assessments have been responsible for the frequency of famine. Throughout the last century there has, however, been a progressive reduction in assessment, which in the second

half thereof has been increasingly manifest, so that, if there be anything in this allegation, the famines of the earlier, should have been more serious than those of the later, part of the nineteenth century. But the contention of the critics is that the contrary has been the case.

Nor is there any support whatever for the assertion that the most highly assessed parts of India have suffered most severely, a contention disproved by the Famine Commission. Indeed, in the famine of 1899-1900, the districts most severely affected had been exempted from paying their increased assessments, and the districts that suffered most in 1896-1897 were such as for years had known no enhancement. A low land-tax, like the few pence an acre paid on unirrigated land in the Deccan, is the outward and visible sign of a poor peasantry, near the margin of subsistence. So fallacious is the inference that a low assessment means a prosperous peasantry. But where the land is rich, and the assessment light, are the people there famine-proof? Gujerat answers this description as well as any part of India, and there was the pressure most severe in 1899-1900, when the Deccan cultivator stood up erect under the loss of his crops, and the comparatively rich Gujerati succumbed, when the crop failure affected 400,000 square miles, 25,000,000 of people in British India and 75,000,000 in native states, the loss in crops being equivalent to £50,000,000 sterling. The Government spent upwards of £10,000,000 on relief, and not much more than 2 per cent. of the population affected succumbed, more from privation and disease than starvation. Then it is asserted that the increase, only 2·42 per cent. of the population between 1891 and 1901, is a proof of far greater mortality, since

between 1881 and 1891 there was an increase of 11·2 per cent. But who is in a position to say that 11·2 per cent. is the normal rate of increase of the Indian population, as to which we know nothing, and have only two or three counts to place to our credit. The Central Provinces, twice desolated by the severest visitations, showed a fall of 8 per cent., while in ante-British days it would have been nothing exceptional had half the population, under similar circumstances, disappeared. In Madras, the province to which, in complete ignorance of the facts, the Congress school of critics has imputed an assessment exceptionally severe, the increase in the population at last Census was the highest—namely, 7·4 per cent. To determine the normal rate of increase in India, excluding the results of monsoon failures, would be to eliminate what is a regular feature recurring at irregular intervals, but never known to have been absent from one part or another of the congeries of countries we call India for more than a short term of years. It is unfortunate that crop failure is invariably described as famine. Tracts in which there are scarcity and distress of varying degrees of intensity are alike called famine-stricken. The State, in its efforts to prevent famine laying hold of the people, long before acute distress prevails brings into operation its relief code, or rules for the prevention of famine, commonly called the Famine Code, and in any province in which these preventive measures are brought into force, famine is said to prevail. The case of the Government in this respect is parallel with that of a pious man called Barebones, the abbreviation of whose lengthy Christian name gave a very erroneous impression of his true character. Those who

think the Indian administration enslaves and starves the Indians are also under the impression that when 6,000,000, or 2 per cent. of the population of India, were, in 1899-1900, in receipt of relief, 6,000,000 were starving, instead of being saved from starvation, and it would be useless to point out that a slightly larger percentage—2·2—of the population of England and Wales is annually in receipt of aid from the State.

It is devoutly to be hoped that this so-called Famine Code will never degenerate into a Poor Law, from the necessity for which India is saved by the abounding charity of the people. Their humane and civilised character enables their rulers to dispense with a Poor Law in normal seasons, and the latter in turn have declared, and take no credit for declaring, that the whole resources of the State, are available for saving the lives of the distressed. So successful is this policy that in 1899-1900, in the locality affected above all others by one of the most widespread scarcities ever experienced, in the Central Provinces, the death rate actually remained round about the normal figure. Among many deductions to be drawn from these visitations is the fact that the peasant proprietors of Madras are better able to pay their nominally higher assessment than are their brethren in Bombay to pay their nominally lower rate. It is pretty clear that it is private debts, often 50 per cent. of the value of the produce, which press, and not the Government assessment of 7 per cent. which presses, so hardly upon the cultivator. It is, moreover, a fact, to which many unprejudiced observers have testified from personal experience, that the administration of famine relief, has now reached such a pitch of perfection that, as a general rule, the workers on the famine relief works,

do not show signs of emaciation and cannot be distinguished from ordinary labourers. The object of the Government is to provide them with work and food before they deteriorate in condition.

Famine photographs, which, with sinister objects, are circulated, are generally those of the occupants of the poor houses, in which are gathered together in times of scarcity the waifs and strays, the halt, the lame, the blind, the feeble and infirm, the flotsam and jetsam of a teeming Oriental population. It is interesting to know that the periods of scarcity, which are held by ignorant or malevolent critics to prove the failure of British rule, have conclusively demonstrated what otherwise might be well regarded as open to argument—namely, the superiority of direct British administration to that of the protected native states, which, during the last great visitation, were tried and found wanting. Indeed, before that, in 1897-1898, the chiefs of Rajputana and Central India had not proved very successful in caring for their own distressed people. No one could be naturally more prone to prefer Indian administration under general British supervision to direct British administration than one who has, himself, had the good fortune to be British Resident in two conspicuously well-governed native states, and who has made a study of native languages, and association with the natives of India, the chief object of his long service in India. But it must be admitted that the evidence of private and official witnesses, the reports of newspaper correspondents, and the Census figures, all alike testify to the immense superiority of our own system of relief, if, indeed, any system can be said to exist outside British limits. In the first place, we can redress the balance, by calling

on a rich, to feed a poor, province, which a single financial unit cannot do. In the second place, the British Government has a positive genius for forethought and *bandobast*, or tie and twist—an Indian word meaning arrangement, but the inward expressiveness of which no translation can convey. The grim realities of actual starvation were almost confined in our districts to the hill tribes, and to the occupants of poor houses and relief works, which were flooded with refugees, already past aid, from native states. Not that the British Government accepts no responsibility for such states. It does, and laid it down as a principle that it could not allow the lives of thousands to be jeopardised by the caprice of their ruler. It is characteristic of a certain school of critics that Mr Hyndman should have written at this period: "We see by looking at the great native states that our system is the real cause of the ruin we deplore. Scarcity in their case seldom deepens into famine!" What shall be said of the equal ignorance of those who glibly assert that famines were less frequent and less disastrous before the days of British rule. Indeed it is true that fights with famine have been more frequent in our time, for our predecessors accepted these visitations as fatalities. Hindoos do not write history, and Mahomedan historians, who omitted nothing to the credit of the kings, who paid them for their chronicles, have not recorded that they made any effort to counteract the effects of failure of seasons. A certain amount of information on this subject can be gathered, however, from Ferishta, Babar, Tavernier, Bernier, Dow, Elphinstone, and Elliott, and after a careful perusal of these works, and after inquiring into the subject, not only in India, but in other Oriental

countries—such as Persia, China, Turkey, Japan, and Corea—I have gathered the impression that, generally speaking, the tax-collectors of Eastern, are not more but less strict than those of European, Governments, and that the enormously high assessments of former times in India, and elsewhere, were only possible because they were spasmodically and irregularly collected. However that may be, in 1596, under Akbar, such famine prevailed that cannibalism became general, burial was abandoned, and pestilence raged unchecked. In 1615 and 1616 there was another great visitation, when wild beasts dragged the starving villagers from their huts, and devoured them in the streets. In Kattywar and Gujerat there were famines in 1559, 1631, 1647, 1681, 1686, 1718, 1723, 1747, 1751, 1759, 1760, 1774, 1780, and 1785. Of such severity were these visitations that, compared with them, the fourteen so-called famines which occurred between 1880 and 1897 were merely local scarcities, In the Central Provinces there are records of famines in 1771, 1803, 1818, 1819, 1825, 1826, 1832, 1833, 1834, 1868 and 1869. Upon these occasions, wheat sometimes sold at 3 or 4 seers of two pounds, for a rupee, and rice at 2 or 3 seers a rupee, whereas in 1899-1900 the average prices in the Central Provinces, the most afflicted part of India, were 15 and 14 seers respectively, and after the famine of 1877-1878, in that province, the cultivation only decreased by 5 per cent. In the Mahabharata the great epic poem of the palmy days of India, written before its sacred soil had been invaded by Mahomedans or Europeans, a famine of twelve years duration is recorded, in which Brahmins were driven to devour dogs. Should Burma ever again suffer, it will, no doubt, be argued that, as in the case of India proper,

so in regard to its newest province, British maladministration has reduced the previously prosperous people to such straits. But Pimenta, writing of Pegu in the sixteenth century says: "The wayes and fields were full of skulls and bones of wretched Pagans, who were brought to such miserie and want, that they did eat man's flesh and kept publike shambles thereof. Parents abstained not from their children, and children devoured their parents. The stronger by force preyed on the weaker, and if any were but skinne and bone, yet did they open their intrailes to fill their owne, and picked out their braines. The women went about the streets with knives to the like butcherly purposes." To this day the skull famine, so called because the countryside was littered with skulls, is remembered in India.

No doubt our Government has not always been successful in treating these calamities. In the earlier part of last century we hardly attempted the colossal task now so successfully achieved. In Madras in 1833-1834, in Madras and Mysore in 1877-1878, and in Orissa in 1866, the mortality was very high, but the science of famine prevention was then in its infancy, and it is that science, and not famine, which is the invention of the British Government. The vernacular press often refers to India as the only country in the world ruled by a wealthy and civilised Government subject to periodical famines, but there was a time when these visitations were frequent in Europe, and the poor ate roots and acorns. These conditions have passed away with improved agriculture, the development of commercial credit, removal of restrictions upon the natural course of trade, and the opening of increased facilities of transport. Yet the critics of

Government, amongst whom in this behalf is an ex-Chief Commissioner, actually accuse improved communications of contributing to cause famine, and to the ruin of the indigenous native transport trade, and so, it is presumed, to the greater sufferings of the victims of crop failure! Nor, in fact, have these visitations by any means ceased to afflict Europe. In 1891 Russia suffered from an extremely widespread famine, and the Czar's Government, while it did infinitely less than ours does, obtained greater credit owing to the feeling abstention on the part of the Emperor, court, and capital from all amusements while the people were distressed. During the last scarcity in the Central Provinces, in some districts 40 per cent. of the population were on relief works, but it was difficult to tell that those upon relief were other than ordinary cultivators. Meanwhile, sufferers flocked in their thousands from native states to British works, and those states lost in the last ten years about the same proportion of their population as the British districts gained. So complete and comprehensive is the famine relief of these days that the question arises to what extent the poorest should be fed out of taxes paid by the poor, for the rich, and notably the landlords, who support the Congress movement, do not contribute their fair share, and there is no Indian middle class to be remorselessly bled by the tax-gatherer. I have myself shown, in the pages of *The Nineteenth Century*, that it was possible for families to earn on relief works 25 per cent. more than the average agriculturist's income. The Commissioner of the northern division of Bombay, Sir F. Lely, now a member of the Indian Decentralisation Commission, attributes the intensity of the distress in Gujerat to the fact that in a long

period of prosperity the people had acquired expensive habits and had become unfit to endure poverty, so little were they brought down to poverty by previous taxation. Some friendly critics maintain that a measure restricting land alienation should be enacted for all India, but it will be necessary first to study the results of the Land Act already passed for the Punjaub, for such legislation reduces the cultivator's credit, and could probably be evaded by the moneylender. Circumstances, moreover, differ in different provinces, and agrarian legislation has been by no means successful in the Deccan. If, again, the revenue were made to depend entirely on the rain, whence would come money in rainless years to feed the victims of rainlessness? Some would say by supplementing the finances of India by a grant from England, regardless of the dictum of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Lord St Aldwyn, that the finances of India are in an infinitely better condition than our own. The fact is that the collection of money in England for the Mansion House Fund apparently makes it impossible for the British public to realise that want of funds has never compelled the Indian Government to refuse relief to a single individual applying therefor, or to relax its efforts to force help upon the retiring and unwilling. There is no reason whatever why India should lose her most precious possession, her financial independence. Indeed, Lord Elgin wisely insisted that the province of private charity, as distinguished from State relief, should be unequivocally laid down before he undertook to receive the Mansion House money, which was used for such comforts and, comparatively speaking, luxuries as the Government did not think could properly be given from public funds.

The introduction of usury laws is also urged, but these indeed were practically adopted when the Indian Contract Act was so amended as to describe the agriculturist as a person entitled to special protection in his dealings with moneylenders. Irrigation of course has been suggested as the best of remedies, and various English newspapers have eloquently described the tens of millions of acres which could be rendered independent of the seasons. Little notice is taken of the fact that the Government of India has spent 32 millions sterling upon irrigation works, for which capital accounts are kept, whereby 17½ millions of acres give crops worth 34½ millions of pounds, and has in hand projects which will irrigate further millions of acres. It is an absurd contention that while the Government has done so much it is responsible for famine because it does not further do what financial and geographical reasons forbid.

So far as the mere prevention of famine goes, it must not be forgotten that successful irrigation schemes lead to a proportionate increase in the population, and it is impossible to suppose that the Government, regardless of levels and water supply, can extend irrigation at a remunerative cost, to such a degree as to make the country independent of failure of the rainfall. Lord Curzon made special inquiries to discover what additional practicable projects could be devised, and it was proved that the field was of a very limited extent. The real remedy is to be found in the introduction of foreign capital, which the present agitation must necessarily scare away; in the development of the material resources of the country, and the removal of the surplus population from the overcrowded occupation of agriculture. Tea and coffee planting, gold and

coal mining, and cotton spinning should be encouraged; the rules and regulations which restrict enterprise should be still further relaxed; obstacles to the movement of labour, of which too many remain, should be abolished, the cheap supply of labour alongside the raw material being a great attraction for the capitalist of India, which, in spite of its admitted, but exaggerated, poverty, absorbs gold and silver to the value of upwards of £10,000,000 sterling per annum. Caste in no way handicaps industrial operations. On the contrary, it enormously facilitates the organisation of labour. Agricultural distress must still exist in a country dependent upon the monsoon, but in modern India there is always sufficient grain to eat, and the object is the creation of economic conditions, in which the people will have the money with which to buy food. Nevertheless, so utterly is this question—like most others relating to India—misunderstood in England, that the old-world expedient of storing grain is seriously recommended, while what the people want is the money they can only get by selling what, in former times, was stored, because there were no communications, and no markets. As to the so-called drain, most of it is incurred as interest—absurdly low from the Indian point of view—upon capital expended for the benefit of that country. It is of course desirable that the amount should be kept as low as possible, and the heavy charges for pensions and non-effective services are certainly open to criticism. The European civil agency could, in some provinces at any rate, be reduced. Few English judges are really wanted, and the Egyptian system would serve as a useful model, but the one man who cannot be spared is the British soldier, who makes it possible for so few civilians to

manage so many millions. The secretariat could probably be reduced, for it can hardly be seriously contended that it is absolutely necessary that the reports of an officer getting 2000 rupees a month should be handed on to others upon 3000 or 4000 rupees a month, with assistants at 1000 or 2000 rupees a month, before they are referred to a greater mandarin at 5000 or 6000 rupees a month, who can refer the matter to a colleague upon the same stipend, when, if the latter differs with him, or if a secretary chooses, the file, *plena jam margine, scriptus et in tergo nec dum finitus*, will finally come before the head of the administration. There is, at any rate in the old presidencies of Madras and Bombay, too much secretariat rule, and any superfluous hands would be better occupied in district administration. But such savings would not seriously affect the situation. The Government of India has pointed out how imperfectly its critics realise the smallness of the land revenue compared with enormous losses resulting from the failure of crops. In the Central Provinces during seven years the loss in this behalf has been equivalent to the total land revenue for fifty years. It is clear that any reductions that could be effected in establishments, and even under the greater head of land revenue demand, would never enable the community to withstand losses of such dimensions, nor indeed is it true that abatement of taxation results in provident saving on the part of the people. It is notorious, on the contrary, that the exact reverse is the case. Excessive leniency encourages the transfer of the soil to moneylenders, landlords, and middlemen, who at once swallow up the profits intended for the cultivator. It is also established that the chief sufferers at famine time

are not those who pay assessment to Government or rent to landlords, but labourers on the land, who are not immediately affected by the revenue assessment. The last Famine Commission, presided over by Sir Antony MacDonnell—than whom no Indian administrator has been a more active friend to the tenant farmers and peasant proprietors—recorded that "the pressure of land revenue is not severe, the incidence on the gross produce of the soil being light, and not such as to interfere with agricultural efficiency in ordinary years, though there is a distinct need for leniency in adverse seasons." Whilst crop failure is the primary cause, there are other factors which cause poverty and indebtedness in India, such as the ever-increasing sub-divisions of holdings, due to land hunger, and attachment to his own locality on the part of the cultivator; the decline of village industries, rack-renting on the part of certain landlords; expensive litigation, and extravagance on the occasion of marriage and other festivities.

The Government of India has long had under consideration the desirability of a gradual and progressive enforcement of such increases in assessment as it is thought desirable to effect on resettlement. Wherever a large enhancement is necessary, endeavours are made to spread it over a period of years, and this has already been arranged in several provinces, but in no case can an enhancement be welcome, and landholders in India, perhaps more than elsewhere, rapidly raise their standards of living to suit their resources for the time being. In theory, Government assessment represents the sum that may fairly be demanded on an average of seasons, but it is assessed upon the assumption that the cultivator will save from

the surplus in a good, to meet the deficit in a bad, year. This assumption, however, rests upon a false basis, and the rigid demand of the land revenue must add materially to the hardships of the poor. In tracts where great variations from the average produce are not frequent, this hardship may not be felt, but where, as so often happens, fluctuations are common and large, the rigid demand of a fixed assessment cannot be other than disastrous. In Madras no revenue is charged upon irrigable land, the produce of which has not ripened owing to failure of the water supply, and in the Punjaub partial failure to ripen, from the same cause, entitles the cultivator to a proportionate abatement. In Burma and Assam unirrigated lands are exempt from payment of assessment if left unsown, but elsewhere, lands dependent upon the rainfall for water pay a fixed and very low assessment, irrespective of their produce. The desirability of making collection more elastic in respect of these lands has frequently engaged the attention of the administration, and it must be admitted that an assessment varying with the out-turn, for such a vast area, would be difficult to work, would throw great power into the hands of subordinates, and would deprive the people of the object they now have in saving for a rainless day. On the other hand, it is hopeless to expect an Indian cultivator to be thrifty and saving, and it is a highly satisfactory circumstance that the Government of India has declared that it is not satisfied that, in well-known tracts, in which the crops are liable to violent fluctuations, a fluctuating assessment should not be introduced; though any alteration in the assessment is in conflict with the terms of the existing contract, by which the land-

holder undertakes the liability for loss in return for an expectation of profit. It may, upon the whole, be regarded as sufficiently proved that the permanent settlement is no protection whatever against famine, that 50 per cent. of the assets is the most ever demanded from landlords, that the State frequently intervenes to protect tenants from such landlords, and to limit the rent they demand, and that in areas where the State is paid directly by the cultivator the proposal to fix the assessment at one-fifth of the gross produce, would always largely increase, and in several provinces would double, the existing Government demand. It may further be held to be proved that the policy of long-term settlements is being extended, that the principle of making allowance for improvements is generally in force, that the disturbance connected with a new settlement is diminished, and that over assessment is not a general or widespread source of poverty and indebtedness in India, and cannot be regarded as a cause of famine.

The Government of India is further prepared to concede more elasticity in collection, and to resort in a still greater degree to reduction of assessment, in cases of local deterioration, even where such reduction cannot be claimed under the terms of settlement. Notwithstanding, the complete answer which this affords to the baseless charge that the Indian administration grinds down the faces of the poor, the proposal to settle with each holder is worthy of the consideration of the Government, whose present system, however, was inherited from its predecessors in title, from whose practice it only differs in that it is infinitely more moderate and favourable to the cultivators concerned.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Provincial Government — Departments — Magisterial and Revenue Functions—Local and Municipal Institutions—The Police

IN accordance with the lines laid down for this little work, after briefly surveying the past history of the country, showing the circumstances under which the present dispensation arose, and the respects in which it chiefly differs from its predecessors, it is necessary to give a brief and popular account of the manner in which the British administration of India works. The Hindoo system described in the Code of Manu is an absolute monarchy, and the manner in which the king passed his day, as laid down in the Code, is practically that adopted to this day by the ruling chiefs in Travancore and Cochin, two old-world states, which have never been invaded by strangers from the north, and which are therefore, a mirror of ancient India, and of great and exceptional interest to the student and historian. The villagers enjoyed a large measure of autonomy by immemorial custom, and of the various criticisms which have been passed upon our system of government none are more weighty than those which condemn the partial destruction of the village system, inevitable though that is in view of the extension of scientific, probably far too scientific, administration. Armies, the size of which is probably exaggerated, but which no doubt were large,

were maintained to defend each kingdom, which was separated into military divisions, each division supporting a body of troops. The revenue consisted of a share in the produce of the land, taxes on commerce and on shopkeepers, and a forced service of a day a month by all accustomed to manual labour, and it has already been shown that the people were, according to accounts given by early travellers, in all probability fairly contented. Under the Mogul administration, the revenue collector was magistrate and police officer as well as revenue official, and this system, against which an outcry is now being made by critics of the Congress School, has survived in the main to the present day. Sir Courtenay Ilbert, the latest writer, has divided the history of British India into three periods—from the beginning of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century, when the East India Company as a trading corporation alternately coerced and cajoled the Indian powers, and fought with its rivals, the French and Dutch; from the middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, in which period the Company acquired and consolidated its territory, sharing its power with the Crown in progressively increasing proportions and, *pari passu*, being deprived of its mercantile functions and privileges, and the third period after the Mutiny of 1857, when the remaining powers of the Company were transferred to the Crown. Passing reference has been made to the conquests of Lord Clive, and during the troublous period in which Britain was at war with France, Holland, Spain, and America, India was preserved by one of the greatest men England has ever produced—Warren Hastings. The conquests and annexations of Lords Cornwallis,

Wellesley, Hastings, and Dalhousie have already been briefly reviewed, and subsequent to the Mutiny the history of India is a record of development, the only important territorial addition made being Upper Burma, acquired in 1886. It is now time, therefore, to explain how the present system of government arose, and what that system is.

By Lord North's regulating Act of 1773 a Governor-General and four Councillors were appointed to administer Bengal, and Madras and Bombay were placed in subordination to the former presidency. By Pitt's Act of 1784 the administration of the three Presidencies was placed under a Governor and three Councillors, of whom the Commander-in-Chief was one, the control of the Governor-General in Council being maintained and extended. The Charter Act of 1813 withdrew the Company's monopoly except in regard to tea and the China trade, and the Charter Act of 1833 put an end to its commercial business, and vested the entire civil, military, and legislative power in the Governor-General in Council. In 1836 the Lieutenant-Governorship of the North-West, now United, Provinces, and in 1854 that of Bengal, was created, the latter province till then having been directly administered by the Governor-General. The original intention was to make Bengal a presidency, with a Governor in Council, which forms the justification for a claim by the Congress party that this constitution should now be conceded. Those who support this request can hardly have been at the pains to learn that the Governor-in-Council constitution is now anomalous, and unworthy of imitation, since it has lost all signs of independence other than outward pomp, and the power of corresponding

directly upon unimportant subjects with the Secretary of State. More than this, since the abolition of the office of provincial Commander-in-Chief, the Governor possesses no power beyond that of over-riding his Council in cases of grave importance, which never can arise in a subordinate administration in telegraphic communication with Calcutta, and, even with his casting vote, he can only equal two votes of his colleagues, so that he might practically be, throughout his term of office, as powerless as Warren Hastings for a time was. It is far more likely that, in order to save the additional expense entailed, the old Presidencies will be reduced to Lieutenant-Governorships than that the latter administration will be levelled up, if indeed it be an ascent for a Lieutenant-Governor, all powerful in respect of acts within the administrative competence of his Government, to become a Governor, who might be readily reduced to a cipher in his own Council. That the men are so much better than the system is the only reason why the now three-legged constitutions of Madras and Bombay continue to work in an admittedly satisfactory manner.

The transfer to the Crown in 1858 made no difference except that the Governor-General became known also as Viceroy, though the title has no statutory basis, the Governor-General in Council being the authority responsible for the entire administration of British India, and for the control of the native states. Immediately under the central or supreme Government, known as the Government of India, are foreign relations, defence, taxation, currency, debt, tariffs, post, telegraphs, and railways, and, subject to its control, provincial governments are responsible for

internal administration, the assessment and collection of the revenue, irrigation, and communications. So complete is this control that no new appointment can be created, except of a very minor character, by provincial governments ruling over perhaps 50,000,000 of people; but the latter have their own budgets, and the expenditure of shares of certain items of revenue raised within their own limits. The shares were formerly assigned for periods of five years, and formed the subject of continual controversy, but arrangements are now being made of a more permanent character. The larger provinces have their own legislative councils, which, however, can only deal with local matters, and then only with the ultimate approval of the Governor-General in Council. The latter authority deals directly with the important native states, though some of these—such as Patiala and Travancore—are under the political control of the adjacent provincial administrations, an arrangement which, in regard to the latter state at any rate, leads insensibly, perhaps inevitably, to its precious individuality being impaired, and its own admirable and indigenous systems being forced into correspondence with those obtaining in neighbouring British districts.

The Council of the Governor-General consists of six ordinary members and the Commander-in-Chief, the Governor-General having since 1786 the power to over-ride the majority of his Council in matters of grave importance, a power which has hardly ever been exercised. By the Councils Act of 1861 the distribution of the work of the various departments among the members was legalised, any act done under orders so passed being deemed to be the act of the Governor-General in Council, the members

of which under this system fulfil the function of Ministers with departmental portfolios—viz. Foreign, Home, Revenue and Agriculture, Legislative, Finance, Public Works, Commerce and Industry, Army and Military Supply. The Governor-General takes the first, Revenue and Public Works are under another, and the remaining departments have each their own members. At the head of each department is a Secretary, whose position is somewhat similar to that of a Permanent Under-Secretary of State in England. The disposal of work by members is subject to reference to the Governor-General in cases of difference of opinion, or where the subjects are of exceptional importance, and the vote of the majority prevails when matters come before the collective Council at its weekly meetings. The Foreign Department deals with external politics and frontier tribes, controls the administration of Ajmere, the new North-West Frontier Province, and British Beluchistan, and transacts all business connected with native states, which cover 770,000 square miles, with a population of 64,000,000, but few of which, outside Rajputana, date from any earlier period than the eighteenth century and the chaos in which the Mogul Empire expired. Some of the chiefs, as, for instance, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharaja of Travancore, coin money, tax their subjects, and inflict capital punishment without appeal; none have power to deal with external relations, or, without restrictions, with Europeans. The Home Office deals with general administration, law and justice, jails, police, education, health, and local government, with which the provincial governments are immediately concerned. It also supervises the ecclesiastical

department, which consists of bishops and chaplains, but the policy of Government is one of the strictest religious neutrality. Missionary schools are eligible for educational grants, but these are solely available for secular instruction, and may be obtained on similar terms by schools of any religious denomination. The department of Revenue and Agriculture administers the land revenue and the forests, deals with famine relief, and organises agricultural inquiries and experiments. Under the care of the Finance Department are Imperial and Provincial finance, currency, banking, opium, salt, excise, stamps, assessed taxes, and the general supervision of the accounts of the whole empire. The department of Commerce and Industry was formed in 1905 to facilitate the disposal of questions concerning trade and manufactures, and a Railway Board was created at the same time to deal, in subordination to it, with matters relating to the administration of the railways of the empire. Post office, telegraphs, customs, statistics, shipping, emigration, mines, and other matters have also been transferred to the new Commercial member.

The chief executive officer of the army is the Commander-in-Chief, under the supreme authority of the Governor-General in Council. The separate armies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay were abolished in 1895, and there are now five territorial divisions, the northern, eastern and western commands, and the Burma and South India divisions. Up till 1906 all business connected with the army was transacted by the Military Department, which was in fact the War Office, but in that year it was replaced by the two departments of Army and Military Supply, the former of which, in charge of the Com-

mander-in-Chief, deals with cantonments, volunteers, and all matters concerning the army, except stores, ordnance, remounts, medical service, and India marine, which are managed by the department of Military Supply. These changes were effected after considerable controversy, and though the Viceroy of the day, Lord Curzon, reluctantly agreed to them he subsequently resigned office over the question of the officer actually to be appointed to the charge of Military Supply.

British India is no longer divided into three Presidencies, but into thirteen local governments, two of which, Madras and Bombay are Presidencies; five of which, Bengal, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the Punjaub, Burma, and Eastern Bengal and Assam are Lieutenant-Governorships; four of which, the Central Provinces, the Andamans, Coorg, and Ajmere are Chief-Commissionerships, and the new North-West Frontier Province, and British Beluchistan. Of these local governments two, the North-West Frontier Province, and the Lieutenant-Governorship of Eastern Bengal and Assam, were created during the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, in 1901 and 1905 respectively. In respect of the former territorial unit so much controversy has arisen that it will be necessary to refer to the matter elsewhere, and in regard to the latter, though considerable differences of opinion existed, there is, upon the whole, a most unusual consensus of opinion to the effect that the step taken was necessary. Sir Mackworth Young, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjaub, from which certain districts were detached, disapproved of the formation of this territory, and of adjoining border tracts over which we exercised direct influence since