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Dorset House

Dorset Sq

London, N. W.

Nov. 15, 1901

The Right Hon^{ble}

Lord George Hamilton, P. C., &
Secretary of State for the
India Office, London.

My Lord,

It was my privilege, from a gallery seat in the House of Commons to listen to your speech when you introduced, on the 16th of August last, the annual financial statement concerning India.

In that speech, according to the report in The Times, you said:—

There is a small school in this country as well as in India who are perpetually asserting that our rule is bleeding India to death. Since I have been Secretary of State I have taken great pains to collect and investigate any information or evidence I could obtain, no matter from what quarter it came, which by facts, figures, or other reliable information tended to support this allegation. I admit at once that if it could be shown that India has retrograded in material prosperity under our rule we stand self-condemned, and we ought no longer to be entrusted with the control of that country. But no such facts, figures, or evidence have I ever been able to obtain. That a section of the public both here and in India believe this allegation is clear from their constant and unwearied repetition of the charge. But this belief is founded not on figures, or facts, or economic data, but on a plausible syllogistic formula that they are never tired of repeating.

These remarks call for some reply

The most distinguished, as
 as one of the earliest, Masters in the
 'all school' to which you refer
 is the most noble the Marquis of
 Salisbury, K. G., now Prime Minister
 the United Kingdom. In 1875, when
 I was Secretary of State for India, he
 urged that 'as India must be bled,' the
 bleeding should be done judiciously. He
 also lamented that 'much of the rev-
 enue' of India 'is exported without a
 direct equivalent.' None of us who
 write concerning India's impoverish-
 ment have yet bettered the phrases of
 our great Master, your political chief.
 So far as I know he was the first to speak
 of the 'bleeding' of India.

2. Probably you will agree that
 the second sentence quoted above, and
 some of the passages which follow, must
 have been altered by you in a moment
 of forgetfulness, was, in fact, one of those
 'oratorical necessities' which become sin-
 indiscretions. A little later in your
 speech you repeated certain statements
 made by Lord Curzon in his Budget speech,
 disproof of which, based wholly on state-
 ments in the most recently published
 official records, had been in your

ssion exactly four months be-
m said over again what the
I had incorrectly said. I know
you received the evidence of dis-
for the receipt of the document
ich this disproof appeared was
nkedged in your instructions about
dile of April last. You have
a great wrong to India in repeat-
and emphasizing statements of
You possessed proof that they
o foundation in fact

3. You assert that if it
be proved India had retrograded
aterial prosperity under our rule
stand self-condemned; and 'we
it,' you go on to say, 'no longer to
nsted with the control of that
try.' I ask your kind acceptance
the accompanying work in which,
aint going outside the covers of your
Office productions, I establish,
I think, beyond all peradventure,
greatly the dismal, the awful, re-
ression, not only in material pros-
ty but also in other important
ects, of the country you govern
is to say, I establish all this if

our own facts and figures depended upon. You put the year by year for the information and guidance of the public, and content to be judged by them. Happily, they appear only too approximate to absolute accuracy.

4. You say that you 'never been able to obtain' 'figures, or evidence' to prove 'our prosperity' has 'retrograded.' You that belief in this retrogression is but, you assert, it is not founded figures, or facts, or economic. You need not remain in the condition of wanting data any longer. I send you there is abundance of figures, of facts, of economic. I have nothing to do with 'syllabic formulae,' whether 'plausible' otherwise. I deal with economic data concerning the people of India doing so I simply employ figures, your evidence, your facts. In this connection, I venture especially to ask your attention to Chapters V & VI, particularly the twelfth.

v. go farther, and express the hope that you will not overlook the Introductory Chapter and Chapters I to V. Everywhere I depend upon the facts which the India Office furnishes—upon them and upon none other. My point of knowledge flows from Whitehall; its source is the lofty chamber you have occupied for many years.

I ask your lordship's careful perusal of the pages of my work. I do not ask this as a mere 'man in the street,' though such men have been held by one of your colleagues to know enough to put them on a level with Cabinet Ministers. In such a matter as this I have a right to some consideration at your hands. Twenty-three years ago, during your novitiate at the India Office, there passed through your hands at least one dispatch from the Government of India in which that Government was pleased to express its indebtedness to my humble self for the manner in

which, the Viceroy and his Councilors said, I had kept them informed week by week concerning the voluntary Relief efforts throughout India. The Viceroy thought so well of what I was able to do in 1877, and of the way I did it, that he informed me of his intention to nominate me for a seat on the Famine Commission which was appointed in the following year. From that distant period until the hour in 1901 in which I am writing this letter, I have not, for one moment, faltered in the interest then aroused in me respecting the condition of our Indian fellow-subjects, nor have I neglected any opportunity of making myself acquainted with their needs. If, in some of my chapters, I write impassionately from a full heart, as I confess I do, in them as in all the other chapters I write from an equally full mind.

Because of the facts I marshal, and because my many years' study of the question call for a consideration of the evidence I submit in the conclusions drawn therefrom,

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I ask, in the public interest, that my assertions and conclusions may be submitted to searching examination by some of the very many able gentlemen who, at Whitehall, assist you to govern India. If I am proved to be wrong in what I state I will as publicly withdraw my statements as I now publicly make them. On the other hand, if it be admitted that I am correct in what I assert, your Lordship, I feel certain, will at once accept the fact of India's retrogression in material prosperity and will consider in what way an effectual remedy shall be applied. That way should be one which shall render unnecessary that heroic measure of retirement from India which you decide will be our duty.

The statements in my book, I respectfully submit, may not be ignored. The challenge contained in your speech is specifically met. You can only desire that the truth should be known. In that we are at one. The writer of the book is naught: leave him,

B

if you will, out of consideration first, last, and all the time. But, as the allegations made are declared to be wholly yours in essentials and often yours in actual words, I implore you, for India's sake, to show that what I state is untrue; or, if that be impossible, to entirely change your policy so that it may be brought into line with the facts. I repeat, nowhere is the evidence the author's evidence. Always is it yours. It must be accepted or it must be disproved. Of my own poor volition, possessing no power or influence save such as is contained in the truth and justice of the cause I advocate, moved wholly by feelings of our common humanity on behalf of a silent, helpless, too-patient, always long-suffering, people, I challenge your lordship to the disproof.

I have the honour to remain

Yours most truly,

Wm Digby.

PREFACE

THIS work, unintentionally, has grown into a big book. That would be regrettable if it were not that India is a big country and space commensurate with its extent and with the variety and complexity of the problems affecting it must necessarily be given. As it is I have not dealt with one tithe of the questions demanding attention, even though I have referred to many topics. To readers of different proclivities certain sections of the book may specially appeal; therefore, to one who does not care for all of it, selection of topic has been made easy.

The object with which the book has been written is, if it be feasible, to bring to a definite issue two contrary views regarding India. Two schools exist. One is always referring to the increasing prosperity of the country and people, and claiming unstinted praise for England as the creator of this prosperity; the other is incessantly dilating upon the rapidly-growing and now alarming impoverishment of both country and people. The latter declare that, by the principles of our rule, deliberately adopted, the impoverishment is made inevitable. Both cannot be right. Nor is there, to my seeming, any middle course which would reconcile the views held by both protagonists, and provide a working arrangement including both views. One is right; the other is wrong.

Which of them is right? I, unhesitatingly, say, 'That

school which declares the country is in a bad way and the people in a worse way.' I endeavour to prove, and think I succeed in proving, the correctness of this statement. I do so from evidence furnished to me—sometimes gratuitously, oftener on payment—by the authorities themselves in India and in England. It is they who tell the story I try to unravel from the complexities in which it is concealed; that story I endeavour to make plain for my countrymen's information. May I ask, kindly interested reader or keen critic, or both of you, that one circumstance be always borne in mind as the various facts herein discussed are produced and considered? It is that I am not responsible for the facts I cite. All that I do is to use the material which the Government of India and the Secretary of State supply. If what I put forward seems, as it well may, far too terrible to be true, let me beg that it be always borne in mind, and let me say it again, that I do no more than put before the reader the evidence, impartially dealt with, scheduled by the authorities themselves. If I be right in my deductions, nothing is to be gained by denouncing me for drawing those deductions. The facts on which they are based are there, whether attention be drawn to them or not. To describe an evil does not make the describer the author of that evil. If a true statement be given concerning an existing disaster, and accurate signs of a coming catastrophe are announced, he who makes the statement and utters the announcement does not cause the disaster or create the catastrophe. It is a satire on present-day controversy that it should be necessary to say this: unhappily it is necessary. Always, in this book, the evidence is given, given in too much detail may be, and the reader is put in a position to judge for himself or herself whether any given deduction is fair or unfair.

To write such a book as this which I have written is for a man to take his (literary and public) life in his hands. No treatment, some people think and say, can be too bad for him who dares to declare that everything in

India is not perfect; who desires to procure adequate reforms and solid benefits for Indians. This has long been a characteristic of the British people in regard to India. Lord Ripon, to his cost, found that this was the case. One of the greatest of the Governors-General before Lord Ripon had drunk from the same cup. 'A part of Lord Wellesley's just policy towards India in 1800 was an endeavour to obtain the admission of Indian ships and their cargoes into the ports of England on terms approaching in some degree to reciprocity; but his Lordship's humane efforts on this point caused him great opposition at home, embarrassed considerably his Government, and was the cause of the treatment which he received in England in 1806-7.' So wrote Mr. Montgomery Martin, nearly seventy years ago, and, in this respect, the average Briton of to-day, who is in any way connected with India, or fancies that his craft may be in danger if justice be done to India, is precisely as were his fathers before him.]

All my sources of information, I repeat, are to be found in the scores of Indian Blue Books—of most of which I have been a diligent student—issued year by year from the Government Press at Calcutta or Simla, and from the presses of His Majesty's Printers in London. There is one exception: The more important details relating to the condition of the people in all parts of India, but especially in Northern India and Bombay, are abstracted from a series of volumes which were printed in the printing offices of the various Local Governments. They are all marked 'Confidential,' and their publication has more than once been refused in the House of Commons. This is not the place in which to argue whether evidence taken in an official inquiry conducted by public servants, in the public time, at the public cost, respecting the condition of the people may, rightly, be withheld from publication, and a more or less accurate summary suffice for the information of those deeply interested in what has been stated. I assume (as I assert) that it is a great wrong to the

community to keep the evidence of such an inquiry in pigeon-holes over the entrance to which, maybe, spiders spin their webs, since it is anxiously desired that no one shall see the contents of those pigeon-holes. All I am concerned with in this place is to account for my possession of the set of volumes, the substance of which, in the words of the witnesses themselves, I put before my readers. The volumes I have used were received from the Parliamentary representative of the India Office by the late Mr. Bradlaugh, M.P., early in 1891, on a request made by him and at first refused; they were handed to me by the honourable member for Northampton himself. Indeed, I have reason to believe that he told the official from whom he received them that they were coming into my hands and would be used by me, that it was, indeed, at my suggestion and for my use that he required them. With this clear understanding, as I was informed, they were given to that great champion of Indian rights, and were by him passed to me absolutely without any conditions which could in the slightest degree fetter my discretion in using them.

Other points, which would have been appropriately referred to in the preface of such a work as I herein venture to put forward, will be found in a letter to Lord George Hamilton, a copy of which forms a part of this volume.

I have simply to add that, in the invidious and most disagreeable and painful duty which the writing of a book of such conclusions must, necessarily, be to one whose faith in England's good work, in England's destiny, has been passionately cherished,¹ I have striven to hold

¹ 'I that shall stand for England till I die.'

England? Yes,—

. . . The England that rejoiced to see
Hellas unbound, Italy one and free;
The England that had tears for Poland's doom,
And in her heart for all the world made room;

Accounting her all living lands above,
In justice, and in mercy, and in love.'

the scales fairly. I have not, consciously, strained any argument to enforce a foregone opinion, nor have I refrained from stating aught, germane to the discussion, that, in the course of the statements I was dealing with, would tell against the conclusions which I drew; those conclusions were drawn because the facts left me no other course but to draw them. I was not a free agent. The reader must judge as to that. I express only that which I was compelled to express. All I ask is that the evidence be carefully considered, especially that portion which is recorded in the first chapter where foundation-principles are dealt with, and the still greater part appearing in chapters six to twelve. In the latter, particularly, are to be found the facts which make the optimism of the Secretary of State for India, as expressed in his latest (and twelfth) Budget speech, a mockery, a frivolity: this optimism and this frivolity, exhibited, as they were, in connection with sorely-suffering men, women, and children, in multitude such as no man has ever before numbered, were worse than a blunder: they were a cruel wrong.

My first request to such readers as I may be honoured with is also my last request. It is that my statements be tested by the evidence I furnish. Only as those statements are adequately supported by the evidence—all, be it never overlooked, obtained from Government sources; in economic matters my sole reliance is on the official evidence—do I ask for their acceptance. Having said this I am, I think, entitled to go farther, and to say that, if the case I put forward be proved, no man or woman who becomes acquainted with it may, henceforth, refrain from doing something to remedy so gross and so grievous a wrong as is embodied in the material impoverishment and the political degradation of two hundred and thirty millions of British subjects. The times of past ignorance may be pardoned: with knowledge comes responsibility. In my own imperfect way I endeavour to supply a portion of the needed knowledge. Others will come and examine deeply and more searchingly where I, a pioneer, have

been able to do little more than indicate the tracts along which trained bands of experts may pass to fully explore the distressful region of which I treat. I am not—

The first who ever burst
Into this troubled sea.

Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji has circumnavigated its shores, and Mr. Romesh Dutt and Mr. Hyndman have indicated many of the perils of the way, while Mr. A. J. Wilson, of the *Investors' Review*, never wearies in well-doing where India is concerned, nor does Sir William Wedderburn ever falter in his endeavours to ascertain what really is wrong, with a view to providing a remedy. But, like Columbus, in discovering America, the Parsee patriot and these others only point the way to research and investigation which statesmen like Lord Rosebery, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Asquith, Sir Robert Reid, Mr. C. P. Scott, Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. W. S. Caine, Mr. C. E. Schwann, and many others are, in honour, bound to undertake. Will they do their duty? Possibly, the continuance of British empire in the East depends upon the answer they and those like-minded with them give to this question.

My acknowledgments are due, and are hereby cordially expressed, to friends who have aided me in my task. Amongst them must be mentioned Miss Annie A. Smith, of Hampstead, whose admirable work in preparing the Index all who need to refer to it will appreciate; Mr. Hedley V. Storey, who prepared the diagrammatic sketches which so vividly illustrate statements in the text that might otherwise be imperfectly apprehended, and whose experience in the villages and towns of India has been of some service to me in connection with the proof-reading of this work; and my son, Everard Tuxford Digby.

Finally, I must be permitted to say that the writing of this book has been the hatefulest and most painful duty I have ever performed. I have put to myself, a score of times, Lord Melbourne's question, 'Can't you let it alone?' and always I have had to answer, 'No, I can't.' And it's as well I can't. For, if I could I should be a contemptible creature. To me, things in India are as I describe them to be, and I have no choice but to so describe them.

DORSET HOUSE, DORSET SQUARE,
LONDON, N.W.

November, 1901.

SOME OF THE AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

OFFICIAL.

The Dufferin Inquiry in 1887-88 as to the Steadily Underfed Population of India:

‘Confidential’ Volumes:

- a. An Inquiry into the Economic Condition of the Agricultural and Labouring Classes in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.
- b. Similar Inquiries for Bombay, Madras, Bengal, Panjab, Central Provinces, Assam, the Berars, and Ajmere-Merwara.

[These volumes constitute the nearest approach to an economic inquiry into Indian conditions yet undertaken.]

Statistical Abstracts of British India, Nos. 1 to 35.

Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India, Nos. 16 to 36.

Famine Commission Inquiries and Reports:

The Orissa Famine of 1866.

The Famine of 1877-78;—

Especially

- a. Miscellaneous Papers bearing on the Condition of the Country and People;
- b. Appendix—Vol. III., Chapter I.—Condition of the Country and the People; and
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Parliamentary Inquiries into the East India Company's Administration prior to Renewal of the Charter—

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About thirty volumes in all.

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‘India,’ by Sir John Strachey, G.C.S.I.

‘England’s Work in India,’ by Sir W. W. Hunter, and other works by the same author.

‘The Dictionary of Statistics,’ by Mulhall.

‘The Law of Civilisation and Decay,’ by Brooks Adams.

‘The Science of Civilisation,’ by C. B. Phipson.

‘The Poverty of India,’ by Dadabhai Naoroji.

‘Famines in India,’ by Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E.

‘The Great Famine,’ by Vaughan Nash.

‘The Indian Tribute,’ by Thos. Inwood Pollard.

‘Asia and Europe,’ by Meredith Townsend.

‘Life of Major-General Sir Thomas Munro, K.C.B.,’ by the Rev. G. R. Gleig. Two volumes.

‘Eastern India,’ vol. i., ‘Behar and Shahabad.’ Montgomery Martin.

Max Müller’s Works.

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‘Mussulmans and the Moneylenders in the Panjab,’ by S. S. Thorburn.

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GOD SAVE INDIA!

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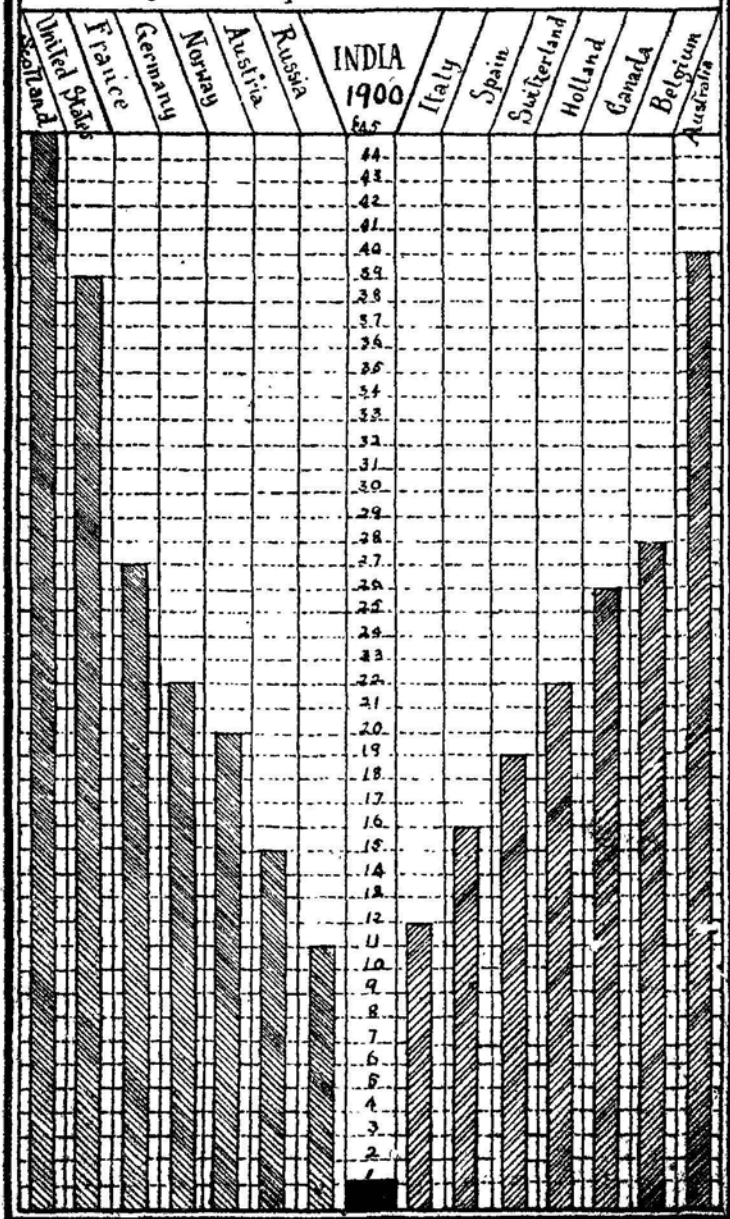
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PROEM

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Alleged Lightness of Taxation in India (Sir J. Strachey's Inaccurate Statement).

English and Indian Taxation Compared.

England's Beneficent Work in India: a Notable Instance.

Obsolete Indian Customs.

Unwillingness in England and in India to discern Ill-Consequences of Present Rule.

A Famine Comparison between the Beginning and End of the Century.

Some personal considerations, chiefly affecting the Author and this Book.

‘THERE is no country possessing a civilised administration where taxation is so light’ as in India.

‘Mr. J. S. Mill declared his belief that the British Government in India was “not only one of the purest in intention, but one of the most beneficent in act, ever known among mankind.”

‘I do not doubt that this is still truer now.

Thus writes Sir John Strachey, G.C.S.I., who, towards the close of a long official career in India, was Finance Minister. The passages are to be found on page 395 of ‘India,’¹ new and revised edition.

¹ Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Company, Limited, London, 1894. When one reads Sir John Strachey's book in the light of the facts recorded in these pages, the wonder arises whether anything more misleading than that book has appeared since William Caxton first made movable type by which to record Anglo-Saxon utterances of voice and pen, and printed his first pages at Westminster. Sir John Strachey possesses a very acute intellect;

If they were true in form and essence I should have been spared the writing of this book.

The Census Commissioner for India, in 1881 (App. p. lxy), before 'India' was written, had put on record an opinion concerning the Panjabis which gave no warrant for Sir John Strachey's remark. 'There can be little doubt,' it was said, 'that the Panjab population is less long-lived than that of England. It would indeed be strange if it were not so. The peasant of our villages leads a life of unceasing labour, even if that labour be not so severe as that of the English workman. He inhabits a mud hovel in the middle of a crowded village surrounded by festering dunghills and stagnant pools, the water of

it is harder to believe that he could not see the other side (of the shield which he has adorned so skilfully) than that he deliberately shut his eyes to the widespread poverty and growing destitution of which the 'drain' from India to England is alike the sign and the cause. There is the dilemma, and there is no way out of that dilemma which can be complimentary to the intelligence of the veteran civilian. Only on the ground of the Divine Right of British Civilisation is praise of the results of the British rule in India possible without the qualifications the present work attempts to supply. In reading such books as that by Sir John Strachey it should never be forgotten that they necessarily partake of the nature of Newman's *Apologia pro vita sua*. The writers are face to face with the work of their own hands, and, unless they are to write themselves down as having failed in promoting the happiness and ensuring the prosperity of the Indian people, they must either drop the pen or indulge in glowing eulogy. 'Nevertheless,' he remarks, 'I cannot say that our Government is loved; it is too good for that.' Lord Lawrence's dictum, in 1867, when he was Viceroy, is quoted: 'The masses of the people are incontestably more prosperous and—*sua si bona nōrint*—far more happy in British territory than they are under native rulers.' A few years later, and instructed India, led by British civilians, was crying out against the rack-renting which especially marked that part of Northern India which John Lawrence had 'settled.' The state of things which, in the Panjab, has led to the necessity for passing the Act to stop land alienation in that Province, is the direct offspring of the Laurentian over-assessment of newly-acquired territories. If an absolutely impartial judge, with a full knowledge of all the circumstances in each instance, were to place side by side the wrong and human suffering caused by Timour the Tartar, or Genghis Khan, with the mental, moral, and physical misery endured in India during the past fifty years, the ill consequences properly debitable against Christian Englishmen, who have a high place in the national *Valhalla*, would be as great as those for which the ruthless brutes of ancient days have had to answer to history, and maybe to God. Our power of self-deception as to the consequences which follow from British acts is truly marvellous.

which latter is not seldom his only drink. His food is poor, and he has to make up by quantity what he lacks in quality. His life is monotonous almost beyond conception. He is born, sickens, and dies, almost like a beast of the field, with only such rude care as his neighbour's ignorance can afford.'

Almost like a beast of the field.'

The reader will judge whether, tested by the results recorded in the present volume, however pure the intention of the rulers may have been and may still be, their rule has not been one of the least beneficent, if not, actually, the least, ever known among mankind.

Meanwhile, be it remarked here :

Taxation in India, declares Sir John Strachey, is the lightest in the world. By what principle is the lightness or heaviness of taxation to be reckoned? Sir John Strachey does not condescend to particulars. The lightness, or otherwise, of national burdens, is not to be reckoned by the sum total obtained from each person taxed, irrespective of the means or income of such person. Yet, apparently, this is Sir John Strachey's contention. There is the less excuse for the remark seeing that Sir William Hunter, several years before 'India' was published, had put the facts clearly forward in the following passage :—

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

As to the pressure of taxation, Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P.

in a speech in the House of Commons in August, 1894, remarked: 'Only one man in seven hundred in India comes within the category of £50 a year. I will make a further statement. The right hon. gentleman is well aware that in this country one penny in the income-tax yields £2,000,000 sterling. In India it yields considerably less than £200,000. India contains 220,000,000 of people under British rule. These people yield on the income-tax less than one-tenth of what 38,000,000 yield in the United Kingdom. The meaning of that is that every million of the people in India yield just one-sixtieth of what a similar number yield in this country. If this is not conclusive of the poverty of the people, nothing will satisfy the most exacting mind. It is indeed difficult to realise the small amount of wealth that there is in India.' Not only is the small sum assessed a matter for indignation, but the Government, 'the most beneficent in act ever known among mankind,' is responsible for such incidents in the collection of this tax as the following:—

One Damodar Kohli was informed last year that he would have to pay Rs.28 (37s.) income-tax. He was thunderstruck; the amount was absolutely beyond his means to raise. He informed the authorities accordingly, but the only result of his appeal was that a fine of Rs.7 (9s. 4d.) was imposed on him for delaying to pay the tax. He was unable to pay the impost as well as the penalty, so his dwelling was searched. But nothing worth taking away was found in it. Next his shop was ransacked, and everything found in it attached and sold. The sum of about Rs.2 (2s. 8d.) was realised by the sale. Then the "house" of the man was attached and put to auction. It fetched the sum of Rs.65 (£4 6s. 8d.). Out of this the Sirkar's dues—Rs.28 (£1 17s. 4d.) tax and Rs.7 (8s. 8d.) for delay—were realised. The balance is under attachment for the present year's demand! Imagine a man whose stock-in-trade was worth only a couple of rupees, and the hovel in which he lived was sold for not more than Rs.65, required to pay Rs.28, or nearly half the value of his whole worldly possessions, as income-tax! Damodar Kohli is a native of Donlat Nagar in Gujrat Tahsil, Panjab.*

* The *Tribune* newspaper, Lahore, July 23, 1901. The *Tribune*, in a later part of the same article, says:—

'The final income-tax demand in the year before Captain Elliott

The taxation per head in India is stated to be 3s. 3d.¹ It is really more than that amount, as all the items of taxation are not included. But it may be taken at this sum :—

Average income, £1 2s. 4d. | Average taxation, 3s. 3d.

Proportion : *One-seventh,*

if an equal division be made amongst all the people. But 230,000,000 out of 231,085,132 people in British India have an income, before any taxation is imposed, of only about 12s. per head per annum, or *less than one halfpenny per head per day.*

Out of that 12s. at least 2s. 6d. are taken by way of taxation, or twenty per cent. of the total income.

To account for the whole £1 2s. 4d., it may be supposed that the balance of 10s. 4d. goes in larger or smaller aggregates to princes, officials, zemindars, professional men, merchants, and others—that is to say, to 1,085,132 people.² This one million persons probably pay the ninepence balance, a too great estimate in favour of the few rich perhaps.

The average income in Scotland is put at £45. If taxation in the United Kingdom—apart from Post Office

came was below Rs.20,000, almost equal to that of Montgomery, Jhang, Jhelum, and Gurgaon. Considering what a poor, tradeless, district Gujrat is, even Rs.20,000 was regarded as too heavy. And in consequence of two successive bad years, during which the trading classes suffered no less severely than the agriculturists, a deduction in the assessment was eagerly looked forward to, and regarded as almost certain. But thanks to Captain Elliott the initial demand this year has already come up to Rs.50,000 in round numbers, and the work of assessment is still going on. Has ever such a leap from *twenty to fifty* thousand been heard of? We have a statement before us showing the initial as well as the final demands of all the districts in the Province for the last five years. The usual difference between year and year is seldom more than of two or three thousand rupees. But in Gujrat in the famine year the moneylenders so prospered that there is already an increase of Rs.30,000 in the assessment proposed!

¹ 'Explanatory Memorandum of the Accounts of India,' 1901, p. 29.

² See particulars in last chapter of this volume.

and other receipts which are not taxation, and which in the Indian estimate have been eliminated—be taken at £107,000,000,* that may be regarded as the average impost, even in the present days of increased expenditure on army and navy and in other directions. This instructive parallel results:—

PROPORTION OF TAXATION TO INCOME.

<i>Scotland</i> , with £45 per head as average, One-seventeenth.		<i>India</i> (outside 1,000,000 well-to-do people), with 12s. per head as average, nearly One-fourth
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Therefore, proportionately to income, the Indian subject of the British Crown is

Taxed more than four times higher

than is his Scottish fellow-subject, and three times higher than his English compeer. Further, it is one thing to take 2s. 6d. out of 12s. and quite another thing to take £2 13s. 8d. out of £45, especially when the latter income is spendable in a land where foodstuffs are ever growing cheaper, and the former in a country where food is ever becoming dearer and dearer, and life in every direction increasingly hard.

Yet Sir John Strachey, to whom these respective facts are available, who has been Finance Minister of one of the largest empires in the world, who should know these things as he knew the Settlement rules when he was a district officer, puts before the British public, necessarily ignorant of such details, the statement that 'there is no country possessing a civilised administration where taxation is so light' as in India.

Alas! there is no Court of Justice in which a man may be arraigned who has misstated facts to the detriment of his fellow-creatures, no Court where, if one be found guilty of having made a misstatement which has resulted

*The amount was actually £108,970,000 for 1900-1.—'Statesman's Year Book,' p. 45.

in human suffering and death, any punishment may be meted out. In the Court of Public Opinion, to which alone there is appeal, the judges never take sufficient notice of what is brought to their attention to be aware whether they should or should not turn down their thumbs.

Sir John Strachey has eaten India's salt since 1842. He has filled every office of importance in India save the highest. There were times when it seemed as if he might become even Viceroy and Governor-General, as had John Lawrence before him. His faulty arithmetic in one of our Afghan wars made this impossible. His emoluments, from 1842 until the day in 1901 on which this sentence is written, have been on a princely scale; —the pension he still draws is equal to the yearly incomes of twelve hundred agriculturists in Madras. In retirement he consumes resources drawn from a land for which, by way of return, he can do nothing better than to convey an altogether inaccurate description of its condition. And in doing this he makes the poverty he is unable to recognise deeper and deeper and deeper. Sir John's book is regarded as an authority. So far as it tells the number of miles of railway constructed and of the other public works undertaken, or describes the abolition of the great Salt Customs line extending for thousands of miles, the work is all that could be desired. But when it comes to the condition of country and people, apart from Anglo-Indian interests, it partakes of that 'make-believe' concerning India which is a greater source of injury to country and people than were the exactions of any of the ancient conquerors or any Feudatory Prince.

With Sir John Strachey in any other capacity than that of apologist for the form and consequences of British rule in India I have naught to do. An able official, an estimable man, I mention his name simply because of his book and because of the esteem, as a guide and counsellor concerning India, which it has brought him. I mention his name and his book because if India

is ever to be brought under beneficent governance, it can only be so brought as the 'make-believe' concerning our rule, of which his work, in its larger senses, in its deeper suggestions, is crammed full, is blown away, as—miasmatic fog that it is—it needs to be blown away; then a clear conception of the position as it really is in India can be obtained.

I may not go on with the task before me until I have said again what the preceding pages record.

India is not lightly taxed. In proportion to its income it is so heavily taxed that a like weight of taxation in this country would procure no mercy and short shrift for the administrators who were responsible for its imposition. More than that, any attempt to maintain it would lead to a complete change of governmental institutions. That is, assuming taxation were ever allowed to become anywhere near so burdensome. Such a contingency is not possible in England. It would involve the yearly abstraction of from one-seventh to one-fourth of the whole incomes of rich and poor alike, with an absolute certainty each year of the proportion growing higher.¹ That may do for India; it would not be suffered in England—no, not for one hour. A like policy in the Britains oversea would have led to the Colonists 'cutting the painter' long, long, ago.

Has, then, England done naught that is good for India? Aye, even in material things, some Indians have benefited directly by British administration. There are, of course, many good results following a definite policy,

¹ 'The Budget for 1901-2 shows a deterioration of £1,949,973 as compared with the account for 1898-99. The net revenue is increased by £443,083, chiefly the result of an improvement under opium. The net expenditure, however, is increased by £2,393,056, the charges in India being heavier by £738,684, while in England they are enhanced by £1,654,192.'—'Exp. Mem. Accounts, India,' 1901. Here is where the certainty of India's condition growing worse is to be found, 'while in England they are enhanced.' Will that leak never be stopped? Or will it go on enlarging until the ship can no longer make any headway, and becomes a derelict on the ocean of history?

whatever that policy may be. So far as they exist, they have served to mitigate consequences which, ere now, would have become insupportable. For example, were it not for the vastly increased quantity and certainty of produce which canal and well irrigation ensure, year in and year out, the economic crisis, involving a general non-payment of rent which, in regard to dry land cultivation, cannot now be far off, would have already come, and our lips would still be bitter with the distaste caused in India and in England, and our hearts sore at the discredit which would have accrued to the British name throughout the world.

I take the irrigated districts of Madras because I happen to know a good deal concerning them. The same thing, doubtless, can be said of the Panjab works, the area of the North-Western Provinces, and the deserts in Sind which have been made to blossom as the rose, of which I know less. But for the irrigation works in Madras—partly improvements of ancient works dating back to the beginning of the Christian era, as in Tanjore, or, wholly new, the creation of British energy, as in the Godavari and Kistna districts—a complete breakdown would have overtaken us years ago.

In a recent work,¹ the money and the material value to India of the work of the greatest of irrigation engineers, the late Sir Arthur Cotton, have been estimated, and the following gains recorded :—

THE MONEY RETURN.

(a) *To Government (after Interest on Capital Expenditure has been reckoned).*

					Rs.
Godavari Delta System	...	...	...	...	3,70,98,768
Kistna Delta System	...	...	...	...	2,02,11,515
Cauveri Delta System	...	...	...	...	2,35,38,320
Lower Coleroon	...	...	...	...	94,10,951
Total, Direct	...	...	...	...	Rs. 9,02,59,549 ²

¹ 'The Life of General Sir Arthur Cotton, R.E., K.C.S.I.,' by his daughter, Lady Hope. I have the permission (for which I tender my thanks) of Lady Hope and of the publishers, Messrs. Holder and Stoughton, for the citations I make in the text here and once elsewhere in this book.

² 'Madras Administration Report,' 1898-99; section 'Irrigation.'

Rs.

Of remainder, one-half may be reckoned, as it is certain but for the earlier successes so much irrigation would not have been undertaken ...

58,74,758

Total in Madras, Direct and Indirect ... Rs. 9,61,84,807

Much of this was earned at the old rate of currency (Rs.10 = £1), and might, half of it, be represented at this = £9,508,430. The present rate, however, may be taken, Rs.15 = £1 ...

£6,408,954

(b) *To the Districts Affected, and the People thereof.*

Some difference of opinion exists as to the increase in produce which comes from irrigated land: certain authorities give Rs.10 per acre in Northern India, Sir Arthur Cotton says Rs.15,¹ and as he appears to have had good ground for his estimate, it is only fair to him to calculate on his basis. There are 5,875,374 acres under irrigation in Madras. Sir Arthur Cotton, who designed and executed, or (as in Kistna) was the originator and partial designer of the great works, may be credited with this increased produce. The annual increased value thus given to the land, the extra money coming into the hands of the people, is Rs. 8,81,30,610; or, at Rs. 15 to £1 sterling ...

£5,875,374

Sixty years have passed since one of the greatest of Sir Arthur Cotton's works was completed—the Cauveri delta—and nearly fifty since the Godavari began to yield large returns. It would not be unfair to reckon for such an estimate as this, thirty years of the above figures. Such an estimate shows that Sir Arthur Cotton has been the means of adding to the income of the inhabitants of certain districts in Madras only, £5,875,374 × 30 =

£176,261,220

¹ I should like to put the Government estimate, but it varies so much that I cannot strike a fair average. Generally, the rate for wet cultivation is four times that for dry cultivation. The Hon. R. A. Dalrymple, of the Madras Board of Revenue, gives statistics for 1856 and 1866, which would justify a much higher calculation, than is given here, but, all through, I have been desirous to give estimates below the actuals (p. 399, 'Administrative Experience Recorded in Former Famines,' 1874).

Summarised, we have this :—

(a) Money return to the Government, wholly profit, as interest has been already reckoned, £800,844 per annum, also multiplied by 80		= £24,019,320
(b) Money return to the people	... ..	176,261,220
Total	... ..	<u>£200,280,540</u>

No public works undertaken in India, or, probably, anywhere else in the world, have been so bountiful in results, even to the bringing in of net revenue to the Government in addition to ordinary land revenue, as has irrigation. The latest results are thus described :—

IRRIGATION WORKS.

Financial Result.	Account, 1899-1900.	Revised Estimate, 1900-1901.
Major Works :	£	£
Direct receipts	1,578,529	1,717,200
Portion of Land Revenue due to Irrigation	670,174	730,600
Total Revenue	2,248,703	2,447,800
Working Expenses	664,753	695,200
Net Revenue	1,583,950	1,752,600
Interest on Debt	896,749	921,800
Net Receipts	687,201	830,800
Minor Works and Navigation : net Charge	550,814	522,900
Total net Receipts	£186,887	£307,900

Yet money upon so beneficial an object is doled out with

a niggardly hand, and the progress year by year is as that of the snail or of the tortoise.

Every work published on India is full of the benefits alleged to have accrued to country and to people by the consolidation, under such wise and kindly conquerors as the British, of all races from Persia to China, from the borders of Kashgar to Komorin. The India Office itself annually trumpets forth pæans of praise of the work of its own hands, of the achievements of its own servants. Few of the trumpeters, however, recognise that whatever may have been done has been paid for by the Indian people. The editor of an Indian journal once remarked: 'We may not have done for the people all we might have done, but *we* have educated them.' The emphasis on the 'we' led to the question, 'Whom do you mean by "we"? All "we" have done is to use the people's money with which to educate them, and even then we have not regarded the matter from their point of view.' The insistence of this view was regarded as very bad taste. 'We' had done it all. It would be wasted space for me to tell once again, even briefly, what a thousand voices have trumpeted, what a hundred new voices to-day are trumpeting. Nevertheless I have never written a treatise on India without bearing my testimony to certain good things, the consequences of British rule, which, indeed, are writ so large as to be seen of all. I never deny them. I have no desire to deny them. Why should I? I, too, am a Briton. So far as they go I am proud of them. In these respects British administrators have, in words familiar enough to all English people, 'done the things which they ought to have done,' but, at the same time, they 'have left undone the things they ought to have done,' and, because of this, in the eye of Justice, 'There is no health in us.'

So unmistakable is the change for the better which, in some directions, has followed British rule, that Mr.

Balfour's man in the street, who knew as much about the South African war as did the Government responsible for its conduct, if India be mentioned, is able to dilate upon what has been accomplished. 'Why, before we went there,' any Englishman will tell you, 'the natives used to burn their widows! We soon stopped that.' Having said this much he considers he has said enough, and sniffs at the remark that it was, perhaps, good to stop suttee, but in only certain parts of India was suttee practised, and, it may be, certain evils have been developed as the result of our rule which kill more people in a week than suttee was responsible for in fifty years. However, be that as it may, I am anxious to put in the forefront the beneficent results of British rule. The more they are recorded the better for the argument of this book. For the incidents related show that the power to ensure beneficence exists as well as the desire to do well by India. And while these are in existence, awaiting appropriate circumstances for manifestation, there is hope for India's recovery. Without them only hopelessness and despair could exist.

For a record of 'some of the beneficent effects of British rule in India during the past, on the social life of the people' I will go to one of the staunchest of the supporters of the Indian Government.¹ I quote as follows:—

OBSOLETE INDIAN CUSTOMS.

¹ [SPECIAL FOR THE "ENGLISHMAN."]

'At the beginning of a new century it may not be out of place to note some of the beneficent effects of British rule in India during the past on the social life of the people. This is strikingly shown by the following list of the manners and customs (compiled by an Indian missionary) which have been made illegal by the British Government:—

I. *Murder of Parents.*

- (a) By suttee.
- (b) By exposure on the banks of rivers.
- (c) By burial alive. Case in Jodhpur territory, 1860.

¹ The *Englishman* newspaper, Calcutta.

II. *Murder of Children.*

- (a) By dedication to the Ganges, to be devoured by crocodiles.
- (b) By Rajput infanticide. West of India, Panjab, East of India.

III. *Human Sacrifices.*

- (a) Temple Sacrifices.
- (b) By wild tribes—Meriahs of the Khonds.

IV. *Suicide.*

- (a) Crushing by idol cars.
- (b) Devotees drowning themselves in rivers.
- (c) Devotees casting themselves from precipices.
- (d) Leaping into wells—widows.
- (e) By Traga.

V. *Voluntary Torment.*

- (a) By hook-swinging.
- (b) By thigh-piercing.
- (c) By tongue extraction.
- (d) By falling on knives.

VI. *Involuntary Torment.*

- (a) Barbarous executions.
- (b) Mutilation of criminals.
- (c) Extraction of evidence by torment.
- (d) Bloody and injurious ordeals.
- (e) Cutting off the noses of women.

VII. *Slavery.*

- (a) Hereditary prodial slavery.
- (b) Domestic slavery.
- (c) Importation of slaves from Africa.

VIII. *Exortion.*

- (a) By Dharma.
- (b) By Traga.

IX. *Support of Caste by Law.*

- (a) Exclusion of low castes from offices.
- (b) Exemption of high castes from appearing to give evidence.
- (c) Disparagement of low castes.
- (d) Exclusion of widows from legal marriage.

'It must be conceded that the above is no mean record, and that it shows in a convincing manner that British rule has created an atmosphere throughout the length and breadth of India unfavourable to the continuance of social and religious customs and practices, however ancient, which are injurious to the well-being of the people.

'Many of the customs referred to have not been put down by the

strong force of law against obstinate resistance; they have simply melted away, in the fulness of time, under the silent but irresistible influence of the ameliorating principles with which Christian civilisation has been permeating society in India. 'Much remains yet to be done, but the leaven is still working, and the spirit of fair play towards all classes alike, which lies at the heart of British government in this great empire, will ensure greater progress in the social, commercial, and religious, condition of the people during the early years of this twentieth century than has been possible during the past generation.'

In this book there is no denial either of the beneficent reforms which have been already brought about or of the desire of the rulers themselves to do good to India—that is to say, to do good according to their preconceived ideas of what is fitting for India. On the contrary there is full recognition of this; nowhere (consciously) is there aspersions of individuals or imputation of motives. Everywhere a man's own words are fully quoted. Nowhere is there a quotation which, by the selection of certain passages, and quoting only them, gives a different impression from that which the writer or speaker intended. What I am trying to deal with is the terrible condition of the people, the backward state of the country, and how it is the things I comment upon and explain have been brought about. This is done in no spirit of fault-finding, or in inappreciation of what my countrymen have done. But I see that the evil daily wrought, though it may be unintentionally wrought, is causing unspeakable and unbearable misery to many, many, millions of our fellow-subjects. I am satisfied the wrong may be righted—if only the facts be realised. I see my official and non-official countrymen in India unable or unwilling to discern significance in such a fact as this:

1800 to 1825, FOUR Famines.		1875 to 1900, TWENTY-TWO Famines.
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To me it appears that the twenty-two as contrasted with the four are the product of our system of rule, of

what we have done, of what we have not done. And, without malice towards any, with a heart very full of sympathy and very sore for those who have become so degraded and so full of suffering and who are wholly blameless (save that they are too 'patient in suffering'), I tell the tale of India as I know it;—I cannot, if I am to retain any sense of duty, refrain from so telling it. I foresee my effort may be all in vain, my pains expended to no purpose. Nevertheless, the effort is made, the pains are expended.

Finally, before entering upon my criticism, I beg forgiveness in that I purpose intruding a few autobiographical remarks which have a bearing upon the publication of this book. I do not like the mode I must needs adopt in setting forth the views I here put on record. My objection arises from the circumstance that I am unable to compel attention on the part of the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy, any Governor or Councillor, to whatsoever I may say. My points may be unassailable; I cannot ensure they will be heeded. In 1885 I wrote a small work on India. Soon after it was published, the late John Slagg, M.P., saw the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the day, J. Kynaston Cross. Asked if he had read the book, Mr. Cross said, Yes, he had. 'What are you going to do about it?' 'Oh,' he replied, 'nothing.' 'But,' it was urged, 'see what is said, and official authority is quoted.' 'Yes,' was Mr. Cross's reply, 'Mr. Digby has obtained his facts from our books, but we shall ignore what he has said.' And, as I am a person of no importance, and as I, that year, failed in my attempt to enter the House of Commons, the book was ignored.¹ One might have thought the thing said was that which was of value; who

¹ But not utterly lost. There are men in public life in India who tell me the book I refer to was a primer which led them to the study of Indian questions.

said it surely mattered little—in that instance, particularly, this should have been the case.

I have always felt, since India took possession of me, that under our system of ruling India, only the fully-informed critic in Parliament, or one associated with the administration of India, could ensure attention being given to what he might say. So long ago as 1878 I thought my chance in this respect had come. Having, in appreciation of such work as I had been able to do in 1877 in the relief of the famine-stricken, recommended my name to the late Empress for recognition (which came on January 1, 1879), Lord Lytton (the then Viceroy) greatly surprised and gratified me, early in 1878, by forwarding to me an intimation that he proposed to nominate me as a member of the Famine Commission, the early appointment of which had been announced from London. Here, I thought, is the very chance I want. I shall be able to get at facts first-hand. I can, as Commissioner, probe certain phases of India's troubles to the bottom; I can form conclusions which, laid before my colleagues, may secure their adhesion; or, if they be not accepted by them, I can prepare a Minority Report, of which some notice will be taken. Unfortunately, as I think, the appointment was not made. Sir Steuart Colvin Bayley, Acting Private Secretary to the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, in a letter to me, dated Simla, April 17, 1878, said:—

‘His Excellency the Viceroy desires me to tell you that personally he was much inclined to place you on the Famine Commission, and that for some time he had the matter under his careful consideration, but, after consulting with General Strachey, and referring to the despatch about the constitution of the Commission, he is of opinion that he is precluded from availing himself of your services. You can certainly not be said to have taken no part in the labours or controversies of the past year, and apart from your prominent position in regard to the Famine Committee, your position as a journalist must of necessity

have committed you to decided opinions on many of the points which will come before the Commission for discussion; so that, in Lord Lytton's opinion he could not, without infringing the spirit as well as the letter of the restriction (placed deliberately on his choice by the Secretary of State) appoint you to be a member of the Commission.'

The real objection to my appointment, General Strachey himself subsequently told me, was that I was a non-official residing in India, and that my appointment would have led to a cry for mercantile and other representatives being nominated to seats on the Commission. *That* had to be prevented at any cost.

Twenty-two years later the famine of 1900-1 rendered another Commission necessary. In the interval I had maintained my interest in Indian affairs and I had come to see many things in Indian administration requiring reform the existence of which were not apparent to me in 1878. I wanted to have a free run of official documents so as to ascertain whether I was right or wrong in the conclusions to which I had come. So, putting my pride into my pocket, I wrote to Lord George Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, proffering my services, and frankly stating my object in doing so, namely, that I might have an opportunity, by diligent research as a Famine Commissioner, not only to do that for which a Commissioner would, specifically, be appointed, but also to see whether a more thorough study of Indian conditions would leave me where I now am. Lord George received my offer with courtesy, but he was unable, he said, to avail himself of it. I was known, he said, to hold strong views on certain features of Indian administration, and so I was ruled out from even the possibility of appointment. Apparently, admitted knowledge on a very complex and highly important subject concerning India disqualifies a man and renders him unfit to inquire concerning that very subject. One might have supposed that exactly the opposite would have been the

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case, as indeed it is everywhere save in Government offices.

I accepted the hand of fate. But I did not remain wholly quiescent. Lord Curzon called this famine 'the most terrible famine of the century.' In one of his speeches he made observations upon the condition of the country which led me to address to him an Open Letter, and, subsequently, a Postscript thereto, in the course of which I showed that his statements involved certain conclusions which indicated India to be on a steep declivity; and that in respect to many parts of the country, a continuance of present methods could end only in total impoverishment. When the Financial Statement was under consideration in the Viceregal Council at Calcutta towards the end of March, 1901, His Excellency the President, in the course of his remarks, replied, in some measure, to my communications. What was said by him was so incorrect in its details and so unsatisfactory in its deductions that I addressed Lord Curzon in another Open Letter, a copy of which I forwarded to the India Office for the information of the Secretary of State.

Out of that Open Letter has come this book. As I have said, any book in itself alone affords but a sorry means of putting forward my views. But it is all that I can do. As in 1885 so in 1901, it may, privately, be acknowledged that my statistics cannot be overthrown because they are the statistics of the India Office. My deductions? 'Oh! we have nothing to do with the deductions a man may choose to draw from the facts before him.' Again, I may be ignored (officially). Whether I have so poorly dealt with the facts I have handled, whether I have used the information, as open to others as to me, in such a way that my countrymen and countrywomen generally, and my Indian fellow-subjects as a whole, find in them no call to action, I know not. I have done my best during the spare hours (of a specially hard-worked year), which alone I am able to give to public duties. There I leave my humble part, which, with myself, may be ignored and

forgotten, if but the facts recorded lead to the amelioration of the condition of a lovable and worthy people—a condition the like of which no country but 'God's England,' in the administration of a subject land, can show.

CHAPTER I

INDIA RULED BY PRECONCEIVED IDEAS, NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH FACTS

British Delusions regarding India.
Principles of Government during Early Period of British Rule.
Foreign Rule Always a Scourge—now Greater than Before.

I.—*Conquest by Trade.*

Britain's Industrial Supremacy due to Indian Wealth being
'Appropriated' in the Eighteenth Century.
Amount of Wealth Transferred from India to the United
Kingdom.

II.—*Conquest by Deliberate Subjection.*

Lord William Bentinck and Mr. W. Thackeray on what
'Ought to be Suppressed' in the Indian Character;
Subsequent Adoption of the 'Suppression' Suggestion
Indian Lack of Ambition and other qualities—according to
James Mill.
Sir Thomas Munro and Bishop Heber to the Contrary.
Thackeray and James Mill against Munro and Heber.
The Big Words of the Charter Act of 1833.
Mr. Robert Rickards on the Policy which should be Adopted
towards Indians and India.
A New Era Inaugurated—in Words.

III.—*Conquest by 'Pousta.'*

Macaulay's Disclaimer of the 'Pousta' as a British Governing
Instrument.
The 'Pousta's' Effect on the British Mind.
For Bread a Stone—for Daily Food Powdered Rocks.

**A Choice between Prohibition and Cheating; Cheating Adopted
What We Choose to Believe concerning India is Alone Fact**

Appendices :

- I. 'Durbār Charges Unjustly Made.'
- II. Early Tributes to Indian Fitness for Official Positions:
 - (a) By John Sullivan, Collector of Coimbatore.
 - (b) By W. Chaplin, Commissioner of Deccan.
 - (c) By Major-General Sir L. Smith, K.C.B.

THE British world is under a delusion in regard to India. No greater delusion ever possessed a people as no delusion before it—though many disastrous delusions are writ large and graven deep on the page of history—has ever wrought so much moral, mental, and physical, ill to those who were its subjects.

If the delusion should remain after the chapters of this book have been written, then—so far as the knowledge of one man is concerned, albeit that knowledge is but small—there is no value in evidence. Fact and circumstance, in such case, cease to be verities, while Preconceived Ideas and the Seeing of that which the Eye Wishes to See become Unassailable Truth.

What were the principles on which our rule in India began? There were, at first, no principles whatsoever. We were too much occupied in establishing a footing to trouble ourselves concerning the people and their interests present and future. From 1740 to nearly the end of the eighteenth century our controlling action was a scramble for wealth. The manner in which that wealth was obtained was a secondary matter, or, indeed, of no matter. We were in India to make money, and all shadow of pretence at even making money honestly, was cast aside. Burke, in the Ninth Report from the Select Committee on the Administration of Justice in India, has told the story in full. Macaulay, in certain of his Essays, has summarised the facts in a narrative which should induce great consideration towards India by all English folk. Burke, nowadays, is seldom read; Macaulay has become a classic, and what he wrote is not held to

have any particular connection with events of to-day. The classics are for culture, not for common, workaday, righteousness. We read what he writes as we read Gibbon: the events described are entertaining, but we do not recognise their relation to the happenings under our own eyes from year to year, even from day to day. Nevertheless, what was done in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay during the eighteenth century and in the early years of the nineteenth century, is of supreme importance to us.

For what was done then, on the one hand, provided the capital by which Britain's industrial supremacy was established, and on the other hand laid the foundations of a system of alien rule which, in essentials, is the same to-day as it was one hundred years ago. Superficially there have been changes; fundamentally there has been no change.

The present can only be understood as the facts and circumstances of the past are clearly apprehended. Whatever of deficiency exists in our mode of administration of India in 1901, so far as the Indian people are concerned, and whatever of unusual poverty is to be found on the Indian Continent, are as they are because of the system of rule which, with every good intention but mistakenly, was then begun and was finally adopted. Those principles of rule were threefold.

1. CONQUEST BY TRADE. Exploitation of India undisguisedly — 'naked and not ashamed' — 1700-1783.
2. CONQUEST BY DELIBERATE SUBJECTION. India for England first and last — 1783-1833.
3. CONQUEST BY 'POUSTA.' A show of Fair Dealing accompanied with the maintenance, rigidly and uncompromisingly, of Indian National Inferiority — 1833-1901.

To understand the India of to-day each of the above-mentioned aspects must be examined, and evidence adduced in support of the conclusions they compel. This evidence shall be as brief as may be, but the facts repre-

sented must be stated even if the reader has to suffer what, otherwise, might be deemed an over-weighting of official statement.

England did not enter into relations with India with empire in view. For a long time after the opportunity of seizing power was ours, we were not anxious to lay hold of it. In agonising tones, repeated again and again, the Committee of Merchants in London commanded their servants not to acquire additional territory. One of the greatest of the Governors-General listened,—Hazael-like, with protest, and denial that we could do such things—to the prophecy of an Ambassador from Nepal, who, early in the nineteenth century, declared British supremacy in India would not stay in its course until it reached the Indus.

Until 1774, when Warren Hastings was made the first Governor-General, little of blame, maybe, attached to the British in India, judged from the point of view of a State responsible for the good government of subordinate peoples. Till then, disguised as the position may have been by the presence of the French in Southern India and the frequent conflicts which took place with the Country Powers, as the phrase quaintly puts it, the British were adventurers, with so much to be said in their favour as may rightly be said of adventurers, and no more. If they possessed power it was mainly by deputy. The position then occupied was like unto that of the British people towards India before the Crown—that is, the nation—became directly responsible for Indian rule.

As adventurers nearly two centuries ago the early Britons in Bengal and the sister Presidencies regarded the land and the people as fair game for plunder. Under King Edward VII., Emperor of India, and under the later Britons, as administrators, disguised with all the speciousness which Western civilisation abundantly supplies for such purposes, and glossed over with words of forceful sound but scant meaning, such as Secretaries of State delude themselves and the House of Commons with

once at least in every year—the day on which the Indian idol is brought out for British worship—India is still fair game for plunder, and is plundered. . Hard as the saying may sound in the ears of the ordinary Englishman, the plunder is proceeding far more outrageously to-day than at any preceding period. The thin whips of the early days of our rule have become bundles of wire thongs; the exactions of Clive and Hastings fall into insignificance by the side of the drain which, in ever-augmenting volume, is over-enriching one country at the cost of the life-blood of another. Behind the fairest product which any administration in the world's history has ever put in the window-front to challenge admiration, there lurks a degree of daily-increasing misery—not intended truly, and, therefore, its very existence denied even when it is exposed to view—which few Britons dream of, and which far fewer realise. We did not *mean* to cause misery, we do not *desire* there should be misery, and, therefore, what is exhibited as such cannot be human misery. To believe it to be so is *maya*, illusion. There is illusion, but it is more correctly spelt delusion.

I. CONQUEST BY TRADE.

'We are,' say the Court of Directors, in their General Letter to Bengal, April 26, 1765, 'extremely anxious for the arrival of Lord Clive, and the gentlemen who accompanied him; as they have been so lately in England, they are the best judges of the opinion the Government and the nation entertain of the conduct of the English in Bengal for these last four years; which we are sorry to say is, in general, that they have been guilty of violating treaties, of great oppression, and a combination to enrich themselves.

'We do not here mean to enter into a discussion respecting the political conduct of our late Governor and Council; but must say that an unbounded thirst after riches seems to have possessed the whole body of

our servants to a degree that they have lost all sight of justice to the Country Government and of their duty to the Committee.

Burke tells the story with more of detail. He says:—

'This new system of trade, carried on through the medium of power and public revenue, very soon produced its natural effects. The loudest complaints arose among the natives, and among all the foreigners who traded in Bengal. It must have unquestionably thrown the whole mercantile system of the country into the greatest confusion. With regard to the natives, no expedient was proposed for their relief. The case was serious with respect to European powers. The Presidency plainly represented to the Directors that some agreement should be made with foreign nations for providing their investment to a certain amount, or that the deficiencies then subsisting must terminate in an open rupture with France.'

'Notwithstanding the famine in 1770, which wasted Bengal in a manner dreadful beyond all example, the investment, by a variety of successive expedients, many of them of the most dangerous nature and tendency, was forcibly kept up; and even in that forced and unnatural state it gathered strength almost every year. The debts contracted in the infancy of the system were gradually reduced, and the advances to contractors and manufacturers were regularly made; so that the goods from Bengal, purchased from the territorial revenues, from the sale of European goods, and from the produce of the monopolies, for the four years which ended with 1780, when the investment from the surplus revenues finally closed, were never less than a million sterling, and commonly nearer twelve hundred thousand pounds. This million is the lowest value of the goods sent to Europe for which no satisfaction is made.'² [The sale, to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds annually, of the export from Great Britain ought to be deducted from this million.]

'In all other countries, the revenue, following the natural course and order of things, arises out of their commerce. Here, by a mischievous inversion of that order, the whole foreign maritime trade, whether English, French, Dutch, or Danish, arises from the revenues; these are carried out of the country without producing anything to compensate so heavy a loss.'

'But that the greatness of all these drains, and their effects, may be rendered more visible, your Committee have turned their consideration to the employment of those parts of the Bengal revenue which are not employed in the Company's own investments for China and for Europe. What is taken over and above the investment

Ninth Report, p. 47; Burke, *Collected Works*, vol. iii.

² *Ibid.* pp. 47-48.

³ *Ibid.* p. 50.

(when any investment can be made) from the gross revenue, either for the charge of collection or for the civil and military establishments, is in time of peace two millions at least. From the portion of that sum which goes to the support of civil government the natives are almost wholly excluded, as they are from the principal collections of revenue. With very few exceptions they are only employed as servants and agents to Europeans, or in the inferior departments of collection, when it is absolutely impossible to proceed a step without their assistance. Some time after the acquisition of the territorial revenue, the sum of £420,000 a year was paid, according to the stipulation of a treaty to the Nabob of Bengal, for the support of his government. This sum, however inconsiderable, compared to the revenues of the Province, yet, distributed through the various departments of civil administration, served in some degree to preserve the natives of the better sort, particularly those of the Mahomedan profession, from being utterly ruined. The people of that persuasion, not being so generally engaged in trade, and not having on their conquest of Bengal divested the ancient Gentu proprietors of their lands of inheritance, had for their chief, if not their sole, support the share of a moderate conqueror in all offices, civil and military. But your Committee find that this arrangement was of short duration. Without the least regard to the subsistence of this innocent people, or to the faith of the agreement on which they were brought under the British Government, this sum was reduced by a new treaty to £320,000, and soon after (upon a pretence of the present Nabob's minority, and a temporary sequestration for the discharge of his debts) to £160,000; but when he arrived at his majority, and when the debts were paid (if ever they were paid) the sequestration continued; and so far as the late advices may be understood, the allowance to the Nabob appears still to stand at the reduced sum of £180,000.

'The other resource of the Mahomedans, and of the Gentus of certain of the higher castes, was the army. In this army nine-tenths of which consists of natives, no native, of whatever description, holds any rank higher than that of a Subahdar Commandant, that is, of an officer below the rank of an English subaltern, who is appointed to each company of the native soldiery.

'Your Committee would here be understood to state the ordinary establishment; for the war may have made some alteration. All the honourable, all the lucrative, situations of the army, all the supplies and the contracts of whatever species that belong to it, are solely in the hands of the English; so that whatever is beyond the mere subsistence of a common soldier and some officers of a lower rank, together with the immediate expenses of the English officers at their table, is sooner or later, in one shape or another, sent out of the country.'

Governor Verelst, with great particularity, himself an observer of the events he describes, confirms all that Burke states.

Much of modern European national prosperity is based upon the plunder of nations representing ancient civilisations. Spain robbed South America; England—from Drake under Elizabeth to Blake under Cromwell—seized as many of the Lusitanian treasure ships on their way to Spain as she could, and appropriated what they carried. Later, in the development of the land and its dependencies even these additional riches were not enough; more money was needed by the country, and none was locally forthcoming.¹ England was vigorously asserting herself on the Continent of Europe and elsewhere. For a time an issue of bank-notes helped the situation. But coin was needed, a metallic foundation for the paper issued, and at last coin was obtained—from India. How it was obtained Macaulay has told in his *Essays on Clive and Hastings*. The historian's works are in the hands of, or are available to, every reader; I may, therefore, be pardoned if I simply call upon the memory of my reader and forbear quotation, especially as I have much, not within reach even of the ordinary student, with which I must deal.

England's industrial supremacy owes its origin to the vast hoards of Bengal and the Karnatik being made available for her use. Had this happened honourably and in the ordinary course of trade it would have been matter for satisfaction. Before Plassey was fought and won, and before the stream of treasure began to flow to England, the industries of our country were at a very low ebb. Lancashire spinning and weaving were on a par with the corresponding industry in India so far as machinery was

¹ 'No foreigner was robbed, and the stock of domestic silver dwindled from year to year, until at the Revolution the golden guinea, which from its first issue in 1662 down to the accession of William and Mary had been nominally current for twenty shillings, actually sold in the market for thirty shillings of the money in use.'—'The Law of Civilisation and Decay,' by Brooks Adams, p. 249; Swan Sonnenschein and Co., Ltd., London, 1900.

concerned, but the skill which made Indian cottons a marvel of manufacture was wholly wanting in any of the Western nations. As with cotton so with iron; industry in Britain was at a very low ebb, alike in mining and in manufacture.

The connection between the beginning of the drain of Indian wealth to England and the swift uprising of British industries was not casual: it was causal. Mr. Brooks Adams¹ says:—

'In discussing the phenomena of the highly centralised society in which he lived, Mill defined capital "as the accumulated stock of human labour." In other words, capital may be considered as stored energy; but most of this energy flows in fixed channels; money alone is capable of being transmuted immediately into any form of activity. Therefore the influx of the Indian treasure, by adding considerably to the nation's cash capital, not only increased its stock of energy, but added much to its flexibility and the rapidity of its movement.

'Very soon after Plassey, the Bengal plunder began to arrive in London, and the effect appears to have been instantaneous, for all authorities agree that the "industrial revolution," the event which has divided the nineteenth century from all antecedent time, began with the year 1760. Prior to 1760, according to Baines, the machinery used for spinning cotton in Lancashire was almost as simple as in India; while about 1750 the English iron industry was in full decline because of the destruction of the forests for fuel. At that time four-fifths of the iron used in the kingdom came from Sweden.

'Plassey was fought in 1757, and probably nothing has ever equalled the rapidity of the change which followed. In 1760 the flying-shuttle appeared, and coal began to replace wood in smelting. In 1764 Hargreaves invented the spinning-jenny, in 1779 Crompton contrived the mule, in 1785 Cartwright patented the power-loom, and, chief of all, in 1768 Watt matured the steam-engine, the most perfect of all vents of centralising energy. But, though these machines served as outlets for the accelerating movement of the time, they did not cause that acceleration. In themselves inventions are passive, many of the most important having lain dormant for centuries, waiting for a sufficient store of force to have accumulated to set them working. That store must always take the shape of money, and money not hoarded, but in motion.

'Thus printing had been known for ages in China before it came to

¹ 'Law of Civilisation and Decay,' Brooks Adams, pp. 259-260; Swan Sonnenschein and Co., Ltd.

Europe; the Romans probably were acquainted with gunpowder; revolvers and breech-loading cannon existed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and steam had been experimented upon long before the birth of Watt. The least part of Watt's labour lay in conceiving his idea; he consumed his life marketing it. Before the influx of the Indian treasure, and the expansion of credit which followed, no force sufficient for this purpose existed; and had Watt lived fifty years earlier, he and his invention must have perished together. Considering the difficulties under which Matthew Boulton, the ablest and most energetic manufacturer of his time, nearly succumbed, no one can doubt that without Boulton's works at Birmingham the engine could not have been produced, and yet before 1760 such works could not have been organised. The factory system was the child of the "industrial revolution," and until capital had accumulated in masses capable of giving solidity to large bodies of labour, manufactures were necessarily carried on by scattered individuals, who combined a handicraft with agriculture.¹

¹ Possibly since the world began no investment has ever yielded the profit reaped from the Indian plunder, because for nearly fifty years Great Britain stood without a competitor. That she should have so long enjoyed a monopoly seems at first mysterious, but perhaps the condition of the Continent may suggest an explanation. Since Italy had been ruined by the loss of the Eastern trade, she had ceased to breed the economic mind; consequently no class of her population could suddenly and violently accelerate their movements. In Spain, the priest and soldier had so thoroughly exterminated the sceptic, that far from centralising during the seventeenth century, as England and France had done, her empire was in full decline at the revolution of 1688. In France something similar had happened, though in a much less degree. After a struggle of a century and a half, the Church so far prevailed in 1685 as to secure the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. At the revocation many Huguenots went into exile, and thus no small proportion of the economic class, who should have pressed England hardest, were driven across the Channel to add their energy to the energy of the natives. Germany lacked capital. Hemmed in by enemies, and without a sea-coast, she had been at a disadvantage in predatory warfare; accordingly she did not accumulate money, and failed to consolidate until, in 1870, she extorted a treasure from France. Thus, in 1760, Holland alone remained as a competitor, rich, maritime, and peopled by Protestants. But Holland lacked the mass possessed by the great antagonist, besides being without minerals; and accordingly, far from accelerating her progress, she proved unable to maintain her relative rate of advance.

Thus isolated, and favoured by mines of coal and iron, England not only commanded the European and American markets, at a time

¹ 'The Law of Civilisation and Decay,' ch. xi. p. 263.

when production was strained to the utmost by war, but even under-sold Hindoo labour at Calcutta. In some imperfect way her gains may be estimated by the growth of her debt, which must represent savings. In 1756, when Clive went to India, the nation owed £74,575,000, on which it paid an interest of £2,753,000. In 1815 this debt had swelled to £861,000,000, with an annual interest charge of £82,645,000. In 1761 the Duke of Bridgewater finished the first of the canals which were afterwards to form an inland waterway, costing £50,000,000, or more than two-thirds of the amount of the public debt at the outbreak of the seven years' war. Meanwhile, also, steam had been introduced, factories built, turnpikes improved, and bridges erected, and all this had been done through a system of credit extending throughout the land. Credit is the chosen vehicle of energy in centralised societies, and no sooner had treasure enough accumulated in London to offer it a foundation, than it shot up with marvellous rapidity.

'From 1694 to Plassey, the growth had been relatively slow. For more than sixty years after the foundation of the Bank of England, its smallest note had been for £20, a note too large to circulate freely, and which rarely travelled far from Lombard Street. Writing in 1790, Burke mentioned that when he came to England in 1750 there were not "twelve bankers' shops" in the provinces, though then, he said, they were in every market town. Thus the arrival of the Bengal silver not only increased the mass of money, but stimulated its movement; for at once, in 1759, the bank issued £10 and £15 notes, and in the country private firms poured forth a flood of paper.'

Thus England's unbounded prosperity owes its origin to her connection with India, whilst it has, largely, been maintained—disguisedly—from the same source, from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present time. 'Possibly, since the world began, no investment has ever yielded the profit reaped from the Indian plunder.'

What was the extent of the wealth thus wrung from the East Indies? No one has been able to reckon adequately, as no one has been in a position to make a correct 'tally' of the treasure exported from India. Estimates have been made which vary from £500,000,000 to nearly £1,000,000,000. Probably between Plassey and Waterloo the last-mentioned sum was transferred from Indian hoards to English banks. In an appendix to

