# THREE ARTICLES

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# CULTIVATION OF INDIAN VERNACULARS.

Dr. B. D. Basu, of the Indian Medical Service, plunges into the discussion of a subject which is beset with peculiar difficulties, but which he regards with a complacency that refuses to recognise those difficulties. The very first line of his article on the "Cultivation of Indian Vernaculars" (published in *East & West* for October 1902) shows a lack of practical acquaintance with the subject. "At present there is hardly any literature worth the name in any of the Indian Vernaculars." This is the opening sentence to which your readers are treated, and men of light and leading in India must stand aghast at the assertion. If Dr. Basu had known anything of the literature of his own people, to say nothing of other vernaculars, he would have seen that Bengali is rich in books on Biography, History, Philosophy, Travel, Poetry and the Drama—why, the *non-educational* books received at the Bengal Government Library in the twelve months ending June, 1901, numbered 714, exclusive of those on religion (*vide* Appendix to Calcutta Gazette, January

30th, April 3rd, July 10th and September 25th, 1900), which were divided thus—Art 3, Biography 23, Drama 85, Fiction 86, History 9, Philology 5, Law 4, Medicine 24, Philosophy 1, Poetry 83, Science 1, Travels 1, and Miscellaneous 127. Many of these are declared to be of high merit. One of the books under the head "Miscellaneous" is the *Bisva Kosha*, which, according to competent authority, is "an encyclopædia of learning and a monument of literary genius running into many volumes." Perhaps Dr. Basu will be surprised to hear that there are no less than 54 Bengali periodicals :—Agriculture 1, Education 1, Art 1, Religion 7, Poetry 1, Medicine 2, Science 1, and Miscellaneous 40 *(vide* Calcutta Gazette, 25th September, 1901). If this is the out-turn of earnest and able workers in a single year, Dr. Basu had surely no reasons for stating that "all that passes under the name of vernacular literature consists of a few elementary school-books, a few novels, a few poetical works—generally translations or adaptations from Sanskrit authorities." He ascribes this alleged poverty of vernacular literature to "English being the medium of instruction in all colleges and schools in India," and adds, "it is on account of this that the

vernacular literature cannot grow and expand." I make bold to assert, and I am not singular in this respect, that English civilisation and Western enlightenment have had a direct effect on the growth of the Bengali language and Bengali literature and have made these what they are to-day. Bengali occupies the foremost place among the vernacular languages of India, enriched, as it is, with translations from the Sanskrit, Persian, English, French and German languages, which give to it a copiousness and character that cannot be claimed by other vernaculars to the same extent. Several Bengali works have been translated into Guzerati. The Bengali girl of to-day, without knowing the alphabet of any European language, may read Guy de Maupassant's stories and have an idea of Heine and Victor Hugo's poems or Molière's dramas ; she may enjoy a hearty laugh over the good-humoured banter in that masterpiece in Persian literature *Vizier-Lankaran* ; she can, without knowing *aliph, bé*, follow the discussions of learned Moulavis as to whether the word *Buln* in the Quran, with reference to the E'ed Sacrifice, means a camel or a sheep. Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill are no strangers to her ; accounts of the Röntgen rays and

wireless telegraphy have reached her through the medium of Bengali.

Dr. Basu says, among other things, "England has derived more benefit by the diffusion of English education amongst Indians than India itself"; "English education has created a market for English goods"; "English educated Indians prefer English manufactured articles to those made in India." Now, why this admission of weakness? Are the ties of "nationality" not sufficiently strong to wean us from such petty creature-comforts as glassware, socks and patent leather boots? English firms in India, we are gravely told, are now managed more economically than before, because good clerks can be secured in India on salaries which need not exceed two figures in rupees, whereas formerly clerks were imported at great expense. Strange to say, the complaint made here is that the employing firms realise larger profits than formerly, while the fact that the arrangement throws open hundreds and thousands of clerical appointments to Indians is completely ignored. The assertion that English officials "in the days of Ochterlony, Malcolm and Metcalf" had to diligently learn and master the vernaculars, but that this is not done

now, seems to me to be inexcusable. It is well known that every member of the Indian Civil Service has to pass an examination in the vernacular of his Province, many hold the Degree of Honour Certificate in Asiatic languages, and some, like Dr. Grierson, are profound Oriental scholars. Why, the very issue of *East & West* containing Dr. Basu's article has an original essay from the pen of Major Wolseley Haig, of Hyderabad, whose scholarly attainments in Persian have elicited the admiration of learned Moulavis.

"India, comparatively speaking, has not been so much benefited by English education as England," writes Dr. Basu. Now, the life of a nation is inspired and sustained by the examples of its great men, and I doubt whether the gentlemen I name below (all countrymen of Dr. Basu) would have risen to the eminence they attained, not only in the Government service, but as intellectual leaders of their community, but for the thorough English education they had received :—Mr. R. C. Dutt, I.C.S., C.I.E., late Commissioner of Orissa ; Mr. K. G. Gupta, I.C.S., Commissioner of Orissa ; Sir R. C. Mitra, at one time acting Chief Justice, High Court, Calcutta ; Dr. J. C.

Bose, of wireless telegraph fame, and many others. Is India not the richer for the examples of lofty aims achieved, of great public good done, in various capacities, by these intellectual giants? Is India not the richer for Mr. R. C. Dutt's translation of the *Rig Veda* or Dr. R. L. Mitra's antiquarian researches? Dr. S. C. Mukerjee's life showed that honourable relations could exist between the English and the Indian, and his efforts to extinguish race hatred were acknowledged by the highest in the land, while his death was regarded as "a loss to the country, a loss to the cause of advancement of English literature, a loss to the cause of Truth and Independence" (*F. H. Skrine, I.C.S.*). I might name others who, by virtue principally of their high English qualifications, have benefited India; but I refrain.

I will now proceed to examine another fallacy of the writer. He says: "It is idle to hope that Indians would be able to write and speak English like Englishmen, or that English would be the *lingua franca* of India." Dr. Basu need not despair. There *are* Indians who do write and speak English like Englishmen, and English *is* the *lingua franca* of educated India. Has Dr. Basu never

read the writings of, say, Dr. S. C. Mukerjee? Are not some of the speeches of Mr. L. M. Ghose or Mr S. N. Banerjee admitted by Englishmen to be masterpieces of oratory, of which the most highly educated Englishman might well be proud? Mr. Robert Knight (the father of Indian journalism, for some time Editor of the *Bombay Times* and the *Calcutta Statesman*) once expressed a hope that Dr. Mukerjee's health would enable him to continue *Reis and Rayyet* "with the *extraordinary ability and moral force* that distinguish its columns." The Indian Civil Service Examination is admittedly one of the severest tests of one's qualifications in English, and has Dr. Basu never heard that his countryman, Mr. B. De, distinguished himself by taking the B. A. and M. A. Degrees in a fortnight, standing 6th in the former and 2nd in the latter, and passing the I.C.S. Examination the next year within seven months of his arrival in England, standing *first* in English?—or that Mr. A. C. Chatterjee stood first in his year in the I. C. S Examination? Among men who have never been to England, but have yet acquired eminence, Dr. R. B. Ghose and Dr. Mukerjee may be mentioned. The former, who is the author of "The Law of Mortgage,"

has been complimented by several High Court Judges as a perfect master of the English language, while Dr. Mukerjee is very well known to fame. Even here in Hyderabad we have a pure Indian who is accepted by educated Englishmen as a thorough master of the English language: need I say that I refer to the Hon'ble Mr. Syed Husain Bilgrami, of the Viceregal Council?

Dr. Basu laments the day when English was made the medium of instruction in India. He suggests that the vernacular should be the medium, English being made a compulsory second language. He despairs of this being done just yet in British India; but he looks to the Indian Princes for assistance in the cause of vernacular literature. "In their territories it is not necessary that English should be made the medium of instruction." He would have these States establish their own Universities, in which only the vernacular will be the medium of instruction for History, Geography, Philosophy, Mathematics and Science, English being compulsory only as a modern language. Dr. Basu presents Japan as a precedent where success has been attained; but he appears to have forgotten the important fact that there is but one language

and one religion in Japan. Japanese religious beliefs, unlike Indian beliefs, is confined to two heads, the *Shinto* (the religious belief of the natives prior to the introduction of Buddhism) and Buddhism. Dr. Basu asserts that "the Japanese language contains an excellent literature, rich in all branches of human knowledge." He must admit that the information at his disposal can hardly be as complete or correct as that given in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The writer of the article on Japan says, "intercourse with foreign countries has of late years naturally created a demand for certain words and phrases, hitherto unnecessary, and consequently unknown, and these have therefore been freshly coined, as it were, for the occasion." If there has been this difficulty with *one* language, we may judge of the hopelessness of the task where a dozen vernaculars are concerned. These are factors that dominate the whole question. Dr. Basu talks of Native States. I do not know whether he has ever been in one. I have been in the premier Native State as a journalist for over a decade, and perhaps Dr. Basu will therefore allow me a hearing. Let us for a moment imagine a University in Hyderabad. What will be the vernacular? As a Vakil of His Highness

the Nizam's High Court, I have large experience of practical work and have been confronted with the difficulty of handling several languages—both Aryan and Dravidian —in cases of Revenue Appeal. In some parts of the Hyderabad Territory Marhatti forms the office record, in another Government work is done in Telegu, while all appellate work is done in Urdu, and old records are in Persian ! May I ask Dr. Basu what will be the vernacular for Hyderabad ? Perhaps he will advise His Highness the Nizam to have three Universities in his Dominions !

Then, according to Dr. Basu, we must have a University for Mysore with Canarese, another in Travancore with Malayalam, and so forth. Are these several States prepared to offer employment to every student from their schools and colleges ? If this is not done, the Hyderabad man must starve in Mysore, while the Mysore graduate would probably only draw a pittance elsewhere as an English copyist. Soon, very soon, English must become the *lingua franca* even in all Native States, while the only really all-round useful man would be the one who has received a more rational education in British India. Dr. Basu would not, of course, recommend a single vernacular

for all India ; if he did, he would be at once confronted with a difficulty infinitely greater than that which recently attended the proposal to have Urdu written in the Nagri character in the courts and offices of the United (North-Western) Provinces. No single vernacular could possibly take the place of the others. After many years' experience of Hyderabad, during which time I have, both as a lawyer and a journalist, been in constant touch with the official classes, I feel how utterly inadequate one language sometimes is to express faithfully the ideas so readily conveyed in another. We have many learned Moulvies here who have come from Northern India with a reputation for great erudition, and yet they have been unable to find suitable words for some of the most common official terms. English words in common use in Urdu characters are "Summons," "Warrant," "Register," "Railway," "Cabinet Council," "Resolution," "Commission," &c. Are we prepared to give a University education in the vernacular and yet drag in English words when the subject becomes too abstruse for the vernacular? As a contributor to the leading Bengali magazines, *Bharati* and *Sahitya*, I have often found myself at a loss for a suitable

word which would adequately express the foreign ideas imbibed through a language much richer than any Indian language. In quoting rulings of the High Courts in British India one has to refer to, say, the *Weekly Reporter* or the *Calcutta Reports* or the *Bengal Law Reports*, none of which are translated into Urdu. Even annotated Acts like "Field's Evidence" or "Sheppard's Contract" have not been translated into Urdu—the Court language of His Highness the Nizam's Courts. When a vernacular like Urdu, which is the *lingua franca* of all Upper India, does not offer sufficient inducements to translators, it would be idle to expect that these bulky tomes would ever be translated into several vernaculars for the circumscribed use to which they would be put. The Panjab University has an oriental side ; it has turned out its Moulvis, its Moulvi Fazils and its Moulvi Alims by the score. Do we find any of these gentlemen holding such high and influential positions as many Bengalis who have received their ideas through the medium of the English language and thus mastered it ? Why, the only Indian gentleman who is a Judge of the Lahore Chief Court is a Bengali, and not a Moulvi Fazil. Even Panjab public (Indian)

opinion always was and is in the hands of the English-educated Bengali, and not in those of Dr. Leitner's favourite Moulvi Fazils, for the Lahore *Tribune*, the exponent of Panjabi public opinion, though owned by Sirdar Dayal Singh Mejethia, has always been edited by Bengalis.

Another suggestion of Dr. Basu's is that, in the matter of Science, "all that has been done in the West should be adapted in the Indian vernaculars." Now, according to Dr. Basu, English is only to be a compulsory second language. The great bulk of students would, a few years after their College life closed, know little more of it than most students (except perhaps those who enter the Educational Department) now know of Latin or Sanskrit or any other second language, because it could not possibly be grasped with the same thoroughness as the language which is the general medium of instruction. Who, then, is to translate these difficult scientific works into the several vernaculars, and how would it pay? To be accepted unreservedly as standard works, they must bear the impress of a master mind, and such minds would, I fear, be few and far between.

I cannot conceive where the advantage of Dr. Basu's scheme comes in. *It must separate, not unite the peoples of India.* The savant from Bengal may now discourse with his brother scientist from Madras on topics dear to the hearts of both with an intelligible interest, because both have dived into their mysteries or become acquainted with their beauties through the same medium—English. But what pleasure would the Madrasi, educated in Tamil, have in the companionship of the Bengali, or the latter in that of the Marhatta, after such a course as that advocated by Dr. Basu ? Lord Curzon's idea in connection with the Delhi Darbar is that it would bring together the Chiefs and Nobles of different States, who would thus be afforded the unique opportunity of holding familiar intercourse with each other. The medium of intercourse will, and must of necessity, except in a few cases, be English. Dr. Basu's scheme is calculated to strike a fatal blow at such social amenities in the future.

Mr. Meredith Townsend, Editor of the London *Spectator*, asked the Nestor of Indian Journalism, Dr. S. C. Mukerji, Editor of *Reis and Rayyet*, in 1883, why men so able as the learned Doctor preferred to publish in a foreign

tongue, instead of making a literature of their own, and remarked, "doubtless you have sufficient reasons." The reply is full of significance. "So we have," wrote Dr. Mukerji, "we might have created one of the finest literatures in the world, *without making any impression in the Camp of our British Rulers, and of course, without advancing our political or even social status.* Nay, the truth is that we have created a literature, and a very respectable literature it is. You, who were a Bengali scholar in your time in India, having conducted a Bengali weekly, I believe, for a couple of years, would have been astonished at the present state of our language, *its copiousness in terms of all kinds and its wealth of literature.* All that copiousness and all that wealth have not helped us one whit or rescued us from our degradation. Hence we are compelled to journalism and authorship in a foreign tongue, *to make English a kind of Second Vernacular* to us if possible." (The italics are mine). This was written nearly twenty years ago. The Bengali language has continued to make vast strides, and yet Dr. Basu tries calmly to assure the public that "there is hardly any literature worth the name in any of the Indian

Vernaculars," and that " the literature is totally devoid of historical, philosophical and scientific works."

There are very few suggestions in Dr. Basu's article with which I, for one, can cordially agree. With regard to the education of the women of India, he says that as they do not attend Colleges to qualify for Government appointments, but simply to gain knowledge, there is no real necessity to educate them through the medium of English. But does not Dr. Basu know that educated Bengali ladies have in many instances made a living as Professors or Lady Doctors? If these ladies, instead of being educated in English had been proficient in the vernacular, what would have been their fate? On the other hand, the well-educated male members of any Indian community naturally like their wives and daughters to be educated like themselves, so as to prove themselves more congenial companions. I hold that a thorough knowledge of the English language has inestimable advantages. India has benefited largely by English education. She has benefited socially, as it is the widespread knowledge of English and the enlightenment it has produced that has raised the social status of the women of India. She

has benefited politically, because the English language has made it possible for people of different parts of India to discuss political problems ; and last, but not least, it has tended largely to the removal of caste prejudices. I would gladly welcome anything that would further enrich my language ; but I cannot believe that this can possibly be attained by a sacrifice of English. There is a literary institution in Calcutta which is doing good work in this direction, and which includes in its membership the best and most learned men of our time. The *Bangya Sahitya Parishad* (the Bengal Academy of Literature) is engaged in collecting the best ancient Bengali works ; manuscripts, coins &c., bearing upon the history or philology of Bengali, are scientifically discussed by the most able members, and the discussions published in the Society's Magazine. Much may be hoped for from these earnest workers. I have, of course, throughout this article, treated only of Bengal and the Bengali language, because I thought Dr. Basu, being a Bengali, would be in a better position to follow the comparison.

It was hardly necessary to quote Herbert Spencer to show the importance of the study of the natural and

physical sciences; but the method of imparting such knowledge, advocated by Dr. Basu, is certainly impracticable. I have great respect for Dr. Ballantyne as a scholar, but scholars are not always practical men, and that which makes a "pandit prick up his ears" may yet be wanting in utility and fail to arrest the attention of a learned Moulavi. Even Dr Ballantyne's greatest admirers will admit that the learned Doctor is somewhat premature in asserting the dogma that "it is not only possible, but incumbent upon us, to present the sciences to the Indian million in vocables, without exception indigenous." Fancy the sciences for the "million" who do not know the alphabet of any language!

There are many other points in Dr. Basu's article with which I should like to deal, but I am afraid I have already exceeded my limit. I hope I have shown that Dr. Basu has taken up a position which is quite untenable; he would put the clock back a hundred years. I think, however, that even Dr. Basu will agree that while it is good to be national, it is infinitely better to be rational.—*East & West*, Bombay, November 1902.

# KEEPING CASTE IN ENGLAND.

We may readily conceive that Dr. Josiah Oldfield's contribution on "Keeping Caste in England," published in November's *East & West*, has raised a smile on many a Hindu face. No one, however, could well take exception in a spirit of captious criticism to the learned Doctor's theories and suggestions, because of the kindly feeling and evident desire to be helpful that characterises his article. There is much in it that will commend itself as being a true picture of an Indian's life in England, and the Doctor's advice, on some points, to those who go to England, is perfectly sound. He points out, that being accustomed to live simply in his home, an Indian in England, on being bidden to be thrifty naturally endeavours to economize upon board and lodging, and he rightly regards this as a "cardinal error." His reasons too are perfectly sound for an Indian living in a cheap second-rate boarding and lodging-house cannot get into touch with that particular grade of society from which he can imbibe those characteristics which make for

England's greatness. The practice of young Indians to sit together at Bar dinners is also rightly condemned, as having no topics of conversation in common with their English comrades they miss "the clash of mind on mind" which leads to the formation of trained independent opinion. Not Dr. Oldfield alone, but all Englishmen of education must feel that they have a personal grievance when good English society is judged by the manners of some of the Indians who have spent a few years in England, who assert that they have spent their time in good English society but whose ways make "their kith and kin wonder what English life is like, which has taken from them all their simple virtues and has given them none better in exchange." Many of your readers will also agree with Dr. Oldfield that anything like a central home or club for Indians in England would be "subversive of all the best reasons for their coming to England." They go, not to keep up their knowledge of the Indian Vernaculars but to mix with Englishmen, talk English and *live an English life*. How far this last is compatible with caste will presently appear. All the advice tendered by Dr. Oldfield is worthy of acceptance, and Indians going

to England would be the better for following that advice, provided they are prepared to relax, and relax freely in the matter of caste prejudice. Dr. Oldfield himself does not advise the carrying out of the *letter* of caste, and the creation of difficulties unnecessarily so long as the man can be true to the *spirit* of his faith ; but he goes further and offers to show how a man "however scrupulous he may be, can carry out the *letter* as well as the *spirit* of his caste. But it is impossible for an orthodox Hindu to draw a line between the *letter* and the *spirit* of caste ! The imperative demands of caste have been and are admitted among all nations of the world. The word in Sanskrit is *Varna* or colour, and there is perhaps some foundation for the contention of Heeren and Klaproth that the divisions of caste were originally founded on diversities of race, thus the Brahmans are spoken of in early hymns as white, Kshatriyas red and the Vaisyas yellow. As in other countries caste was originally an indication of profession or craft as it undoubtedly now is in India—Palgrave (*History of Rise and Progress of English Constitution*) proves that it existed in Britain during the Roman period, when, under the Theodosian Code,

the son was compelled to follow the father's profession. There were other traces of similarity, thus Stubbs in his "*Constitutional History of England*" shows that Members of different castes or guilds, could under certain conditions, rise from one to another and so ancient hymns suggest that the four castes arrive successively in four great periods to *Dharma* or righteousness, when of course they would be one. These four great periods are the *Satya* or glorious age of truth and piety in which there were no distinctions ; the *Treta* or age of knowledge ; the *Dvapara* or age of sacrifice ; and the *Kali* or age of darkness. The *Vayu Purana* assigns the origin of caste to the *Treta* age. The institution goes so far back into the early history of the world as to be hoary with antiquity. Although caste, as it is now understood, is not to be found in the Vedas, it has acquired so firm a hold on the religious convictions of the people during the course of ages, as to have become a second nature. Native reformers, Missionaries and a wise and powerful Government have been unable to shake the simple faith of credulous people. The history of Christian Missions in India is a standing proof of the vitality of the old divisions and customs.

The Jesuit Missionaries Xavier and Fradei Nobili dressed themselves like Brahmins, made frequent ablutions, became strict vegetarians and smeared *their foreheads with sandal-wood paste.* Pope Gregory XV. went so far as to sanction caste regulations in the Christian Churches and so did the German and Danish Missions at Tanjore and Tranquebar, but all to no purpose. Are there not cases on record of men dying from thirst rather than receive the life-giving water at the hands of an out-caste? Benjamin Convant in his "*De la Religion*" points out that "caste rests on the religious idea of an indelible stain resting on certain men"; and the much dreaded penalty of expulsion from caste follows numerous moral offences, among which are the mere act of eating with persons out of caste or failing to perform funeral rites. Has not Dr. Oldfield gone beyond his depth in suggesting that the letter of caste can be observed in England? Dr. Oldfield no doubt believes that he is perfectly justified in saying that he has learnt just those points of caste custom to which Hindus attach so much importance, because he, for some little time, lived in the houses of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Jains. No doubt he had explained

to him many of their ceremonial observances ; but was he once in the same room in which they took their food or noticed the scrupulous care observed to prevent even what may be called notional defilement? I think it is only fair that I should be allowed to remove the wrong impression that Dr. Oldfield's article is calculated to make in the minds of non-Hindu readers. Though by no means a caste-ridden orthodox Hindu myself, coming as I do from the upper layer of Hindu society of Konnagar, the greatest stronghold of caste factions on the banks of the Hooghly (Bengal), I know a thing or two about caste. Having travelled all over Northern India and a good deal in Southern India, I am in a position to assert that, whether on the banks of the Ganges or on that of the Godavery, the rules regarding caste pollution are about the same. Let us consider for a moment some of the interdictions imposed by caste and see how far these can be avoided on the journey by sea. And here I may at once say that the mere fact of a sea voyage to Europe is defilement, and needs the ceremony of purification (*prayaschitta*), with all its unsavoury details, for getting back into caste. Now no self-respecting man can do this,

for it means an admission of guilt where none exists from the educated man's point of view. If therefore the initial step towards acquiring an English training places a high caste Hindu in this predicament, why should he make himself a laughing stock in England, why offend the susceptibilities of those with whom he resides, why make his life and that of others a burden? Either be free from caste prejudices or do not go to England at all, unless you are prepared to sacrifice your conscience at the altar of *Prayaschitta*, and thus make yourself the butt of ridicule. But the question at issue is, can a high caste Hindu be true even to the spirit, much less the letter of caste in England? I can unhesitatingly say *no, he cannot.* Let me deal with Dr. Oldfield's suggestions as to how a high caste Hindu is to live on board ship. He is to have his meals in his cabin, or at a small table entirely to himself. Now a table is out of the question. If caste is to be observed the food must be on mother-earth, with the intervention merely of a dish or plate of leaves or metal not even a table cloth is allowed. The floor of the room in which the food is served must be washed clean with a particular Hindu disinfectant before and after meals, by a Hindu.

Will this be permitted in the Cabin? Dr. Oldfield altogether loses sight of the defilement theory as expressed by the words *Shagri*, *Chauka*, *Chhoot*, etc., in different parts of India. If the body of the attendant who brings the food comes in contact with that of a non-Hindu or anything cooked by a non-Hindu, the food he carries is "polluted." The Brahmin cook, if one is taken, himself becomes an out-caste on board ship. It is suggested that the traveller should take a cask of water; but this would be "polluted" if touched by other hands, when being taken aboard. No doubt fruit or any vegetable cannot be defiled when presented whole, but it would be. if touched by non-Hindu (*mlechha*) hands after being broken or cut. As to the tins of "Brahmin cakes or biscuits" the less said the better. The tinker who makes the box and the one who solders the cover must be of the same caste and this is practically impossible, for here again the same rules as to "pollution" apply. These are only a few difficulties, and when a man voluntarily places himself in a position where he is defiled, the principles of *Jatradesa tadachara*, like that of *factum valet*, *does* not apply in every case.

Dr. Oldfield trips badly when he suggests that the *ship's cook* should be made to cook the rice and dhall and vegetables and make bread of flour and milk, instead of flour and *water*, and thus "avoid the ceremonial forbidding of eating flour and water baked by other than a caste fellow." Rice and dhall cooked by the ship's cook—whether a Mahomedan or a Christian—will not be touched by even a low class Hindu. Though *raw* milk may be touched by a non-Hindu, without being "polluted," it loses this characteristic the moment it is *boiled*. But let us suppose that the young high caste Hindu has landed in England, free from all "defilement" and has been admitted, as is so nicely put as "a son of the house" somewhere in the suburbs of London where according to Dr. Oldfield the difficulties would be reduced to a minimum. We will admit the Brahman cook established in an out-house, we will admit that he is able to take his bath before cooking each meal and that the climate admits of his cooking the food for his master with nothing but his waist cloth (*dhotee*) on. His master the student, must also bathe, and clothe himself as his cook does before he can even touch his food;

he can wear no clothing that has been "defiled" by being stitched with a needle while at his meals. If, after thus becoming ceremonially clean a little English child but touches him, he must go through the bath again before he can eat. Now let your readers imagine an Indian youth (whose parents wish him to adhere to the letter or even the spirit only, of their caste rules) admitted into a happy English home, with perhaps two or three English boys or young men of his own age, full of fun and mischief and with the idea ingrained in them of belonging to the finest nation on earth. I think that even if he were proof against the banter of his fellows, the comparison between the freedom of their lives and the intolerable restraints of his own, added to the effects of climate, would soon render it, if not impossible, difficult to "reverence his fathers' creed." If these are the difficulties at his adopted home, conceive the plight of the lad when, as "a son of the house," he goes where the family goes The Brahman cook with his pots and pans, must go with the party and a fresh kitchen be found for him during their wanderings. After a long walk he dare not take a cup of tea offered by the lady of the house; he may not even call for a

lemonade or ginger pop, but wending his way to some adjacent spring or water tap, kick off his boots and socks and have a good wash before a drop of liquid goes down his thirsty throat. Let us suppose that the Hindu student in England receives intimation of the death of a relative in India, whose funeral rites have to be observed by him. He must have himself carefully shaved head and all by a *professional caste barber* and for a certain period he must not put on any clothing that has been stitched. Is this possible for a young Hindu lad living with an English family? Under the "protective ægis" of the fatherly and motherly eye of his English guardian, he is to "practise the rites of his religion and *learn the spirit which underlies all ceremonies*" (the italics are mine). I am afraid the Doctor estimates human nature too highly when he supposes that any Englishman will consent to do all this for any Indian youth unless he is well remunerated for such constant irritation and self-sacrifice. In fact the whole position is an impossible one. The presence of this goody-goody Indian boy in an English home would be a constant source of friction; he would soon be voted an insufferable nuisance.

I cannot agree with Dr. Oldfield that the young Indian should as it were, be kept in leading strings in England lest he should "slide a little lower into the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures." How have the brilliant scholars in past years gone to England and come out in the Indian Civil Service and other departments? Who in their case stood in *loco parentis*? True, many a young man has returned a moral wreck, but I rather agree with the great George Washington that the young man whose life is worth the saving will never be swamped in the sea of moral corruption. It may perhaps be asked how did the Maharaja of Jaipur go to England and keep up his caste? I reply, first, that the case is special in an unparalleled degree. A ship was chartered and all the attendants were caste people, so that there was little fear of pollution; the conditions for cooking and eating and drinking must have been as perfect as wealth and ingenuity could make them, and in England, the Maharaja had his own house where, too, "defilement" must have been warded off as far as it was possible. and yet I make bold to say that no real orthodox Hindu will eat with any of the Maharaja's party before they purify themselves by taking *panchgavya*

(the five products of the cow) at a *prayaschitta* ceremony. Of course, the longer the purse of the defiled Hindu, the smaller the *panchgavya* pills he will be called upon to swallow ; but caste defilement can in no sense be altogether avoided by those who seek enlightenment in the West.—*The Indian Review*, Madras, February 1903.

# MR. DUTT AND INDIAN FAMINES.

THE subject of Indian Famines, pregnant as it is with deep and vital importance, is drawing a good deal of attention, both in England and in India. In most cases the writings on the subject are characterised by an ardent desire to ameliorate the condition of the Indian ryot. For some time the letters and articles with reference to famine which appeared in the public press passed practically unnoticed, at least officially ; but when on the 20th December 1900, the following petition was presented to the Secretary of State by no less than eleven retired Indian officials of high rank, it drew official attention, for their utterances carried weight as much from the past position of the signatories as from the moderate language in which the petition was couched.

(1) "In view of the terrible famines with which India has been lately afflicted, we the undersigned who have spent many years of our lives among the people, and still take a deep interest in their welfare, beg to offer the following suggestions to your Lordship in Council, in the

hope that the Land Revenue Administration may be elsewhere placed on such a sound and equitable basis as to secure to the cultivators of the soil a sufficient margin of profit to enable them better to withstand the pressure of future famine."

(2) "We are well aware that the primary cause of famines is the failure of rain, and that the protection of large tracts of country by the extension of irrigation from sources that seldom or never fail has been steadily kept in view and acted on by the Government for many years past; but the bulk of the country is dependent on direct rain fall, and the pinch of famine is most severely felt in the uplands, where the crops fail simply for want of rain. The only hope for the cultivators throughout the greater part of India is therefore that they should be put in such a position as to enable them to tide over an occasional bad season."

(3) "To place the cultivators in such a position we consider it essential that the share taken as the Government demand on the land should be strictly limited in every Province. We fully agree with the views of Lord

Salisbury, when Secretary of State for India, as set out in his Minute of 26th April 1875" :—

'So far as it is possible to change the Indian fiscal system, it is desirable that the cultivator should pay a smaller portion of the whole national charge. It is not in itself a thrifty policy to draw the mass of revenue from the rural districts where capital is scarce. Sparing the towns, where it is often redundant and runs to waste and luxury. The injury is exaggerated in the case of India where so much of the revenue is exported without a direct equivalent.'

(4) "Without going into tedious details we consider it very advisable that in those parts of the country in which the Land Tax is not permanently settled the following principles should be uniformly adhered to" :—

(*a*) Where the Land Revenue is paid directly by the cultivators as in most parts of Madras and Bombay, the Government demand should be limited to 50 per cent. of the value of the net produce after a liberal deduction for cultivation expenses, has been made, and should not ordinarily exceed one-fifth of the gross produce, even in

those parts of the country where in theory, one-half of the net is assumed to appropriate to one-third of the gross produce.

(*b*) Where the Land Revenue is paid by landlords, the principle adopted in the Saharanpur Rules of 1855 whereby the Revenue demand is limited to one-half of the actual rent or assets of such landlords should be universally applied.

(*c*) That no revision of the Land Tax of any Province or part thereof should be made within thirty years of the expiration of any former revision.

(*d*) That when such revision is made in any of those parts of India where the Land Revenue is paid by the cultivators direct to the Government there should be no increase in the assessment except in cases where the land has increased in value (1) in consequence of improvements in irrigation works carried out at the expense of the Government or (2) on account of a rise in the value of produce based on the average prices of the thirty years next preceding such revision.

(5) "Lastly we recommend that a limit be fixed in each Province beyond which it may not be permissible to

surcharge the Land Tax with local cesses. We are of opinion that the Bengal rate of 6¼ per cent. is a fair one and that in no case should the rate exceed 10 per cent."

(Sd.) R. K. BUCKLE,
*Late Director of Revenue Settlement and Member of the Board of Revenue, Madras.*

„ J. H. GARSTIN,
*Late Member of Council, Madras.*

„ J. B. PENNINGTON,
*Late Collector of Tanjore, Madras.*

„ H J. REYNOLDS,
*Late Revenue Secretary to the Government of Bengal and late Member of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General of India.*

„ RICHARD GARTH,
*Late Chief Justice of Bengal.*

„ ROMESH C. DUTT,
*Late Officiating Commissioner of Orissa Division in Bengal and Member of the Bengal Legislative Council.*

„ C. J. O'DONNELL,
*Late Commissioner of Bhagalpore and Rajshahi Divisions in Bengal.*

(Sd.) A. ROGERS,
*Late Settlement Officer and Member of Council in Bombay.*

„ W. WEDDERBURN,
*Late Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay.*

„ JOHN JARDINE,
*Late Judge of the High Court, Bombay.*

„ J. P. GOODRIDGE,
*Late B. C. S. and formerly Officiating Settlement Commissioner, Central Provinces.*

Among the signatories Mr. R. C. Dutt, C. I. E., (I. C. S. Retired), late Officiating Commissioner of Orissa and Member of the Bengal Legislative Council, returned to the charge in India and carried on an active campaign in a series of open letters addressed to the Viceroy. Mr. Dutt is not an antagonist to be despised. Added to the glamour of his name as oriental scholar and historian, the author of some works on ancient India, there is the stern fact that he is a Revenue Officer of great experience. Lord Curzon's Government welcomed the opportunity thus afforded of discussing a question which is of one of the highest national importance. Mr. Dutt's open letters

were, therefore, referred to all Local Governments for their consideration and report, and from the mass of information received from various Provinces, Lord Curzon was able to issue Resolution on the 16th January 1902, which is a comprehensive review of Land Revenue policy throughout India. In that Resolution His Excellency claimed to have established the following points :—

(1) That a permanent Settlement whether in Bengal or elsewhere is no protection against the incidence and consequences of famine ;

(2) That in areas where the State receives its land revenue from landlords, progressive moderations is the key-note of the policy of Government, and that the standard of 50 per cent. of the assets is one which is more often departed from on the side of the deficiency than of excess ;

(3) That in the same area the State has not and does not hesitate to interfere by legislation to protect the interests of the tenants against oppression at the hands of the landlords ;

(4) That in areas where the State takes the land revenue from the cultivators, the proposal to fix assess-

ment at one-fifth of the gross produce would result in the imposition of a greatly increased burden upon the people ;

(5) That the policy of long term settlement is gradually being extended, the exceptions being justified by conditions of local development ;

(6) That a simplification and cheapening of the proceedings connected with new settlements and an avoidance of the harassing invasion of an army of subordinate officials are a part of the deliberate policy of Government ;

(7) That the principle of exempting or allowing for improvements is one of general acceptance but may be capable of further extension ;

(8) That assessments have ceased to be made upon prospective assets ;

(9) That local taxation as a whole though susceptible of some redistribution is neither immoderate nor burdensome ;

(10) That over-assessment is not as alleged, a general or widespread source of poverty and indebtedness in India, and that it cannot fairly be regarded as a contributory cause of famine ;

The Government of India have further laid down liberal principles for future guidance and will be prepared where the necessity is established, to make further advance in respect of :

(11) The progressive and graduated imposition of large enhancements ;

(12) Greater elasticity in the revenue collection facilitating its adjustment to the variations of the seasons and the circumstances of the people ;

(13) A more general resort of reduction of assessments in cases of local deterioration where such reduction cannot be claimed under the terms of settlement."

The conclusions arrived at by Lord Curzon's Government were not, however, satisfactory to Mr. Dutt, and several letters appeared in the *Pioneer* and other journals over the signature of Mr. Dutt in *reply* to the Government Resolution. As far as I am aware no Indian has had the courage to question in any public print the correctness of Mr. Dutt's dictum, and yet there must be some among the educated classes who know and feel that they cannot endorse all that he has said. It may have been a mistaken idea of what patriotism really is which prompted silence

in the presence of a great leader of Congress thought, or was it a natural disinclination to cross swords with so doughty an opponent? The fact remains that Mr. Dutt's statements—some of which are hardly calculated to gain for Mr. Dutt the reputation of a reliable historian—have either been endorsed or allowed to pass unchallenged. Let me give an instance. Mr. Dutt says "the famines which have desolated India within the last quarter of the 19th century *are unexampled in their extent and intensity in the history of ancient or modern times.*"

The italics are mine. The sentence I have quoted is not one hurriedly dashed off for the columns of a newspaper. It will be found in Mr. Dutt's "*Economic History of British India*" published in England last year. The assertion is a sweeping one and any thoughtful man may be pardoned, if, after wading through Mr. Dutt's writings on the subject, is forced to exclaim "not proven." Even the Government of India's exhaustive Resolution on the subject does not challenge this statement, and perhaps therefore Mr. S. N. Bannerji in his Presidential address at the last Congress asserts that the Viceroy himself says that the last famine of the last

quarter of the expiring century was *the severest that the country has ever known.* (*Vide* Mr. Bannerji's speech, Press copy last line page 21). It may, therefore, seem temerity in me to venture into the arena ; but if I am able to disprove fallacies I may perchance render some little aid to the great work of devising means of occupying philanthropists, patriots and faddists by asking them to relinquish untenable ground and renew their researches into avenues where their efforts will be rewarded with more tangible results than has attended such sweeping criticism, unsupported by facts and figures, of the acts and intentions of a Government that commands the respect of the civilized world. And Mr. Dutt himself will perhaps admit that often a good case is spoilt by even one unreliable witness or an exaggerated statement placed on the record. Unlike the Congress President who says "the public have not the time to verify intricate calculations and they cannot be expected to follow the writer on Indian economics through the mazes of his figures, &c." (*vide* Mr. S. N. Bannerji's speech page 22 Press copy), I am a great believer in figures. People who have "no time to verify intricate calculations"

should not complain if thoughtful men decline to listen to them. When leaders of the Congress openly show their contempts for figures, how can they possibly expect the Government to accept their suggestions. No oratory can take the place of figures and no "omnibus Resolutions" can disprove facts. I will quote chapter and verse for every statement I make.—I am aware that there are some who are unwilling to believe anything written by English writers when dealing with Indian History, but every one must confess that no Mahomedan Historian could be charged with inaccuracies, when recording events which happened under the Mahomedan Rulers and which contain any reflection on their administration. I will therefore quote Mahomedan Historians—in some cases referring to the original Persian—to show how far Mr. Dutt was right in some of his statements, which history disproves. Mr. Dutt says that the Indian famines of the last quarter of the 19th Century have been unexampled in their intensity in the history of ancient and modern times. Let us see what Mahomedan Historians say ; let us go back a thousand years and see what sort of famines visited us then.

The *Tarikh Badauni* says that about the year 960 A. D., a dreadful famine raged in Eastern Provinces, of Agra and Delhi. Even *Jawari* could not be obtained. Mahomedans and Hindus perished. Common people fed on the seeds of thorny acacia and on the hides of cattle. The famine was called *Khashmi Izad* (Wrath of God), which according to the well-known Arabic *abjad* system of historical calculation gives the date. The author Mullah Abdul Qadir says that he witnessed with his own eyes men eating their own kind. Mulla Abdul Qadir is no obscure historian. He is mentioned in *Elphinstone's History of India* and *Biographical* Dictionary L. U. K., &c. Mulla Abdul Qadir was a great scholar in Sanskrit also, and even now there are scholars who believe that *Rajtarangini* (the abridged history of Kashmir) was translated by Mulla Abdul Qadir and not by Maulana Imad-ud-din.

*Tarikh Feroz Shahi* of Ziauddin Barni is the chief source from which the great Ferishta draws his account of the period. This work says that in Jalaluddin's reign about 1290 A. D., there was such a famine that "Hindus came into Delhi with their families twenty or thirty of them

together and in the extremity of hunger drowned themselves in the Jumna." The same historian says that in the reign of Sultan Mahomed "there was a fatal famine in Delhi and its environs and throughout the Doab famine became general and continued for some years and thousands perished; ryots were impoverished and reduced to beggary, lands were ruined and cultivation was entirely arrested." The same Mahomedan historian refers to the Great Malwa Famine about the same time. Delhi was devastated "*not a thousandth part of the population remained*, the country was desolate and all cultivation abandoned, no horses and cattle were left in that part of the country." About the same time in another part of the country Barni says "famine was so severe that man was devouring man." Referring to the Gujerat Famine in the same year *Tarikh Feroz Shahi* says "men and beasts died of starvation."

*Zafarnamah* by Sharfuddin Yazdi (who died in 1446 A. D.) is an important historical work. This work Mir Khond declares to surpass everything that had up to his time enlightened the world in the department of history. It is well known to the orientalists of Europe by the

French translation of M. Petis de la Croix (*Histoire de Timur Bec*, Paris, 1722, 4 vols., 12mo.) which is one of Gibbon's chief sources of information respecting that period. The French version was translated into English in 1723 by J. Darby. There is also an Italian translation by Bradutti. As all oriental scholars know, *Zafarnamah* is based on *Mulfizat-i-Temuri*; its translation into various European languages shows that it enjoys a high European reputation. An English translation of the *Zafarnamah* was published in the *Delhi Archæological Journal* in 1862 but I have not been able to find a copy. In *Zafarnamah* we find "women cutting in pieces and eating the skin of a horse which had been dead. Skins were boiled and sold in the markets. When bullocks were slaughtered, crowds rushed forward to catch the blood and consumed it for their sustenance."

It is admitted by every one that Akbar's reign was the best in the Mahomedan history of India. Let us see how the great Akbar fared as regards famine. Three great famines desolated the country during his reign. Abul Fazal Allami in his *Akbarnamah* refers to one of these thus :—"Men could not find corn, they were driven to

the extremity of *eating each other and some formed themselves into parties to carry off lone individuals for their food.*" The *Ain-i-Akbari* admits "at the time of famine and distress parents were allowed to sell their children."

Let another Mahomedan historian give his version of famine in Akbar's time:—*Zubdat-ut-Tawarikh* was written by Shaikh Nurul Haq in the 42nd year of Akbar's reign, *viz.* 1596 A. D. The third great famine in Akbar's reign which took place only a year before the work was written was a very severe one. "A fearful famine raged continuously for 3 or 4 years *throughout the whole of Hindustan.* A kind of plague also added to the horrors of this period and *depopulated whole cities*, to say nothing of hamlets and villages. In consequence of the dearth of grain and the necessities of *ravenous hunger, human flesh was eaten. The streets and roads were blocked up with dead bodies and no assistance could be rendered for their removal.*"

The italics are mine. I have given enough extracts to show how Upper India fared during a pre-British famine. I may now give an instance of famine in Deccan. Mahomed Amin Kaziwini in his *Padshâhnamah* gives

some harrowing details of a famine which raged about Daulatabad and Balaghat in the reign of Shah Jehan. We read "Inhabitants were reduced to the direst extremity. *Life was offered for a small loaf* (the original Persian is *Jáne-ba-náne*), *the ever bounteous hand was stretched out for food, dogs' flesh took the place of goats' flesh, and pounded bones of the dead was mixed with flour; destitution at length reached such a pitch that men began to devour each other and the flesh of a son was perferred to his love.*"

*Tarikhi Tahiri* was written in 1621 A. D. It gives an account of Sindh. The maulavies of Sindh consider it the best history of their country. The Amir of Khairapur and the Syeds of Thatta carefully preserve the *MSS.* of this work in their libraries. *Tarikhi Tahiri* says that there was such a famine in Sindh in the 14th century that a mother who could not see her sons perish before her eyes, besought them to kill her and satisfy the cravings of their hunger. The sons actually killed the mother.

*Safarnamah Ibni Batutah*, the *Muntakhabullubab* and *Mukhtasirat-Tawrikh* and other well known Persian works give accounts of various famines in India. But I

think I have given enough extracts from prominent Mahomedan historians.

Even making an allowance for Persian authors' *ibarati munshiana*—flowery and pedantic language, which European historians felicitously call the Jedediah Cleishbotham style —there is enough to prove beyond the shadow of doubt that famines in the pre-British period were much more *intense* than they have been in the last quarter of the 19th century. So, it is clear that Mr. Dutt has tripped and tripped badly.

Even his friends are now coming forward to say that they do not endorse all that Mr. Dutt says about famine. Mr. Pennington, I. C. S. (late Collector of Tanjore), who in *December 1900* signed the memorable Petition addressed to the Secretary of State, in *December 1902*, in public print says that he disagrees with Mr. Dutt in the alleged efficacy of a Permanent Settlement and lays more stress on Irrigation. This is what Mr. Pennington says in an open letter to Mr. Dutt :—

"I do not know what exactly caused the famine in Bengal of 1770 as I have no books of reference here, though I fancy it was a good deal owing to war, unsettled

Government and over-assessment; but surely it is going too far to say that there has been no famine in Bengal *because* of the Permanent Settlement. There has certainly been no famine in Tanjore, Godavari and Krishna since the work of Sir Arthur Cotton; yet there has been no Permanent Settlement. Nor is there any trace of famine in the Tambaraparni valley since the great irrigation works were carried out there some centuries ago or in the Malabar and on the West Coast generally, where the climate is perhaps even more favourable than in Bengal. You yourself have said that famine is due primarily to failure of rain or of irrigation. Bengal is exceptionally well watered and like all irrigated districts is practically safe against famine, *provided* it has a reasonable and settled Government and is not over-assessed. I cannot understand your saying 'that the Permanent Settlement 'has saved Bengal from the worst results of famines is 'proved by history as completely and unanswerably as any 'economic fact can be proved.' There seems to be no such proof at all."

When irrigation plays so important a part in averting famine and railways in mitigating its effects, let us see

what the Government of India have done in these directions. An answer will be found in the following figures which give the expenditure on these two items from revenue.

*Expenditure from Revenue in India on Railways and Irrigation*, 1882-83 *to* 1897-98.

| | | Rs. |
|---|---|---|
| 1882-83—Railways ... ... ... | | 6,520,738 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,480,912 |
| | | 4,039,826 |
| 1883-84—Railways ... ... ... | | 6,808,186 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,440,963 |
| | | 4,367,223 |
| 1884-85—Railways ... ... ... | | 8,158,667 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,501,949 |
| | | 5,656,718 |
| 1885-86—Railways ... ... ... | | 8,975,159 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,489,964 |
| | | 6,485,195 |
| 1886-87—Railways ... ... ... | | 8,777,884 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,416,712 |
| | | 6,361,172 |

| | | Rs. |
|---|---|---|
| 1887-88—Railways ... ... ... | | 9,068,422 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,552,619 |
| | | 6,515,803 |
| 1888-89—Railways ... ... ... | | 9,494,359 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,692,950 |
| | | 6,801,409 |
| 1889-90—Railways ... ... ... | | 10,336,538 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,723,146 |
| | | 7,613,392 |
| 1890-91– Railways ... ... ... | | 10,353,049 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,813,622 |
| | | 7,539,427 |
| 1891-92—Railways ... ... ... | | 12,793,700 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 3,020,347 |
| | | 9,773,353 |
| 1892-93—Railways ... ... ... | | 13,081,225 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,994,606 |
| | | 10,086 619 |
| 1893-94—Railways ... ... ... | | 13,489,992 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,917,024 |
| | | 10,572,968 |

| | | Rs. |
|---|---|---|
| 1894-95—Railways ... ... ... | | 13,655,371 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 2,992,928 |
| | | 10,662,443 |
| 1895-96—Railways ... ... ... | | 13,902,214 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 3,013,153 |
| | | 10,889,061 |
| 1896-97—Railways ... ... ... | | 13,353,383 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 3,295,191 |
| | | 10,058,192 |
| 1897-98—Railways ... ... ... | | 13,561,896 |
| Irrigation ... ... ... | | 3,142,339 |
| | | 10,419,557 |

The area under Irrigation in 1899-00 was 31,544,056 acres and the area under crops 223,654,333. The following figures speak for themselves :—

*Area under Irrigation in* 1899-1900 *in Acres.*

| Administration. | Total area under crops. | Area Irrigated. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | By canals. | | By Tanks. | By Wells. | Other Sources. | Total Area Irrigated. |
| | | Government. | Private. | | | | |
| Bengal ... | 65,708,800 | 754,577 | .. | ... | ... | ... | 754,577 |
| N. W. Provinces .. | 30,189,651 | 1,981,373 | 5,692 | 1,215,683 | 4,478,507 | 553,595 | 8,234,850 |
| Oudh ... | 11,413,508 | . | . | 976,394 | 1,643,178 | 80,453 | 2,700,025 |
| Punjab . | 20,738,687 | 4,243,524 | 823,729 | 20,049 | 4,154,598 | 134,083 | 9,375,983 |
| Lower Burma ... | 6,665,639 | 310 | 1,325 | ... | ... | 3,434 | 5,069 |
| Upper Burma ... | 3,419,703 | 252,161 | 307.198 | 129,864 | 7,211 | 102,587 | 799,021 |
| Central Provinces ... | 17,043,937 | ... | 810 | 176,187 | 64,188 | 14,079 | 255,264 |
| Assam ... | 5,321,818 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Ajmere-Merwara ... | 394,844 | .. | .. | 7,228 | 43,776 | 116 | 51,120 |
| Coorg ... | 202,541 | 1,370 | ... | ... | .. | .. | 1,370 |
| Madras ... | 27,785,796 | 2,648.160 | 26,289 | 1,832,527 | 1,129,804 | 146,986 | 5,783,766 |
| Bombay and Sind ... | 27,975,223 | 2,452,262 | 145,608 | 30,443 | 698.794 | 188.563 | 3,515,670 |
| Berar ... | 6,787,318 | . | 72 | . | 66,638 | 107 | 67,070 |
| Pergana Manpur ... | 6,868 | ... | ... | ... | 324 | | 324 |
| Total ... | 223,654,333 | 12,333,737 | 13,10,723 | 4,388,375 | 12,287,218 | 1,224,003 | 31,544,056 |

The expenditure on Railways has also been shown and at the end of the year 1900 we had in India 24,707 miles of Railway thus :—

| | Miles. |
|---|---|
| Guaranteed Companies... ... ... | 1,305 |
| Assisted Companies ... ... ... | 1,514 |
| State Lines ... ... ... ... | 18,941 |
| Native State Lines ... ... ... | 2,873 |
| Foreign Lines ... ... ... | 74 |
| Total... | 24,707 |

Mr. Dutt has referred to the "desolation" caused by famine. That thousands have fallen victims to want and disease which treads close on the heels of a famine no one can deny, but the wonderfully recuperative power which has asserted itself even after periods of prolonged drought is amazing and counteracts the woeful effect of famine. Let me present a few figures—from the Province nearest to me—Bombay, during the *last quarter of the 19th Century* which Mr. Dutt has singled out for his theme. What do we find? An increase in population in almost every district and a total increase in 20 years of 1,771,552. The figures of the last Census are of course excluded, because plague has raged for the past six years and nowhere more than in the Bombay Presidency, and their insertion would only vitiate the results.

*Population of each district of the Bombay Presidency proper in* 1872, *and* 1891.

| Districts. | 1872. | 1891. |
|---|---|---|
| Ahmedabad ... ... ... | 829,637 | 921,712 |
| Kaira ... ... ... ... | 782,733 | 871,589 |
| Panch Mahals ... ... ... | 240,743 | 313,417 |
| Broach ... ... ... ... | 350,322 | 341,490 |
| Surat ... ... ... ... | 607,087 | 998,949 |
| Thana ... ... ... ... | 847,424 | 819,580 |
| Khandesh ... ... ... | 10,28,642 | 1,460,851 |
| Nasik ... ... ... ... | 734,386 | 843,582 |
| Ahmednagar ... ... ... | 773,938 | 888,755 |
| Poona ... ... ... ... | 907,285 | 1,067,800 |
| Sholapur .. ... ... ... | 662,986 | 750,689 |
| Satara ... ... ... | 1,160,050 | 1,225,989 |
| Belgaum ... ... ... ... | 938,750 | 1,013,261 |
| Dharwar ... ... ... ... | 988,037 | 1,051,314 |
| Bijapur ... ... ... ... | 816,037 | 796,339 |
| Kanara ... ... ... ... | 398,406 | 446,351 |
| Ratnagiri... ... ... ... | 1,019,136 | 1,105,926 |
| Kolaba ... ... ... ... | 350,405 | 594,872 |
| Total ... | 13,391,954 | 15,163,506 |

What effect the *famine of the last quarter of the 19th Century* (Mr. Dutt's words) had on the agriculture of the country and the agrarian population may be gathered from the following Table, which will show that the expression "desolation" used by Mr. Dutt must be taken in a quite modified sense.

Statement comparing the extent of fully assessed [illegible] during 1855-56, 1865-66, 1875-76 and 1895-96. [illegible] Abau Pargana

| Districts. | 1855-56 | | | 1865-66. | | | 1875-76. | | | 1895-96. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of Government Village. | Occupied Area. | | No. of Government Village. | Occupied Area. | | No. of Government Village | Occupied Area. | | No. of Government Village. | Occupied Area. | |
| | | Total. | Average per Village. | | Total. | Average per Village. | | Total. | Average per Village. | | Total. | Average per Village. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| **NORTHERN DIVISION.** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ahmedabad .. | 499 | 3 5,503 | 652 | 459 | 496,993 | 1,083 | 443 | 500,217 | 1,129 | 447 | 493,4 5 | 1,104 |
| Kaira .. | 495 | 262,528 | 530 | 524 | 380,463 | 726 | 525 | 363,255 | 692 | 525 | 39[illegible],963 | 756 |
| Panch-Mahal .. | .. | .. | .. | 457 | (155,000) | (339) | 435 | 152,388 | 350 | 403 | 220,072 | 551 |
| Broach .. | 406 | 403,719 | 994 | 406 | 453,613 | 1,117 | 410 | 466,811 | 1,139 | 407 | 469,565 | 1,154 |
| Surat .. | 807½ | 413,362 | 512 | 808 | 472,965 | 585 | 816½ | 584,239 | 716 | 810½ | 652,176 | 805 |
| Thana .. | (2,216) | 1,000,000 | 451 | 2,216 | (1,000,000) | (451) | 2,115 | 1 011,391 | 478 | ,587 | 820,154 | 517 |
| **CENTRAL DIVISION.** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Khandesh .. | 3,206½ | 1,294,644 | 404 | 3,853½ | 2,431,579 | 631 | 3,310½ | 2,415,638 | 730 | 2,704½ | 2,873,131 | 1,062 |
| Nasik .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,508 | 1,821,840 | 1,208 | 1,500 | 2,025,257 | 1,350 |
| Ahmednagar .. | 1,879½ | 2,562,127 | 1,363 | 1,987½ | 3,507,794 | 1,765 | 1,215½ | 2,415,593 | 1,990 | 1,223½ | 2,552,989 | 2,087 |
| Poona .. | 970 | 1,447,006 | 1,492 | 1,561 | 3,481,723 | 2,230 | 990½ | 1,875,670 | 1,893 | 1,002½ | 1,898.179 | 1,893 |
| Sholapur .. | 917 | 1,962,895 | 2,141 | .. | .. | .. | 660 | 2,147,432 | 3,254 | 665 | 2,071,770 | 3,115 |
| Satara .. | 1,180 | 1,428,086 | 1,210 | 1,020 | 1,651,568 | 1,619 | 959 | 1,421,055 | 1,482 | 961 | 1,397,714 | 1,454 |
| **SOUTHERN DIVISION.** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Belgaum .. | 1,320 | 1,226,129 | 929 | 888 | 1,097,771 | 1,236 | 894 | 1,114,584 | 1,247 | 913 | 1,161,123 | 1,272 |
| Bijapur .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,004 | 1,951,219 | 1,943 | 1,009 | 2,084,721 | 2,066 | 1,011 | 2,128,946 | 2,105 |
| Dharwar .. | 1,211 | 1,144,614 | 945 | 1,272 | 1,549,897 | 1,219 | 1,278 | 1,539,097 | 1,204 | 1,289 | 1,566,161 | 1,215 |
| Kolaba .. | .. | .. | .. | 962½ | 412,715 | 428 | 985 | 468,646 | 475 | 1,538 | 689,255 | 448 |
| Ratnagiri .. | 1,279 | (1,000,000) | 782 | 1,277 | (1,000,000) | (782) | 1,273½ | 100,172 | 786 | 1,270½ | 1,624 002 | 1,278 |
| Kanara .. | (1,416) | (320,000) | (226) | (1,416) | (320,000) | (226) | (1,416) | (320,000) | (226) | 1,4 6 | 329,770 | 233 |
| Total Presidency Proper.. | 17,802½ | 14,790,613 | 831 | 20,111½ | 20,363,300 | 1,012 | 20,243½ | 21,706,649 | 1,072 | 19,673¾ | 23,372,682 | 1,188 |

The area figures are for fully assessed occupied area. The figures in brackets are estimates only.

I have shown from Persian histories that Indian famines, before the advent of the British, affected *all classes*, because then famine meant *want of grain* whereas now it simply means *want of money* to buy grain. *Jawari*, the poor man's staple food, sells in ordinary seasons at about 30 seers per rupee. The statistics relating to food grains show that during seasons of famine, it never sold at less than 5 seers per rupee. In other words, in *extreme* cases the prices rose to about six times. Now let us see what happened a few centuries back before the English set foot in India. I have the authority of Mahomedan historians for stating that in pre-British famines the price of *Jawari*, which ordinarily sold at about 60 seers per rupee, rose to ½ seer per rupee, or in other words 120 times higher than the normal rates! And we have also seen that often there was no grain to be had for any price, with the result that people had to live upon thorny acacia and cattle skin! The famines of the *last quarter of the 19th Century* were not so intense, because they did not affect even the agricultural classes much. At all large relief works it has been

found that the great majority of those seeking relief were not ryots but labourers. Evidently these had some means of support which helped them to tide over their temporary difficulties. A glance at the Report of the Famine Commission of 1901 will show that here also I rely on the unimpeachable testimony of figures. The famines in pre-British periods affected all classes, as is abundantly proved by history. Therefore it is clear that the famines of the 19th Century were not so intense as those that literally desolated the country before the British conquest of India.—*The Indian Review*, Madras, March 1903.