

MEMORANDUM

OF THE

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF INDIA

DURING THE LAST THIRTY YEARS,

AND THE

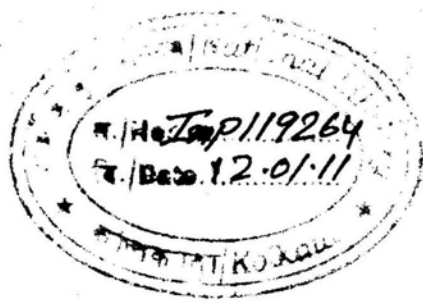
PETITION OF THE EAST-INDIA COMPANY
TO PARLIAMENT.

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CONTENTS.



REVENUE ADMINISTRATION, AND RIGHTS OF THE RURAL POPULATION	<i>Page</i> 2
JUDICATURE AND LEGISLATION	30
IMPROVEMENT OF THE COUNTRY BY PUBLIC WORKS	52
EDUCATION	75
MISCELLANEOUS IMPROVEMENTS	85
APPENDIX	95



CORRESPONDENCE	102,
PETITION	111

MEMORANDUM,

&c., &c.

At this time, when a calamity unexampled in the history of British India has excited an unusual amount of interest in Indian affairs, while the statements publicly made, and the opinions expressed, concerning the administration of the Indian Government, strikingly manifest the deficiency of correct information on the subject; a brief survey of the principal measures which have been of late adopted for improving the internal government of the country, and the physical and mental condition of its inhabitants, may be serviceable in removing false impressions, and in supplying materials for a deliberate judgment.

It may be thought that this survey would most fitly commence from the last renewal of the powers of the East-India Company, with some modifications, in 1853; and it must be said that the years which have since elapsed have been marked by a degree of activity in every description of public improvement, not only greater than that exhibited previously, but unsurpassed, it is believed, in any country and in any

age. An interval, however, of only four years is evidently too short to afford an intelligible view of a course of progressive improvement. The foundation of all the great measures which were in active progress during that interval, was laid at an earlier period; and the new measures which have been initiated during that brief term have not yet had time to exhibit tangible results. It is therefore necessary to trace the stream of Indian improvement from a point much higher up in its course; beginning at the origin of the measures which have contributed most, in each department, to give to the administration of India its present enlightened character.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION, & RIGHTS OF THE RURAL POPULATION.

Connection
of the
Revenue
System with
the Rights
and Condi-
tion of
the People.

In a country like India, the departments of public business on which the good government of the country, and the security and contentment of the people, principally depend, are the revenue administration and the judicial administration. The importance of a good and easily accessible administration of justice is the same in India as elsewhere; but the manner in which the entire economical condition of nearly the whole population is determined by the management of the revenue department, cannot, by persons unacquainted with India, be understood without special explanations.

Everywhere, indeed, it is of first-rate importance to a people that the taxes should be of moderate amount; that they should be certain, not arbitrary;

and that they should be so assessed and levied as neither to favour one person or class at the expense of another, nor to interfere injuriously with industry. These requisites, too, are obviously of more than their ordinary importance, where the bulk of the tax-paying population consists of persons depending for subsistence on their own exertions in tilling the soil. But these general considerations afford only an imperfect conception of the relation of the tax-paying cultivator in India to the revenue system. Throughout the greater part of India, there is no intermediate landlord between the immediate cultivator and the State. The cultivator does not pay rent to one person and taxes to another: his taxes *are* his rent (or a part of his rent); and his condition is affected by the good or bad quality of the fiscal administration, in every way in which the condition of a European tenantry can be affected by a good or a bad landlord. And there is an additional fact, of greater importance than all the rest. The titles to land, and to all rights issuing out of land, (that is, to all the property of the country, except a small percentage), are in India a branch of the revenue administration. The revenue records, which show who were the persons held responsible for the revenue by the officers of former governments, are the general register of title. They always constitute the principal, and in many cases the sole, reliable evidence of right to the land. While the British Government confined itself, as it necessarily did on the first acquisition of any district, to annual or short settlements, it had no need to look beyond the fact of actual possession; but when it began to grant leases or settlements for long terms of years, it was bound to ascertain that the persons whom it admitted to these engagements were those really entitled to the land.

This could only be done by minute local inquiries; and justice required that these should be judicially made, and a full hearing given to all parties on the spot. The revenue officers of Government being thus under the necessity, for revenue purposes, of investigating and ascertaining all titles to land, it has been deemed proper that the adjudication so performed should have the force of a judicial decision; though, if any of the persons interested considers himself aggrieved by the decision, he can seek redress by a suit in the regular courts. It is hence apparent, that in India every revenue officer is also, in the most important sense of the word, a judicial officer. The security of the most important and extensive class of proprietary rights throughout the country, depends upon the manner in which the revenue branch of the Government performs its judicial functions; and the history of the revenue administration of India is the history of its landed property, and of the economical condition of the whole agricultural population.

Permanent
Settlement
of the Lower
Provinces
of Bengal.

An important mistake, committed with the most generous intentions by the administration of Lord Cornwallis towards the end of the last century, has divested the Government, in the oldest and most fertile of its Indian possessions, of this great power of influencing beneficially the condition of the cultivators of the soil. In the provinces of Bengal and Behar, to which were subsequently added Benares, and some districts of the Madras Presidency, the Government gave away its rights over the soil to private landlords, reserving only from each estate an annual payment, which it solemnly bound itself never to increase. It is not necessary here to enter into the disputed questions respecting the original character and rights of these landlords or zemindars.

There is no doubt that many of them were persons of hereditary influence and station in the country, and that their connection with the lands, of which they were now recognized as the proprietors, had in general been of a permanent character. But their position was nevertheless essentially that of middlemen; collecting the revenue, not for themselves, but for the Mogul Government; accounting to that Government for their receipts, and remunerated by a percentage (generally ten per cent) of the collections. It is now universally admitted that they never had the power of disposing arbitrarily of the land. There were, everywhere, at least large classes of tenants, whom they could not lawfully eject, except for non-payment of revenue; and from whom they could not lawfully exact more than the customary payments.

These rights of the occupying tenants it was the full intention of Lord Cornwallis to preserve. But the Government demand being now fixed in perpetuity, and claimable from the landlord only, the revenue officers had no longer any power of interposing in favour of the tenantry; and their rights were henceforth left for protection solely to the courts of justice. But the courts of justice could proceed only by regular suit, on the complaint of the injured party. The poverty of the people, their passive character, and the extreme difficulty of proving by legal evidence, before a distant tribunal, what were the customary rates, have rendered this protection illusory; the rights of the Bengal ryots have (as has been said) passed away *sub silentio*, and they have become, to all intents and purposes, tenants at will. These facts are not adverted to for the purpose of casting blame on a generation long gone by, whose mistakes are sufficiently explained and

excused by the short experience they had then had of India, and the extreme difficulty which persons nurtured only in English ideas and institutions, have in correctly apprehending a state of facts so entirely unlike anything which ever existed in England, as the whole framework of Indian society presents. But justice to the subsequent Governments of India requires it to be understood, that in the most fertile and valuable portion of the Indian territory, they inherited from their predecessors an agrarian system, consisting of great landlords and cottier tenants, forming as close a parallel as the difference between Europe and Asia will admit, to the condition of Munster and Connaught; and that the Government has had, during the last sixty years, no more power of correcting the evils of this system, than the Government of the mother country had, during the same period, of remedying the evils of a similar system in Ireland. The tenacity, however, of old impressions, which characterizes the Hindoos, has kept alive the idea of a right still existing in the actual cultivator to hold his land at a rent fixed by custom, not by arbitrary will; and this traditionary feeling, from which the landlords themselves are not exempt, must form the basis of anything that can be hereafter done to improve the tenure of the Bengal ryot.

Present
Improvements in
Bengal.

What the Government had it in its power to do, for alleviating the operation of the existing system, it has done. It takes systematic measures for the education of zemindars who are wards of Government. It has made imperative on the landlords to give to every tenant a written engagement, specifying the amount of rent and the conditions of tenure; and it has made these engagements legally binding. It has done more. Owing to the hasty and careless mode

in which the permanent settlement was in the first instance conducted, the boundaries both of estates and of villages or townships were undefined, and not only the litigation but the affrays, occasioned by boundary disputes, had grown into a public evil. The revenue officers were so ill informed on the subject, that in some cases estates advertised for sale on account of arrears of revenue, were purchased, and possession was demanded, when it was found that the estate existed only in the collector's books, having been swept away by the changes in the bed of the river, or absorbed by the encroachments of the neighbouring landholders. To remedy these evils, a survey was determined on, and has been for several years in progress, for the purpose of ascertaining what estates are in existence, and determining their boundaries. This survey has already produced very appreciable benefit, and holds out the promise of much more.*

The Governments which have administered Indian affairs in the present generation, have abstained from imitating elsewhere the errors which were committed in the permanent settlement of Bengal. Their object has been, as new provinces were successively brought under British rule, to ascertain accurately the persons, and classes of persons, who by law or usage had a beneficial interest in the land, and the nature and extent of the beneficial interest of each; and having thus determined who were the persons with whom the settlement of the revenue should be concluded, to define the demand of Government on each, and limit it to the smallest amount consistent with the public necessities.

The subsequent revenue administration of India

* See Appendix (A).

is a succession of conscientious endeavours to fulfil these duties; endeavours which, in a large portion of India, have been rewarded by signal success, and in the remainder are in rapid progress towards it.

Ryotwar
System in
Madras.

Nearly the whole territory of the Madras Presidency became part of the British possessions at a period subsequent to Lord Cornwallis's permanent settlement; and its revenue system was principally founded by two of the ablest men who have ever taken part in the government of India—Colonel Reade and Sir Thomas Munro. Under this system, the land is not made over to great landlords, but the actual cultivator, the peasant himself, is regarded as the proprietor of the soil, subject to the payment of the Government demand. He has the option annually of increasing or diminishing his holding; and, in the words of the Madras Government in their last general report, “has all the benefits of a perpetual lease, “without its responsibilities, inasmuch as he can, at any “time, throw up his lands, but cannot be ejected as long “as he pays his dues.” He also receives assistance, by remission of assessment in unfavourable seasons. The practical operation of this, which is known as the ryotwar system, evidently depends on the certainty and moderation of the Government demand. For many years these two conditions were very insufficiently realized. The extreme difficulty, to a European revenue officer, of ascertaining the real capabilities of each petty holding, and his unavoidable dependence, for much of his information, upon native subordinates, made it inevitable that great errors should be committed in the first assessments. Some were unnecessarily low, but a much greater number were too high; and if not so at first, many afterwards became so, when the security which our rule had

given from the ravages of war and internal depredation, had produced its natural effect in the extension of cultivation, and consequent lowering of the price of agricultural produce; whereby, notwithstanding the increased well-being of the ryots, the same money rent became a burthensome exaction, which was comparatively little felt when the produce bore a higher price.* These circumstances were, as justice required, allowed for, and reductions made, but not always sufficiently early, nor to a sufficient amount. And so long as the Government demand was too heavy, it was also uncertain, owing to the necessity of an annual inquiry to test the justice of claims to remission.

Up to this time, it could not be said that the British Government in India had anywhere succeeded in establishing the revenue administration on a sound basis. But inquiries and discussions of the utmost importance were going on, and knowledge was being acquired, the want of which at former periods had led to all the mistakes. It was in the settlement of the North-western Provinces that the fruits of this increased knowledge were first gathered in.

The greater part of what are called the North-western Provinces became part of the British dominions through the consequences of Lord Wellesley's Mahratta wars, in the first years of the present century. For a considerable number of years after the conquest, the revenue arrangements were of necessity provisional. Such serious consequences having been experienced in Bengal from hastening to establish a permanent system, when the knowledge acquired was not sufficient for framing it rightly, there need be no wonder if, in a new field, considerable time was in the first instance devoted to becoming

Settlement of
the North-
western
Provinces.

acquainted with the capabilities of the country, and the prescriptive rights of the different classes of its inhabitants. The delay was amply justified by its results. The settlement of the North-western Provinces, commenced and completed between 1834 and 1844, by some of the most distinguished of the Company's servants, among whom the most conspicuous in merit was Mr. Robert Mertens Bird, is the first great monument which the British rule in India has exhibited, of wise, deliberate, but thorough reform, grounded on complete knowledge of the subject, and equally efficacious in removing present evils and in providing for future improvement.

It is now known that in the greater part of India, and without doubt originally throughout the whole, the property in the land (so far as that term is applicable at all in India) resides neither in the individual ryot, nor in the great officers who collected revenue for the former native governments, but in the village communities. The village community is not co-extensive with the cultivating inhabitants of the village : it consists of the descendants or representatives of those by whom the village was, at some remote period, conquered, or reclaimed from waste. In most cases these proprietors are a part, and in some the whole, of the agricultural population of the village. When they are only a part, the remainder consists of persons, or the descendants of persons, who have taken up their residence in the village at later periods, and had no other original right than the permission of the proprietors ; but some of whom have, by grant or prescription, acquired a fixity of tenure, while others have remained tenants at will. The village proprietors formed prescriptively the municipal government of the village ; a fact of great importance,

village government being the only institution, properly so called, which the Hindoos possessed.

It was with the village communities, as thus defined, that the settlement of the North-western Provinces was made; with a reservation and definition of all rights which had been acquired by any of the ryots under them. The time occupied in the operation was about ten years, and the expense incurred in it was upwards of £500,000. It comprehended a detailed survey of a country about 72,000 square miles in extent, containing a population of more than twenty-three millions. The difficulty and complication of the process will appear from the appended note.*

The proprietary rights, as ascertained and recorded at the survey, were confirmed in perpetuity; but the Government assessment was fixed, in some cases for twenty, generally for thirty, years. In a few of the districts, the term of settlement has expired, or is on the point of expiring. On resettlement, the assessment is liable to revision, and may be increased if the net produce of the land has augmented, but not proportionally to the increase of the net produce; and a pledge has besides been given, that a liberal consideration will be allowed for "improvements attributable only to the efforts of the tenant himself, and "especially with regard to such as are of a comparatively recent date."

The effect of the settlement upon the general pressure of the Government demand was to remove irregularities, and in general to lighten the aggregate burthen; the only exceptions being Goruckpore and Azimgurh, in which districts, though they are known to be still lightly taxed, a considerable increase was effected. The beneficial results may be traced in the

* See Appendix (B).

improved condition of the population, and the ease and punctuality with which a revenue of more than £4,000,000 is collected, as evidenced by the small amount of outstanding balances, and the great diminution in the number of coercive processes for the enforcement of payment.

Settlement
of
the Punjab.

After this great economical and social reform had been for some years in operation, the important territory of the Punjab became, by the event of the Sikh war, a part of British India. This took place in 1849. And now was seen the full value of the superior knowledge of native rights and institutions, which had been acquired since the period of Lord Cornwallis's settlement. The task of bringing the Punjab under British rule was confided to men wisely selected from the body of public servants who had effected and administered the settlement of the North-western Provinces. The principles of the settlement, being grounded on a correct knowledge of the prescriptive rights of all classes, were found equally applicable to the adjacent territory of the Punjab. In India, as in other countries, great reforms have usually been of slow introduction. Our revenue improvements, so long as they were merely tentative, were necessarily slow. But their authors were now able to proceed with the ease and decision of men who thoroughly understood their work. There is something striking in the rapidity with which the latest and best principles of Indian policy, both in revenue and judicial administration, were at once applied to the Punjab by the consummate administrators to whom the discernment of the Marquis of Dalhousie had committed the government of the province. Before a year had elapsed from the first acquisition of the country, great progress had already been made in the

introduction of the system of the North-western Provinces, with its most recent improvements. The greater part of the Punjab in extent, and by far the greatest in point of importance, has since been settled for terms of years. The leases were usually shorter than in the North-western Provinces; but the assessment was lowered, as compared with that of the native Government, by Rs. 72,37,244, or £723,724; being not less than twenty-five per cent. It has been ascertained that the Government demand does not exceed one-fifth of the gross value of the produce in rich tracts, and one-sixth, or one-eighth, or even less, in poor tracts. The result has been a peace and security never before known in the province; a rapid increase of cultivation and production; and a contentment with our rule, which has enabled this newly-conquered territory, inhabited by the most warlike population of India, to become the base of our operations for the recovery of our older territories, and has made the Sikhs, so lately in arms against us, an important part of our strength for subduing the general revolt of the Bengal army.

While these great improvements were taking place in the north of India, a reform of equal magnitude was being inaugurated in the west and south. The reformed revenue administration of those territories is not grounded on the village, but on the ryotwar principle. The ryotwar system, or that which recognizes the actual cultivator of the soil as its proprietor, and collects the Government revenue directly from him, is the general system of the South of India. Circumstances already mentioned had, during many years, prevented this system, even under the able management of Sir Thomas Munro, from operating beneficially on the prosperity of the people. As, in Northern

Bombay
Ryotwar
Reform.

India, the territories latest acquired were those which first had the benefit of our improved knowledge and experience; so, the earliest example of a successful ryotwar system was in the districts (forming the greater part of the Bombay territories) which came under British government at the close of Lord Hastings's Mahratta war, in 1818.

The village communities still existed in those territories; and if the village system had been as well understood in 1818 as it was in 1838, the settlement of the Deccan would probably have been made on the same principles as that of the North-western Provinces. Such, however, was not the case: Sir Thomas Munro's principles were then in the ascendant; the settlement was, for the most part, ryotwar; and until about twenty years ago, little had been done to improve the fiscal administration of these territories, beyond the removal occasionally, as they were brought to notice, of vexatious and oppressive taxes, which had been added to, or incorporated with, the land revenue, during the declining period of the Mahratta power. The assessments which we found in force were generally, even after these reductions, excessive; and large remissions were annually required, which necessitated every year an inquisitorial investigation into the affairs of each ryot who claimed a share in the remissions. The agricultural population, being always liable to be called on for an amount of rent which could only be paid in the most prosperous seasons, were constantly in arrear, and were therefore without any incentive to improve their condition.

To remedy these evils, a survey of the country and general revision of the assessment, were undertaken. The operation commenced in the Deccan and Southern Mahratta country, where it is now nearly, if

not quite, completed; and it is gradually being extended to the northern districts of the Presidency, as the experienced officers, European, and native, who have been trained to this difficult duty, can be spared for the purpose. In the northern districts, however, the progress of the survey has been retarded by the greater complication of the landed tenures there prevalent, and by the existence of various classes of middlemen, who, like the talookdars of Oude, are hostile to our improvements, because, though preserving to them their pecuniary rights, they interfere with their power.

Where any ancient proprietors, either middlemen or village communities, were found in existence, and in possession of their proprietary rights, at the time of the survey, those rights have been respected; but in general, the principle of the reformed Bombay system is ryotwar. The land, cultivate and waste together, is divided into portions called fields, the extent of a field being for the most part fixed at the quantity of land which can be cultivated with one yoke of bullocks. On each field the Government demand is fixed, for a period of thirty years, at a very moderate rate. While the contract is binding on the Government, the ryot, on his side, can throw up the land at pleasure; and he is not required to pay the assessment for any year, on any field which he has not cultivated, or undertaken to cultivate, in that year. The appended note* explains the details of the process.

The fixation of the Government demand for thirty years would have been of little service to the ryot, if the demand had remained so high as to require, almost every year, remissions of uncertain amount.

* See Appendix (C).

But it has been fixed on a very low scale, the reduction of the assessment generally exceeding considerably the average amount of remissions and balances under the former system. The effect of this reform is visible in the large increase of cultivation which has always taken place after the completion of the survey of a district; in the realization of the revenue, with scarcely any balance remaining in arrear (in some years with absolutely none); and in the fact, that in all the surveyed districts lands are frequently underlet. These important results have been purchased by an immediate sacrifice of revenue; but the encouragement which a fixed and moderate assessment gives to the occupation of waste land, is gradually making up to Government for the loss; and in some of the surveyed districts, the revenue under the new settlement already exceeds that under the old.

The eminent success of the reformed ryotwar system of Bombay has established the fact, which many Indian authorities trained in a different system had doubted, that the ryotwar, or peasant-proprietary system, may be so organized, and so worked, as to be neither oppressive nor arbitrary; and that, when so organized and worked, it brings the motives to exertion, and to the exercise of intelligence, which property gives, to bear upon those on whom the prosperity of agriculture most depends—the actual cultivators of the soil. In all those parts of India, therefore, in which the village communities have been broken up by the distracted state of the country for generations, or in which the exclusive title of the representatives of the old proprietors has been superseded by the prescriptive rights acquired by the actual cultivators, ryotwar is now the recognized system of revenue management.

In the Madras Presidency, considerable improvements in the detail of the revenue system preceded the steps recently taken for a general revision. The most important of these are the two following. In 1837, it was adopted as an universal rule, that no land should be more heavily taxed, in consequence of its being applied to the cultivation of a more valuable description of produce. The demand was thenceforth fixed on a general estimate of the productive power of the land, with reference to the staple productions of the country; and the ryot was left perfectly free to cultivate whatever he pleased, without being in any case liable, on that account, to an increased demand. From this time, therefore, there has not been even the semblance of foundation for the statement often made, that the land assessment is a discouragement to the growth of the more valuable products, and, in particular, of cotton. To go any further would be to demand a lower rent from lands on which cotton is grown, than from land devoted to other cultivation; which would be to give a bounty on the production of cotton.

Madras Improvements.

The other great improvement was the establishment of the rule, that no ryot should be required to pay an additional tax (or rent) for his land, in consideration of increased value derived from improvements made by himself. If, therefore, a proprietor, by labour or outlay of his own, sinks wells, constructs tanks, or plants valuable trees, he enjoys, not for the duration of any settlement, but in perpetuity, the full benefit of the increased value which he has given to the land; an assurance which no private tenant in any country, even of Europe, has obtained.*

Large reductions of the assessment have also

* See Appendix (D).

been made in the most heavily-taxed districts, which have in general produced so great an extension of cultivation, that the revenue has scarcely suffered.

Ryotwar
Reform in
progress
at Madras.

In 1855, the present enlightened Governor of Madras submitted a plan for a survey and revised assessment of the whole of the Madras territory, on the Bombay principle, to the consideration of the Governor-General in Council. Having obtained the approval of that authority, it was laid before the Court of Directors, and received their formal sanction in a despatch dated the 17th of December, 1856; in which also several improvements were indicated, of which the scheme appeared to be susceptible. A commencement has thus been made in removing the last remaining blot in the administration of the land revenue of British India; for the social and economical condition of the Lower Provinces of Bengal is, for reasons already explained, no longer dependent upon the revenue system.

Under both the reformed modes of revenue administration, the village system of the North-west Provinces and the Punjab (the introduction of which into the more recent acquisitions of Nagpore and Oude has been sanctioned) and the ryotwar system of the Bombay and Madras presidencies, the agricultural population either have, or will shortly have, the benefits of tenures and rights perfectly defined and secured, and moderate rents fixed for a sufficient term to afford, in full strength, the natural incentives to improvement. It should be remembered also, that on the expiration of the thirty years settlements, the holders will not be liable to be ejected. They will only be liable to a revision of the amount of the rent paid to Government; and it is the declared intention of the authorities, that not merely the same, but a

still greater degree of moderation, shall be observed in the future, than in the past, settlements.

~ A further exemplification of the manner in which the Indian authorities now take advantage of the latest experience for purposes of improvement, is afforded by recent proceedings in two limited portions of the territory of India. Cuttack is a portion of the Lower Bengal Provinces, to which the permanent settlements of Lord Cornwallis were never extended. The revenue system of Cuttack is ryotwar; but the attempt has latterly been made to combine the advantages of the ryotwar principle, with a portion of those of the system of the North-west Provinces. The assessment is made on each holding, and the payment to be made by each ryot is fixed, by the Government officers; but the collection of it from the individual ryots by native revenue officers, with the opportunities it affords for vexation and corruption, is done away with: the ryots elect a few of their number to represent the rest; these become responsible to Government for the whole revenue of the village, and take on themselves the recovery from the other ryots of their portion of the payment, according to the terms of the settlement; having recourse to the tribunals, if (which is not a common occurrence) such aid is required. This mixed system of ryotwar and village management, having been successful in Cuttack, is in course of introduction into one of our latest acquisitions, the districts made over to our permanent administration by the Nizam; and the plan has been recommended by the home authorities to the attention of the Madras Government, with a view to eventual application to that presidency.

After this review of the present revenue administration of India in its bearing on the social rela-

Fiscal
System of
India.

tions, proprietary rights, and economical condition of the mass of the people, it remains to speak of it as a merely fiscal system.

Land
Revenue.

Nearly two-thirds of the revenue of India consist of the rent of land. So far as this resource extends in any country, the public necessities of the country may be said to be provided for, at no expense to the people at large. Where the original right of the State to the land of the country has been reserved, and its natural, but no more than its natural, rents made available to meet the public expenditure, the people may be said to be so far untaxed; because the Government only takes from them as a tax, what they would otherwise have paid as rent to a private landlord. This proposition undoubtedly requires modification in the case of a ryot or peasant cultivating his own land; but even in his case, if the Government demand does not exceed the amount which the land could pay as rent if let to a solvent tenant (that is, the price of its peculiar advantages of fertility or situation), the Government only reserves to itself, instead of conceding to the cultivator, the profit of a kind of natural monopoly, leaving to him the same reward of his labour and capital which is obtained by the remainder of the industrious population.

Any amount whatever of revenue, therefore, derived from the rent of land, cannot be regarded, generally speaking, as a burthen on the tax-paying community. But to this it is of course essential that the demand of revenue should be kept within the limits of a fair rent. Under the native Governments, and in the earlier periods of our own, this limit was often exceeded. But under the British rule, in every instance in which the fact of excessive assessment was proved by large outstanding balances and increased

difficulty of realization, the Government has, when the fact was ascertained, taken measures for reducing the assessment. The history of our government in India has been a continued series of reductions of taxation; and in all the improved systems of revenue administration, of which an account has been given in the preceding part of this paper, the object has been not merely to keep the Government demand within the limits of a fair rent, but to leave a large portion of the rent to the proprietors. In the settlement of the North-west Provinces, the demand was limited to two-thirds of the amount which it appeared, from the best attainable information, that the land could afford to pay as rent. The principle which has been laid down for the next settlement, and acted on wherever resettlement has commenced, is still more liberal: the Government demand is fixed at one-half, instead of two-thirds, of the average net produce; that is, of a fair rent. The same general standard has been adopted for guidance in the new assessment of the Madras territory. In Bombay no fixed proportion has been kept in view; but the object has been, that land should possess a saleable value. That this object has been attained throughout the surveyed districts of Bombay, there is full evidence: and as the ryots have been secured from increase of revenue for the space of thirty years, the value of land may be expected, from the progress of improvement, to be constantly on the increase.

It has been shown above, that by far the largest item in the public revenue of India is obtained virtually without taxation, because obtained by the mere interception of a payment, which, if not made to the State for public uses, would generally be made to, individuals for their private use. A similar remark

Opium.

though for a different reason, is applicable to the second in amount of the sources of Indian revenue,—that of opium. The opium revenue is not derived from the taxation of any class of her Majesty's subjects, but is (as far as this can be truly said of any impost) paid wholly by foreigners. It cannot reasonably be contended that this is an improper source of revenue, or that the burthening of an article considered to be noxious, with an amount of taxation which has sometimes caused it to be sold for its weight in silver, can be liable to objection as encouraging the consumption of the article. Whether this revenue, of between four and five millions sterling, should be levied as it is at present in Bengal (though not in Bombay) by a Government monopoly, or in the more usual form of an excise duty, is a question of detail on which opinions differ, and which is open to consideration. The former mode has hitherto been retained, under the belief that the unrestricted production and sale of the article would give such facilities to smuggling, as would render the realization of anything like the present amount of revenue impossible. It might, however, be practicable—though this is doubtful—to maintain the price in the foreign market by restrictions on exportation; but it is matter for serious consideration whether any system involving the free cultivation of the poppy, would not expose India itself, which has hitherto been comparatively free from this kind of hurtful indulgence, to be flooded with the article at a low price.

Salt.

The third item, in point of amount, of the revenue of India, is that from salt. This is the only considerable tax existing in India which can be regarded as objectionable in principle, and the entire abandonment of which, if financially practicable, would be a benefit to the people at large. It is impossible,

however, to look upon this impost in the same light in which it would deserve to be considered if it were levied in addition to other heavy burthens. We must bear in mind, in extenuation of the objections to a tax on salt, that it is, speaking generally, the only tax which the labouring ryot of India pays.

The revenue from salt is commonly said to be obtained by means of a monopoly. This, however (as will be seen by the appended note*), is strictly true only of the Madras Presidency; and even there the monopoly is of a very qualified description, since the importation of the commodity is free, subject to a duty considered equivalent to the profit charged by Government on the salt produced by it. In the Bombay territory there never has been a monopoly, or even a Government manufacture. There is an excise duty, imposed to compensate for other more objectionable taxes, yielding a far greater amount of revenue, which have been abolished. The Government of India, in 1844, fixed this excise duty at one rupee per maund of 82½ lbs.; but before this rate had come into operation, it was reduced by the Court of Directors to twelve annas (three-fourths of a rupee). In the same year, and for a similar reason—namely, to compensate for other taxes then abolished—the Government of India fixed the selling price of the monopoly salt in the Madras Presidency, at one and a half rupees per maund; but the Court of Directors immediately reduced it to one rupee.

In Bengal, up to 1836, there was a real monopoly. In that year, in anticipation of the subsequent recommendation of a Committee of the House of Commons, the Bengal system was fundamentally modified. The present system is, to ascertain the actual cost to Government of all descriptions of salt

* See Appendix (E).

manufactured at the Government works, and to issue it to dealers, in any quantity applied for, at a price equal to the cost with the addition of a fixed duty. Importation is free, subject to the payment of the same duty. The duty has been gradually lowered from three sicca rupees per maund (equivalent to $3\frac{1}{4}$ Company's rupees) to $2\frac{1}{2}$ Company's rupees (about three farthings per pound); while the Madras duty is only $\frac{7}{8}$ of a rupee, and the Bombay only $\frac{3}{4}$ (less than a farthing per pound). The reduction in Bengal, not having been attended with the hoped-for increase of consumption, has not been carried further. Even if the revenue derived from salt were not required for the necessary purposes of government, it is still conceived that more good would be done to the people by retaining the tax, and expending its proceeds in roads and works of irrigation, than could possibly be done by its remission.

Within the last three years, the manufacture of salt in the districts round Calcutta has been laid open to all who are willing to engage in it, subject to excise regulations. Very little use, however, has been made of this liberty, the quantity of salt manufactured under license having only amounted to from 20,000 to 25,000 maunds. It is hoped that the quantity will increase, and that private enterprise may in time supersede Government agency. But the small amount of response made to the encouragement held out, is a presumption that the Government arrangements for the manufacture and sale afford as marketable an article, at as low a cost, as could be produced by private manufacturers.

Tobacco
Monopoly
abolished.

The tobacco monopoly which formerly existed in the Malabar provinces of the Madras Presidency, and which yielded an annual revenue of about six lacs

of rupees (£60,000), was abolished in 1852, without equivalent: and this article is now wholly untaxed.

The customs, in India, are not a very productive source of revenue, the classes who consume any considerable amount of foreign productions being comparatively limited. There is no branch of taxation in which the burthens of the people have been more conspicuously lightened by the British Government. The most important taxes levied on commodities by the native Governments of India, were the inland customs, or transit duties. Every petty chief whose territory was situated on any of the great lines of commerce, made use of his position to extort from traders the largest sums which they could be induced to pay. In the British territories, these duties have been entirely abolished: in the Lower Bengal Provinces as early as the administration of Lord Cornwallis (reimposed in a modified form in 1801, and finally abolished in 1836); in the North-western Provinces from 1834 to 1836; in the Bombay Presidency in 1837; in Madras in 1844; and in our other possessions immediately after their acquisition. This was not a small sacrifice of revenue. The transit duties in Madras alone yielded a net revenue of about thirty-one lacs of rupees, or £310,000 sterling. Several of the native princes have, with praiseworthy liberality, followed the example of the British Government, by abolishing, or greatly lowering, their transit duties; and the diplomatic influence of our Government is freely used to encourage this policy. In cases in which the duties levied by some particular chief have been an obstruction to important lines of mercantile communication, and in which it was not probable that the chief would be indemnified for their loss by the increase of his other sources of revenue, our Government has even purchased his assent by pecuniary compensation.

Customs.

Besides these duties, the sale of goods was, under the native Governments, hampered by innumerable exactions, laid on under various pretences, most of which we have, on every occasion of coming into possession of a new territory, abolished or commuted. But some taxes on internal trade still remained even in the British territories. The last of these has been swept away less than two years ago, by an order from the home authorities, bearing date the 5th November 1856, for the abolition of the Mohturfa, or tax on houses, trades, and professions, in the Madras Presidency. There are now no internal customs in British India, except, in some cases, town duties; and these, not for general, but for local purposes, and as far as possible under local management; though the exertions of the Indian Governments to foster a municipal spirit, and induce the inhabitants of towns to take an active part in the management of town affairs, are only beginning, and very slowly, to be successful.

There has been similar activity in reducing the duties on the external commerce of India, and extending the principles of free trade. In the recent acquisitions of Sind and the Punjab, the frontier duties have been entirely abolished, and those territories are outside our customs line. On the frontier line between the Punjab and the North-western Provinces, customs are paid on salt and sugar only. In Southern India the land tariff is the same as that on imports by sea. The discriminating duties on goods carried in foreign vessels were abolished in 1848; and in 1850 the coasting trade was thrown open to the ships of all nations: In thus abolishing the navigation laws, the Government of India preceded the Imperial Government. The three presidencies

were formerly, in regard to commerce, treated as distinct settlements, and the trade between them subjected to the same duties as that between India and Great Britain. In 1848 this trade was completely thrown open, and the whole of British India treated, for customs purposes, as one empire; and great success has attended the efforts of the Company to obtain for the produce of native states in dependent alliance with us, the privilege of admission into the ports of the United Kingdom at the rates of duty chargeable on goods of British origin. The duty levied on British goods imported into India is five per cent *ad valorem*. There is still a distinctive double duty on many articles imported from foreign countries; and a general export duty of three per cent (from which however cotton is exempt) on the produce and manufactures of India. These are admitted defects; and the export duties were marked out by the home authorities, in a despatch of 1846, to be dispensed with at the earliest period which financial considerations may permit.

The post-office in India, as in England, is maintained more for public convenience than as a source of revenue. Its improvement in India has fully kept pace with that in England. Reductions of postage, and the removal of practical impediments and imperfections, may be said to have been constantly in progress; and the great change recently made in the post-office system of this country has been imitated, with equal success, in India. The principle of uniform postage, without reference to distance, has been adopted, and letters and newspapers are conveyed from Cape Comorin to Peshawur at the same charge as for the shortest distance. The lowest rate is half an anna, or three farthings, for a letter a quarter of a

Post-office. ●

tola in weight (equivalent to about one-tenth of an ounce); it having been found by experiment that the average weight of native letters is considerably below this limit. There is an ascending scale of charges up to twelve tolas, above which weight letters are not conveyed by the ordinary post; but a parcel post is also maintained by Government, which they are prepared to abandon whenever the duty shall be undertaken by private enterprise. Newspapers are conveyed at a charge of one anna, or three halfpence each. The postage on letters and newspapers must be prepaid by stamps, under penalty of double postage on delivery. There is also a book post, at a minimum rate of one anna per twenty tolas (about half a pound), and an ascending scale up to 120 tolas, or three pounds. Arrangements have been made with her Majesty's Government for the conveyance of letters, newspapers, and books, from any part of England to any part of India, at low rates of postage, payable in one sum, either on despatch or receipt. The Post-office department for all India is under the control of a Director-General at Calcutta, immediately under the Government of India. The progress of improvements in every branch of the details has been very striking, and it is believed that the department will not suffer by a comparison with that of any other country.

The pecuniary results of the change to a low uniform postage have been as satisfactory as in England. It had been doubted whether such a population as that of India would take advantage of the facilities afforded for correspondence, to the extent necessary to make up, in any considerable degree, to the revenue, for the diminution of the rate. At the close, however, of 1855-56 (the first complete year of the new system), the number of chargeable

letters had increased 101 per cent as compared with the preceding year, and 142 per cent as compared with 1849-50. The loss of revenue, which, if there had been no increase of correspondence, would have been Rs. 9,12,000, is only Rs. 3,01,869, and may be expected yearly to diminish.

The general result of all these improvements in administration, combined with the security which our rule has for the first time given to property against the ravages of war and fiscal rapacity, has been a great and rapid growth of general prosperity. Besides the remarkable increase of cultivation and population, the cheapening of agricultural produce, and the recovery of the revenue after great reductions, which have been already commemorated, there has been an enormous increase in the external commerce of India. The exports have risen from £7,993,420 in 1834-5, to £23,039,268 in 1855-6, being 188 per cent. The export of cotton amounted in the former year to 98,320,050 lbs., and in the latter to 237,179,949 lbs., being an increase of 141 per cent; but the quantity exported to England has increased in a much greater ratio, namely from 38,268,402 lbs. to 170,771,510 lbs., or 346 per cent. The export of rice, chiefly from the east coast of the Bay of Bengal, has so vastly increased that labour can scarcely be found to transport it to the coast; the wages of labourers have risen to an unexampled height, and the agricultural population of large districts are, for the first time in memory, out of debt to money-lenders and to their landlords. During the same period of twenty-one years, the imports into India have risen from £4,261,106 to £13,447,027, or upwards of 227 per cent; the great excess of exports above imports being regularly liquidated in silver.

General
Prosperity.

JUDICATURE AND LEGISLATION.

Judicial arrangements
of Lord
Cornwallis.

The history of the judicial administration of British India bears a striking analogy to that of the revenue administration. It began with well-intended, but premature and ill-considered measures, which produced many evils, and but a small part of the good which their authors expected from them. When experience had disclosed the faults of the system at first adopted, similar errors were avoided, and a better system introduced into our later acquisitions; while palliatives of great value, though falling short of the full exigencies of the case, were adopted in the older provinces. Last came the plans, now in an advanced stage of their progress, for effecting a complete reform.

At the period at which the judicial arrangements of Lord Cornwallis were made, the ideas of civil judicature entertained in England still partook of an almost barbarous character. The English courts of law were still encumbered with all the technicalities, and disgraced by all the delay and expense, which had descended from the middle ages, or grown up in the attempt to make the institutions of the middle ages suffice for the wants of modern society; and unfortunately these courts, far from being considered defective, were looked upon as the models to be imitated in every other place, departure from which was regarded as an imperfection, in all cases to be regretted, though not always to be avoided. The Legislature, however, had recognized that forms of procedure more simple and expeditious might possibly be necessary in India; and power had been given to

the judges of Her Majesty's Supreme Court to modify the procedure of that court, so as to meet the exigency: but the power was never acted on. It is, therefore, not surprising that Lord Cornwallis's courts were greatly infected (though in a far less degree than the courts in England then were) with technicalities of procedure, calculated both to defeat justice, and to obstruct the access to it by needless delay and expense. But the arrangements had a still more fatal defect: the judicial establishment was totally inadequate to the wants of the country. The attempt to administer justice (except in the most trifling cases) wholly by European agency, made it impossible to defray the expense of the number of courts necessary to render justice accessible: and if the benefits of judicature were to be afforded at all to the mass of the people, the intrusting, under proper securities, of the greatest portion of it to native functionaries, was not a question of expediency, but of necessity.

The creation of native courts of justice, and (as the experiment succeeded) the progressive extension of their powers, has been the greatest practical improvement made in the administration of justice in our older provinces during the last and present generation. The foundation for the present extensive employment of uncovenanted and native agency in the judicial department, was laid by the administration of Lord William Bentinck in 1831. At present, in the Bengal and Bombay presidencies, the entire original jurisdiction in civil suits is in the hands of the native judges, the covenanted Europeans being only judges of appeal; and the same thing is true of the Madras Presidency, in regard to all suits below the value of 10,000 rupees. The employment of uncovenanted agency has also been greatly extended in the adminis-

Subsequent
Improve-
ments.

tration of criminal justice, and in the revenue department. Deputy magistrates (in some instances exercising judicial powers equal to those of the district magistrate) and deputy collectors, discharge important functions, and afford material assistance to the head authorities of the district. Most of these are natives, and some of them natives of high rank and influence.

The movement towards reform in legal affairs generally, also dates from the administration of Lord William Bentinck. At Bombay, indeed, the Regulations of Government, comprising the penal law and the law of procedure actually in force, and as much of the civil law as had been introduced by our own Government, had already, under Mr. Elphinstone's administration, been consolidated into what is called the *Bombay Code*. But it was on the recommendation of Lord William Bentinck's Government that, by the Act of 1833, the present ample legislative powers for all India were conferred on the Governor-General in Council; a barrister appointed from England being added to the Council, for the express purpose of aiding the Government in its legislative functions. By the Act of 1853, the Legislative Council was further enlarged by the addition of the Chief Justice and one puisne judge of her Majesty's Supreme Court, two members representing Madras and Bombay, and selected by those Governments, and two representing Bengal and the North-western Provinces, and appointed by the Lieutenant-Governors; to whom the Governor-General has the power of adding two other civil servants of Government, selected at his discretion. The Legislative Council now holds its sittings in public, and its debates are regularly reported and published.

Since the first institution of the Legislative Council, few years have passed in which there have not been one or two legislative measures for the improvement of the procedure of the civil courts. The object of some has been to facilitate the progress of suits through their various stages; of others, to secure the correct recording of the judgment, by prescribing that it shall be made by the judge himself; of others, to insure a more speedy and certain execution of judgments; of others, to render more efficient the systems of regular and special appeals. Legislative measures have also been taken for reforming the law of evidence; for the abolition of Persian as the language of record; and for putting the office of native pleader on a more efficient and respectable footing. The defects of the criminal courts have likewise largely engaged the attention of the Legislature, and much has been done for their improvement. But notwithstanding these partial amendments, it cannot be said that the courts, in what are called the Regulation Provinces, have yet been freed from their radical defects. The principal impediments to a good administration of justice, are the complicated and technical system of pleading in the civil courts, and in the criminal courts the character of the police.

By the Act of 1833, a Law Commission was appointed to sit in Calcutta, and inquire into the jurisdiction and procedure of the courts of justice and police establishments, and into the operation of the laws, civil and criminal. The declared purpose of Parliament in creating the Law Commission, as well as in the new constitution given at the same time to the Legislative Council, was to facilitate measures for bringing Europeans and natives under the same courts of justice, civil and criminal. The machinery constructed

• The
New Codes.

for this purpose has been employed to lay the foundation for correcting all the principal defects of the laws and of the tribunals. The Commission prepared a penal code of great merit, and made many reports full of valuable suggestions on other branches of legal administration, some of which have been acted on. But it was important that any new system, before being brought into practical effect, should be well understood by those who would have to apply it, and should be approved by those whose authority would carry the greatest weight. Opinion could not be expected to ripen all at once on so great a subject as the reconstruction of the legal and judicial system of a vast country; and the suggestions of the Law Commissioners, being referred to various authorities, elicited great varieties of judgment. By the Act of 1853, a Commission was appointed to sit in London, for considering and reporting on the recommendations of the Indian Law Commissioners. The wants of India as to codes, both of substantive law and of procedure, civil and criminal, have been fully considered by the Commissioners so appointed. They have recorded a strong recommendation in favour of the preparation of a code of civil law for India; and they have prepared complete codes of civil and criminal procedure, grounded on a rare combination of appropriate local knowledge with the matured views of enlightened jurists. These codes, together with the penal code passed by the earlier commission, are in progress through the Legislative Council of India, and would probably by this time have been law, but for the calamitous events by which the attention of all Indian authorities has of late been engrossed.

These codes, when enacted, will constitute the

most thorough reform probably ever yet made in the judicial administration of a country. The code of civil procedure entirely sweeps away the present cumbersome and complicated system of pleading, and substitutes the *viva voce* examination of the parties; and in all other respects, as compared with the previous practice, it is of great simplicity, and eminently free from delay and expense. As Mr. Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-western Provinces, observed in his last general report, "It is not alone, as the Lieutenant-Governor apprehends, that by the new code of procedure, the practice of the courts will be made more simple and rapid, and the costs of a suit be diminished; it is because, as he hopes, the judges will be brought much more frequently into direct communication with the parties in suits and their witnesses, without any intervention of agents or pleaders, that he looks to the public becoming satisfied that the courts are to be trusted as a means for obtaining substantial justice, and not dreaded as an engine capable of being readily perverted to the working of fraud and wrong under the forms of law. It is not, he fears, to be denied that low classes of practitioners and unscrupulous habits of chicane have grown up about our courts, with their old complex and artificial pleadings and rules: and this being the case, it cannot be matter of surprise that among a population so generally ignorant and helpless, discredit and dislike should have extensively attached to our judicial institutions." Under the new code, if not materially altered by the Legislative Council, India is likely to possess, so far as judicial institutions can secure that blessing, as good and as accessible an administration of civil justice, as the lights of the age are capable of conferring on it.

Judicial
System of
the Non-
regulation
Provinces.

It was only the Regulation Provinces which stood in need of such a reform; for the Non-regulation Provinces have had (generally from their first acquisition) the benefit of a cheap, accessible, and expeditious administration of justice, free from all such formalities and technicalities as either defeat justice, or add needlessly to the difficulty and expense of obtaining it. The following are the terms in which the eminent Sir John Lawrence, in his last general report, describes the "judicial system of the Punjab, which has been the model of those introduced into all the other recently-acquired territories, as well as into our older possessions of Saugor and Bundelcund:—

" In former reports it has been shown how the
" system of civil judicature in the Punjab has been
" founded and erected; how that no effort has been
" spared to render justice cheap, quick, sure, simple,
" and substantial; how every other consideration has
" been rendered subordinate to these cardinal points.
" We are, indeed, without elaborate laws, but we have
" brief rules, explaining, in an accessible form, the
" main provisions of the several systems of native law
" on such matters as inheritance, marriage, adoption,
" testamentary or other disposition of property; and
" setting forth the chief principles to be observed in
" other branches of law; such as contracts, sale, mort-
" gage, debt, commercial usage. We have the most
" open and liberal provisions for the admission of
" evidence. We have complete arrangements for
" reference to arbitration, and for the ascertainment
" of local custom. We have a procedure, without any
" pretension to technical exactitude; but a procedure
" which provides for the litigants and their respective
" witnesses being confronted in open court, for a
" decision being arrived at immediately after this brief

“ forensic controversy, and for judgment being deli-
 “ vered to the parties then and there. We have a
 “ method of executing decrees, which, while it allows
 “ no door to be opened for evasion or delay on the
 “ part of defendant, and thus renders a decree really
 “ valuable to plaintiff, as being capable of ready
 “ enforcement, and gives him his right free from lien,
 “ encumbrance, or doubt; yet, on the other hand,
 “ prevents the defendant from being hastily dealt with,
 “ or from being placed at the mercy of his creditor.
 “ We have Small-cause Courts scattered all over the
 “ country, and several regular courts at every central
 “ station; so that everywhere justice is near. Our
 “ civil system may appear rough and ready; whether
 “ it would be suited to other provinces, in a dif-
 “ ferent stage of civilization and with a different
 “ machinery at command, may be a question; but in
 “ the Punjab it attains the broad and plain object
 “ aimed at, and without doubt gives satisfaction to
 “ the people.

“ But in order to regulate the administration of
 “ justice, a complete system of reporting has been
 “ established. Month by month, the reports of every
 “ court are transmitted to the judicial department at
 “ head-quarters, and are there criticised. At the close
 “ of each year, these reports, and the figures embodied
 “ in them, are collated, averages are struck, division is
 “ compared with division, and district with district,
 “ and the general result, with a brief critique by supe-
 “ rior authority, indicating the defects to be avoided
 “ and the reforms to be emulated, is published for the
 “ information of all officers concerned. It is believed
 “ that many improvements in the working of the
 “ courts are traceable to this system. Every court
 “ works under a constant sense of supervision, and

“ with the great objects to be aimed at perpetually in
 “ view, and standing out in strong relief.

“ In respect of speed, the average duration of a suit
 “ in 1854 was twenty-eight days, and in 1855 twenty-
 “ three days. This average has been becoming laud-
 “ ably lower year after year; it is now nearly as low
 “ as it can be, consistently with due inquiry and deli-
 “ beration; and as the above average includes all
 “ those cases which for any special cause may be pro-
 “ tracted, it is evident that the trial of most suits can
 “ only extend over a very few days. In respect to
 “ cheapness, the cost averages only 5r. 0a. 1p. per cent
 “ on value of suits during 1854, and 4r. 13a. 3p. per
 “ cent during 1855. As a proof of the entire
 “ absence of technicalities, it is to be observed that
 “ only 5·19 per cent of the suits were nonsuited
 “ during 1854, and 5·42 per cent during 1855. The
 “ small number of nonsuits which are ordered are
 “ probably real and honest ones.”

Prison
 Discipline.

In the course of the last few years the system of prison discipline in India has undergone a complete and most salutary revolution. The origin of this reform may be dated from the report of a committee appointed in Calcutta in 1838, composed chiefly of the principal members and secretary of the Indian Law Commission.

Up to this time, those inmates of jails who were under sentence of labour, were employed almost exclusively (in fetters) on the roads: which rendered prison discipline almost impossible, as the prisoners could nearly always, by the connivance of their guards, command intercourse with friends and relations; and the engineer officers, in their anxiety to obtain efficient work, fed them highly, and treated them in other respects with an indulgence entirely inconsistent with

the purposes of punishment. At the same time, the mortality from exposure and unhealthy localities was great. The committee showed that the State were absolute losers by employing convict labour on the roads; that it would be a positive saving to keep them in idleness in the jails, as the cost of extra superintendence and guards considerably exceeded the expense at which the work they did could be executed by hired labour. Since this time out-door convict labour has been abandoned, and the prisoners are employed within the jails in various manufactures; and this employment, which commenced in 1843, has every year become more profitable, until, in 1855-56, the profit in the fifty-five jails of the Lower Provinces of Bengal reached the large sum of Rs. 1,11,582 (£11,000). This profit now forms a fund for the execution of the public works formerly performed by the convicts themselves. The jail manufactures, too, are of such improved quality, that some of them have acquired a high character in foreign markets; and public exhibitions of them are now held in the Town Hall of Calcutta.

Prisoners sentenced for long terms of years are now removed to large central jails; and the change has been attended with great improvement in general management and discipline. There is an inspector of jails for each presidency and sub-presidency. These officers are most active in discovering and correcting defects, and increasing the effectiveness of the jails, both as reformatories and as places of punishment.

The reform of the police of India is not yet in so advanced a state; but the present disturbances found the authorities in the very crisis of their deliberations on the subject. The police has hitherto remained the most faulty part of our system in India, and it is the part which it is by far the most difficult

to reform effectually. The peculiar difficulty of administering criminal justice in India arises from the character and habits of the people. In most countries, the voluntary and active co-operation of the people may be looked for in bringing criminals to justice. In India, rather than incur the trouble and annoyance of appearing as a prosecutor or as a witness, a man will even forswear himself to screen the man who has robbed him. The injury he has suffered is looked upon as the decree of destiny, and he has no disposition to add to the inconvenience by incurring exertion and expense, and perhaps exposing himself to the further vengeance of the criminal. Among such a people there is only the police who can be looked to for bringing criminals to justice. The great powers which must be intrusted to the police of such a country, and that police necessarily composed principally of natives, give rise, when combined with the passive and slavish character of the people of many parts of India (especially of Bengal), to evils with which the Government has hitherto struggled with very imperfect success.

Police.

The police of India, up to a very recent date, consisted of native establishments, under the control and orders of the European magistrate. Each zillah, or judicial district, is formed into subdivisions (more or fewer, according to the size of the district) each of which is under the charge of a local stipendiary police, consisting of a head native officer and his subordinate clerks sergeants, and constables. The native police in the Bengal Presidency is (with the partial exception of the tehsildars in the North-western Provinces) separate from the body of revenue officers. In the Presidency of Madras, the same officers discharge both revenue and police functions; and, until recently, this was also the case at Bombay.

The recognized defects of the system are, the low rate of pay, and the consequent inferiority of the class of men who enter the police, and also the disproportion of the strength of the force to the density of the population, and to the extent of country committed to their charge. With a view to the correction of these evils in Bengal, higher grades of subdivisional police officers have of late years been created, and their pay has been increased. Deputy magistrates have also been appointed, and invested with the judicial and police charge of subdivisions. The former measure has been productive of some good, by inducing a more trustworthy class to enter the service ; the latter has not yet been carried to a sufficient extent to effect any practical improvement of a general character.

The state of the police of the North-western Provinces had deeply engaged the attention of the late Lieutenant-Governor, the lamented Mr. Colvin. That distinguished functionary conducted, through the district commissioners, a general revision of the local police establishments ; reducing the number of officers in some of the districts, but increasing the salaries, and holding out the sure prospect of promotion as the reward of good conduct and efficient service. These measures were the best that could be adopted with the then available materials ; but they did not at all touch the essential constitution of the police. With regard to the village police, the ancient and indigenous police of the country ; in the North-western Provinces, its proper maintenance by the villages themselves is provided for by the conditions of the settlement. In the Lower Provinces, the terms of the permanent settlement have unfortunately deprived the Government of the power of enforcing this obligation. An Act has, however, been passed for the maintenance

of an improved city police, by an assessment on the occupiers of houses; and this plan has been introduced into several large cities and towns.

It is in the Bombay Presidency that the greatest improvements have been actually effected in police administration. The measures for this purpose were commenced under Sir George Clerk's administration, in 1848. Under the new system, revenue and police functions have ceased to be combined in the same native officers. The powers of punishment previously exercised by police officers have been taken away. To each district has been appointed a European superintendent of police (either a military or an *uncovenanted officer*), under whose command the police force of the district, both village and stipendiary, is placed, and who exercises the functions of an assistant to the magistrate in his police duties. This functionary, again, has the aid, in each subdivision under his orders, of an officer called joint police amildar, who has the more immediate charge of the preservation of the public peace, and the preliminary investigation into crimes of a serious nature. Active measures have been set on foot for reorganizing the village police, by ascertaining the assignments formerly made in lands and money for the purpose, and requiring that the duties for which these assignments were the remuneration, be really performed. The general control and direction of the police of the whole presidency, except the island of Bombay, is concentrated in one chief officer, under the title of Commissioner of Police. These measures are believed to be already effecting a great improvement in the police of the presidency.

In the Punjab, a police system had to be, not reformed, but created; and this task has been fulfilled

with the same efficiency with which every other part of the administration of that territory has been organized. As the Punjab police may not improbably form a model for other parts of India, it is well to note the general features of its constitution.

The police establishments consist of two parts ; the preventive police with a military organization, and the detective with a civil organization.

The preventive police consists of foot and horse ; each regiment has its own native commandant, and the whole force is superintended by four European officers. Both arms of the service are regularly armed and equipped, and are ready at a moment's notice to reinforce the civil police.

The civil police consists, first, of a regular establishment, paid by the State ; secondly, of the city watchmen, paid from a fund raised by the levy of town duties ; and, thirdly, of the village police, nominated by the landholders, confirmed in their offices by the magistrate, and paid by the villagers.

The infantry of the military preventive police furnish guards for jails, treasuries, frontier posts, and city gates, and escorts for treasure. The cavalry are posted in detachments at the civil stations ; and smaller parties, stationed at convenient intervals along the grand lines of road, serve as mounted patrols. The general duties of the civil police consist in reporting crimes, tracking and arresting criminals, and procuring evidence against them.

The police of the Punjab have been eminently successful in repressing crimes of a violent nature, in breaking up gangs of murderers and robbers, and in bringing criminals to justice ; and in no part of India is the authority of the Government more thoroughly respected than in the Punjab.

In 1856, the Court of Directors, in a despatch which has been laid before Parliament, discussed at some length the defects of the police of India, and the means available for their correction, and proposed for the consideration of the Government of India a plan of thorough reform, grounded on the three principles, of European command, unity of action throughout the country, and complete separation between revenue and police duties.

* This plan has undergone careful deliberation from the Government of India. The various members of that Government, and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, have individually recorded their sentiments, in minutes characterized by a frank recognition of existing defects, an earnest desire of improvement, a remarkable amount of knowledge and understanding of the subject, and great ability in the statement and discussion of the merits and defects of the various plans advocated. For the present, so far as regards the Bengal Presidency (including the North-western Provinces), the recommendations of the Government of India are limited to a better choice and ampler remuneration of the native police, and to the aiding and strengthening them, in certain localities, by police corps of a semi-military character. These measures have been sanctioned; and until their effect has been tried, the Court of Directors have consented to put in abeyance the more fundamental changes which they had recommended. But authority has at the same time been given to the Government of India, should the present state of the country in their opinion render it expedient, to organize the police of Bengal on the model of that of the Punjab.

In the Madras Presidency, the opinion of the local Government was favourable to the Court's original

views; and in September last authority was finally given to that Government for the thorough reorganization of the police system. The leading features of the scheme which has been sanctioned are as follows:—

The appointment of a chief commissioner of police for the whole presidency, in whom will be vested, in direct communication with the Chief Secretary to Government, the direction, discipline, and internal economy of the police force;

The appointment in each district of a European deputy commissioner of police, with a sufficient number of subordinate officers and peons or constables;

The entire separation of the police from all connection with the revenue branch of administration, and of the magistrate (who will now be a purely judicial officer) from the properly police duty of the prevention and detection of crime;

And, finally, measures for reorganizing, and, it may almost be said, reviving, the village police, which, from its close connection with the localities, must necessarily constitute the last (and a most important) link in any police system really efficient, or willingly supported by the people.

The imperfections of the general police of India have not prevented some results from being attained in the way of suppression of crime, sufficiently remarkable to have attracted an amount of European notice seldom accorded to Indian affairs. The most memorable of these is the suppression of the Thugs. This singular association, which, though recruited from all castes, and even from Mussulmans, was held together by a religious tie, and a common worship of the Hindoo goddess of destruction, infested all the roads in India; and from their universal practice of murder-

Thuggee
and
Dacoitee
Suppression.

ing all they robbed, it was not only almost impossible to obtain evidence for their conviction, but the extent of their crimes was greatly underrated, and their very existence in many parts of India, disbelieved in. A separate police was organized specially against them. The gangs were broken up in the only manner in which this could possibly have been effected—by encouraging some of them to denounce the rest.. From the narratives of these approvers, taken separately from one another and with the utmost precautions against the possibility of concert, lists of all the Thugs in India were obtained, and the particulars of the crimes committed by each. These were then traced to their haunts, identified, tried, and convicted, on the evidence of their accomplices, confirmed by the finding of bodies, the identification of property, or other corroborative evidence. Many suffered death, a much greater number transportation for life, and, in a few years from the commencement of the operations, all India was cleared of these criminals. The pardoned accomplices remain under surveillance at Jubbulpore, in Central India, where they and the children of the captured Thugs have been taught several useful branches of manufacture. The Jubbulpore School of Industry now supplies to Government and the public many valuable carpets and linen cloths, and a great proportion of all the tents used in India.

When the work of the Thuggee Suppression Department was nearly completed as far as regarded the Thugs, its operations were extended to the still more prevalent crime of dacoity, or robbery and burglary on a large scale by organized gangs of professional banditti. The mode of breaking up the gangs by means of approvers, which had been so successful against the Thugs, has been put in practice with equal

success against dacoits; and this crime, so far as it was perpetrated by large associations ranging over a wide extent of country, has now been almost as completely rooted out as Thuggee. Dacoitee had been almost entirely suppressed in the North-western Provinces and in Bombay, before the occurrence of the recent disasters. In the Lower Provinces of Bengal the crime has been greatly reduced within the last three or four years. In seven large districts surrounding Calcutta, where it was lamentably prevalent, the number of dacoitees has been progressively reduced from 524 in 1851, to 111 in 1855. In some of the districts of the Madras Presidency, dacoitees of a local character, by small gangs, to which the approver system is not equally applicable, are still frequent; but the improvement in the police, and other measures in contemplation, will, it is hoped, speedily reduce their number.

The piracies which formerly made the navigation of the Arabian seas unsafe for commerce, have been so effectually suppressed by the East-India Company's cruisers, that there is now hardly any part of the world in which trading vessels are more secure against depredation. The formerly piratical tribes have been bound by engagements to abstain not only from piracy, but from maritime war, which affords opportunities and pretexts for piracy: and, for the first time probably in history, a perpetual peace, guaranteed by treaties and enforced by superior naval strength, reigns in the Persian Gulf.

Suppression
of Piracy.

Equal vigour has been displayed against many barbarous usages of the natives. Special measures have been carried on during a long series of years for the suppression of female infanticide, a crime which had become a positive custom among several of the

Infanticide.

higher castes in various parts of India, from motives, not of religion, but of family pride. The co-operation of the native princes has been urgently invited, and to a great extent obtained, for the suppression of this practice. In the places, and among the castes, in which the practice was ascertained to exist, means were taken to obtain an annual census of female children. A report of all births, of all deaths of infants, and of the causes of deaths, was required, under stringent regulations and penalties. Engagements were taken from the influential persons of the castes to preserve their own children, and to aid in enforcing the same conduct on others. Honorary rewards and marks of distinction have been conferred on chiefs and others who have exerted themselves for the promotion of the object. By great efforts of persuasion and address, the heads of castes and tribes have been prevailed on to agree to a limitation of that favourite subject of vanity, marriage expenses; and grants of money are regularly made to poor persons of the castes, in aid of the marriages of their daughters. These efforts have been rewarded by a continual diminution of the number of infanticides, evidenced by a constant increase in the number of females in existence, of the formerly delinquent castes.

Suttee.

Suttee, or the voluntary burning of widows on the funeral piles of their husbands, after having been long discouraged by every means short of positive prohibition, was finally made a criminal offence in all who abetted it, by a legislative Act of Lord W. Bentinck's administration, and has now entirely ceased in the provinces subject to British administration. Unremitting efforts have been used to induce the native princes to follow the example, and have been at last successful with all of them except one, the Maharana

of Odeypore, the representative of the oldest and proudest dynasty in India: and this prince professes himself willing to abolish the rite, when the cessation of existing differences between himself and his feudatory chiefs shall enable him to obtain their concurrence in the measure. Various other modes of self-immolation practised in India,—by drowning, burying alive, or starvation,—have been, with equal success, prohibited and suppressed.

The pretence of supernatural powers was a source of great evil in India, not only as a means of extortion and intimidation, but also by the numerous murders perpetrated on persons suspected of practising on the lives or health of others by magical arts. These acts of fancied retaliation have been, with a gentle but powerful hand, repressed, and great progress has been made towards their extinction. The fraudulent pretence is now punished as a substantive crime. Witchcraft.

The insecurity of rights, and the imperfection of the tribunals, under the native Governments, had introduced, on the part of those who were, or believed themselves to be, injured, a singular mode of extorting redress. They hired a person of one of the religious classes to threaten that unless the demand, whatever it might be, was complied with, he would kill or wound himself or some one else; thereby, it was supposed, entailing the guilt of murder or of wounding on the person whose alleged injustice was the original cause of the act. If the threat proved ineffectual, the honour of the threatener was engaged to carry it into practical effect; and many suicides or murders were committed from this cause. This barbarous practice, known by the name of Tragga, has been almost entirely suppressed, partly by penal laws, and partly Tragga.

by affording more legitimate means of enforcing just claims.

Meriah
Sacrifices.

Among the barbarous tribes who occupy the hill tracts of Orissa, on the south-west frontier of Bengal, human sacrifices prevailed until a very recent period. By a well-devised and judicious series of conciliatory measures, worthy of a more lengthened record than can be given to them in this place, the extinction of this enormity has been effected.

Abolition of
Slavery.

After a full consideration of the subject of slavery in India, by the Indian Law Commissioners and by the Government of India, an Act was passed in 1843, which entirely abolished slavery as a legal status. The courts of justice are forbidden to recognize it; no fugitive, claimed as a slave, can be forcibly restored; and every act which would be an offence if done to a free person, is now equally an offence when done to the persons formerly considered slaves.

Vet Begar, or Forced
Labour.

One of the most oppressive of the burthens on the agricultural and labouring classes under the native Governments, was compulsory labour, not only for the repair of roads where any existed, but for the purpose of carrying the abundant baggage of Government officers or powerful individuals when journeying from one place to another. This practice has been abolished. The last vestige of it, in a licensed form, is believed to have been in the construction of the Thibet road through the Himalaya Mountains, and orders have recently been issued for its discontinuance there.

Civil Rights
of Religious
Converts.

By an Act passed in 1850, the principle already laid down in a Bengal Regulation of 1832, that change of religion should not involve loss of property or civil rights, was extended to the whole of the territories subject to the British Government of India. The religious and civil laws of the Hindoos have in

this point been completely set aside; and converts to Christianity have been shielded, as far as law can shield them, against temporal ill consequences from their change of faith.

By an Act passed in 1856, another great inroad has been made on Hindoo prejudices, by legalizing the re-marriage of widows.

Re-marriage
of
Widows.

An Act passed in 1840 gave effect to instructions issued by the home authorities in 1833, on the subject of pilgrim taxes, and the superintendence of native festivals. The instructions directed that the interference of British functionaries in the interior management of native temples, in the customs, habits, and religious proceedings of their priests and attendants, in the arrangement of their ceremonies, rites, and festivals, and generally in the conduct of their interior economy, should cease; that the pilgrim tax should everywhere be abolished; and that in all matters relating to their temples, their worship, their festivals, their religious practices, and their ceremonial observances, our native subjects be left entirely to themselves. Property held in trust for religious uses of course cannot be diverted from them by any act of the Government; but if such trusts are infringed, redress must be sought, as in all other cases, from the tribunals. In 1841 the home authorities sent out further instructions, that no troops or military bands of music be called out, and no salutes fired, in honour of native festivals; and all such acts have since been regarded as strictly prohibited. When any case of infringement of these principles is found to have been overlooked, it is, on being brought to notice, immediately corrected.

Discon-
tinuance of
Connection
with the
Religious
Ceremonies
of the
Natives

IMPROVEMENT OF THE COUNTRY BY PUBLIC WORKS.

The measures which have now been briefly described, for fixing and moderating the demands of Government on the tax-paying population, and securing to every one the full enjoyment of the fruits of his industry, are in themselves the most effectual means which could have been adopted for improving the productive resources of the country. In a country like India, however, the direct aid of Government to industry is required, for a variety of purposes which, in more advanced countries, are sufficiently, and even better, provided for by private enterprise. The principal of these are, irrigation, and the means of communication by roads and canals.

Irrigation Works.

The British Government in India has frequently been charged with niggardliness in incurring expense for these purposes. There was some, at least apparent, ground for the charge, in former generations ; though even then, the truth fell far short of the current representations. It is often asserted that the country is covered with the remains of tanks and other works of irrigation, which the native rulers constructed, and which the British Government has allowed to decay. The fact is overlooked, that most of these were already in a state of decay before the country came into our possession ; long periods of disorder and military devastation having destroyed the funds which should have repaired them, and the security which would have admitted of their repair. Many works which are supposed to have fallen into decay, never were completed :

many were allowed to decay by the native sovereigns; for it was only occasionally that a prince, of unusual talents and vigilant economy, had funds to spare for such purposes; and the same prince who would commence new works with which his own name was to be connected, would often neglect to keep up those of his predecessors. Whether it is a just subject of censure, that the restoration of these old works was not commenced earlier, is a question depending on many and various considerations; but the activity in this department for many years past has been exemplary.

The Western and Eastern Jumna canals were of ancient construction, but had fallen into disrepair and become useless to the country, until again brought into activity by the labours of the Company's officers at a sufficiently early date to admit of a full estimation of the benefits which the country has reaped from their restoration. The main line of the Western Jumna Canal is in length 445 miles. In the famine year, 1837-38, the gross value of the crops saved by the water of this canal was estimated at £1,462,800; of which about one-tenth was paid to Government as land and water rent; while the remainder supported, during a year of devastating famine in other districts, the inhabitants of nearly 500 villages.

Jumna
Canals.

The works originally projected for the restoration of the Eastern Jumna Canal were completed in 1830; but considerable improvements have been effected since that date at a large expense. In 1853, the Court of Directors sanctioned an expenditure of £15,276 for improving this canal, so as to economize the water, facilitate its distribution, and correct the malarious state of the country on its banks. It is stated, that on the 1st of May, 1852, the clear profit to Government on this canal had been £9,750.

Up to 1847-48, the expenditure incurred on these and some minor works in the North-western Provinces had amounted to about £557,000, while the amount received in direct canal revenue was in all £546,000. The quantity of land brought under the influence of irrigation was 1,300,000 acres, yielding produce of the annual value of £2,500,000, and supporting a population of 600,000 souls.

Ganges
Canal.

The history of the Ganges Canal, the greatest work of irrigation ever constructed, belongs to a more recent period. The employment of the water of the Ganges for irrigation purposes appears to have been first contemplated by Colonel Colvin, who, on delivering charge of his office of superintendent of canals to his successor, the present Sir Proby Cautley, recommended the project to his consideration. Colonel Cautley carefully examined the country through which the canal would pass, and the scheme was, in 1841, brought under the consideration of the home authorities, who gave it their cordial support, subject to a further examination of the project by a committee of engineer officers. The committee's report was favourable; but various difficulties intervened, and the work cannot be said to have been fairly commenced, on a scale commensurate with its importance, till the year 1848.

The total length of the Ganges Canal and its branches, when completed, will be $898\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and it will furnish abundant irrigation for an area of 4,500,000 acres. The canal, in the words of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-western Provinces, "presents a system of irrigation unequalled in vastness throughout the world; while the dimensions of the main channel, and the stupendous works of masonry which occur in its course, more particularly in the section

“ between Roorkee and Hurdwar, render the work “ eminently one of national distinction and honour.” The amount expended on it up to the 1st of May 1856, had reached the sum of £1,560,000; and when completed, the total cost will fall little short of £2,000,000. The canal has but just begun to be brought into operation; but it is estimated by Colonel Baird Smith, the director, that the annual produce of the land already watered by it is of the value of, from £150,000 to £200,000; and that when the canal is in full operation, the value will ultimately reach the enormous sum of £7,000,000.

On the 30th April, 1856, the canal had been carried so far that the water flowed continuously through 449½ miles of the main trunk and terminal branches. The extent of main channels of distribution (rajbuhas) completed, was 435½ miles, and 817 miles more were in active progress.

The canal is fitted also for purposes of navigation, but it has not yet been made available to the public for this purpose, although extensively used by the Government for the transport of materials. Colonel Baird Smith states that the canal closes its first year of work (1855-56) with an aggregate revenue, from all sources, of rather more than Rs. 60,000, having watered during the year about 55,000 acres of land, and having placed beyond the risk of serious damage from drought, an area of cultivation extending over about 166,000 acres, distributed among 1,134 villages.

In the Punjab, the canals are of two kinds, inundation canals and permanent canals. The inundation canals are cuts from the rivers, which are empty during the winter, because the water is not then high enough to enter them; but as the water rises in the spring, from the melting of the snows, these channels

Punjab
Canals.

fill, and remain full until late in autumn. The fertility of the South-western Punjab mainly depends on these canals, and in a former age they appear to have been conducted from all the rivers; their course being traceable by the ruins not only of villages but of cities and public buildings, which depended for existence on their fertilizing influence. Such of these canals as were found in working order at the annexation, have been maintained, improved, and enlarged; and plans and estimates have been formed for the restoration of others. As yet, however, the greater part of the funds which could be spared for the purpose, have been devoted to the construction and improvement of permanent canals. In 1849, the enlargement and extension of the Huslee Canal, stated to be capable of irrigating 70,000 begahs of land, was sanctioned, and it is now in good working order. But this will ultimately be superseded by the Baree Doab Canal for irrigation and navigation. The length of this new work is about 450 miles; the original estimate of the cost was £530,000; but more extensive works than were at first expected having been found necessary, and the rates of labour having proved much dearer than those calculated, the ultimate cost will fall little short of a million sterling. In May 1856, more than 325 miles had been excavated; and it was hoped that the canal would be opened in 1859. The expected return is 12 lacs of rupees, or £120,000 per annum.

Sind Canals.

The cultivation of the province of Sind is dependent on the rise of the river Indus, whose waters are distributed over the face of the country by a network of canals of greater or smaller dimensions. About two and a half lacs (£25,000) are annually expended in clearing these canals from the

deposits of silt left in them by the receding waters. The principal works which have received special sanction, are the widening and deepening of the Begaree Canal in Upper Sind, at a cost of £13,000 (expected return £11,900 per annum), and the improvement and extension of the Foolalie Canal, at a cost of £15,083.

In the Madras Presidency, the means of artificial irrigation are chiefly obtained by the construction of tanks or reservoirs for preserving the monsoon rains, and storing them up for use in the dry season, and of "anicutts," or dams across the beds of rivers, by which the waters are maintained at a level higher than that of the country, in order to be from thence conducted over its surface. Of the latter class of works, the most worthy of notice are those which have been constructed on the Coleroon, the Godavery, and the Kistna.

The commencement of the Coleroon works is said to be traceable to the second century of our era. Imperfectly executed in the first instance, they were found, when the country came into our possession in 1801, to be very defective; and notwithstanding the remedial measures adopted, the bed of the river continued to rise, from the deposit of silt; the extent of land which the means of irrigation could reach, diminished; the revenue fell off, and the condition of the people was gradually deteriorating. This state of things appears to have reached its acme about 1829-30. Plans and estimates were then framed, and from 1836 the work was regularly and vigorously prosecuted. The total expenditure on the Upper and Lower Coleroon anicutts, up to their completion, amounted, as far as can be ascertained, to upwards of £80,000. In addition to this sum, subsidiary works for conveying

Coleroon
Works.

irrigation over the districts of Tanjore, and portions of Trichinopoly and South Arcot, were constructed, at a cost of about £100,000.

The average quantity of land watered annually from the Coleroon and Cauvery prior to 1836, is given at 630,613 acres. Since the improvements, the average (up to 1850) was 716,524 acres; being an increase of 85,911. The annual increase of revenue has been about £44,000; and it may be assumed that the agricultural community have benefited to the extent of at least £66,000 per annum, from the extension of the area of irrigation. It is further calculated that at least an equal amount is added to the value of the annual produce, by the better irrigation of the lands which the waters already reached.

Godavery
Anicut.

An expenditure of £47,575 for the construction of the Godavery anicut was sanctioned in 1846. It was then anticipated that the total cost, with compound interest at 5 per cent, would be recovered in ten years, and that thenceforward a clear profit would be returned of at least £9,000 per annum. The work has, however, proved much more costly than was expected. Up to 1852, the amount expended was £130,000, and a further outlay of £110,000 was expected to be required, which, with £24,000 allowed for annual repairs during its completion, would raise the total expenditure on the works (including a system of roads and an important line of inland navigation) to £264,000. The amount expended has, it is stated, been already repaid by the increased receipts; and the Madras Public Works Commissioners of 1852 (to one of whom, Colonel Cotton, the merit of this important work is in a great measure due) estimate that when the works shall be in full operation, the total increase of revenue will not be less than £300,000 per annum,

while the gain to the people, by enabling them to cultivate the more valuable products, such as sugar-cane, rice, &c., instead of the ordinary dry crops, will exceed £3,000,000 per annum.

The anicut across the Kistna river was commenced in 1853. The original estimate of the cost was £155,000; but it is probable that this amount will be to some extent exceeded. It is intended, by 290 miles of irrigation channels distributed on both sides of the river, to supply water sufficient for 280,000 acres of rice cultivation, or 350,000 of rice, sugar, and possibly cotton, combined. The results anticipated are, an increase of £60,000 in the revenue of Government, and a gain of £90,000 per annum to the agricultural community.

Kistna
Anicut.

In 1854, sanction was given to an expenditure of £86,611 for the construction of an anicut across the Palar river, in North Arcot, and of the works subsidiary to it. The expected increase of revenue was stated at £18,470 per annum, or, deducting ten per cent for repairs, £16,623.

Palar
Anicut.

Very large sums have in the aggregate been spent in the construction of new, and still more in the repair and restoration of old, tanks and wells, both in the Madras Presidency and in the other parts of India which depend on works of that description for water supply. In some hill districts, ravines have been dammed up, and a head of water obtained for the irrigation of the adjacent valleys or plains. This was the plan of Colonel Dixon's irrigation works in Mhairwarra; and a system of such works had begun to be executed in Bundelcund, when the disturbances broke out.

A disposition has been of late shown to form companies for the execution of profitable works of

irrigation, on certain conditions to be granted by the State. In September last, the Indian Governments were directed to take this subject into deliberate consideration, and to frame rules under which the aid of private companies in the construction of such works might most beneficially be employed; and readiness was expressed to give to such companies a guarantee of interest, on the same footing as railway companies.

Roads and
Navigable
Canals.

Next in importance to irrigation works, are the means of internal communication. Whatever may have been the degree of care bestowed by the Hindoo and Mahomedan Governments on the former object, it has not been pretended that they did anything for the latter. It was never their practice to lay out money in the construction of permanent roads, or in the formation of canals for navigation. The plains of India are traversable by carts, and even by armies, without made roads, throughout the dry season; and neither (in general) military movements, nor commercial transport, were carried on during the rains. Roads, therefore, in India, were not, as in some countries, a matter of absolute necessity; and in this respect, whatever has been done at all, has been done by the British Government.

Grand Trunk
Road.

The most important line of road in India is the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Delhi, through Hooghly, Burdwan, and Benares, and including either in the main line, or by means of branches, all the principal cities of the North-west Provinces. This road, 837 miles in extent, has been gradually brought to its present state of a thoroughly well-formed road, metalled and bridged, except a few of the larger rivers, which are still crossed by ferries; but over all these (it is believed), except the Ganges

and the Soane, bridges are in course of construction. This road, with its continuation to Kurnal (and now to Lahore, which is in course of completion), has been divided into different portions, each under the charge of a separate engineer officer, with an establishment for the purposes of construction, or of maintenance and protection, as the case may be. The cost of the Grand Trunk Road as far as Delhi had been, up to the year 1848, £489,100, and the annual expense of maintaining it was then estimated at £35,000. •

• Since the annexation of the Punjab, a continuation of the Grand Trunk Road from Lahore to Peshawur, a distance of 275 miles, has been in progress. This road also is to be completely metalled and bridged throughout. The cost was estimated, when the work was sanctioned in 1852, at £154,848. By means of this road a direct line of communication will have been established between Calcutta and the extreme boundary of the British territory to the north-west, a distance of 1,500 miles. Besides this, many other roads in the Punjab, and among them roads from Jullundur to Lahore, and from Lahore to Mooltan, have been undertaken.

The sea has been mainly relied on for communication with Madras; but roads are now in course of formation, which will provide a line of continuous communication by land.

The land communication with Western India is carried on by way of the Grand Trunk Road to Benares, onward by Mirzapore and Jubbulpore to Nagpore, and thence to Bombay. The road beyond Mirzapore, under the name of the Great Deccan Road, was commenced thirty years ago, but was kept up only as a fair-weather road till within the last few years, when arrangements were made for its being

Great
Deccan
Road.

thoroughly raised, metalled, and bridged. The distance from Mirzapore to Nagpore or Kamptee, is nearly four hundred miles. Estimates amounting to £11,659 were sanctioned by the Court of Directors in 1856, for bridging the portion of road between Mirzapore and Jubbulpore, which had been already metalled; £25,084 were also sanctioned for raising and metalling the portion between Jubbulpore and Kamptee, and measures were further authorized to bridge this portion of the road.

Agra and
Bombay
Road.

Another great and important line, the Agra and Bombay road, 735 miles in length, was commenced in 1840. In 1854, the Court sanctioned an annual expenditure of £9,880 for the maintenance and improvement of the portion of this road between Agra and the frontier of the Bombay Presidency.

Dacca and
Chittagong
Road.

After the annexation of Pegu, roads were projected by way of Dacca to Arracan, from which province a road was to be carried over the mountains to Prome. Great difficulty was experienced in laying out a road from Calcutta to Dacca, and it is probable that this part of the project will not be carried into effect; the traffic of this district, so intersected by tidal channels, being left to be carried on by water, unless it shall be found practicable to form a railway. A road to Jessore (the line of communication with Assam and Burmah) was however sanctioned, at a cost of £41,720 on a rough estimate. From Dacca to Chittagong, considerable progress has been made in the formation of a road, or rather in the completion, as a first-class road, of the road which, though in a most inefficient state, previously existed. From Arracan into Pegu, the task of forming a road across the mountains by the Toungoop Pass has been most successfully accomplished by Lieutenant Forlong.