



If it is argued, that the Government has no right to take away what it has given, we will refute that argument by quoting one of the highest authorities in the world. The Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone, in his speech on the Irish Church Bill, said :—"When property had been given for purposes, that had not been attained, and could not be attained, it was the duty of the legislature to see that it was not wasted, and if it becomes mischievous, to take it away." The principle was acknowledged and acted upon by both the Houses of Parliament. From the general argument let us come to the particular case of the Permanent Settlement. The land of Bengal was given to the zemindars, in the words of the father of that settlement, for the "ease and happiness of the people," but it "has produced" to use the words of the celebrated Fifth Report "more distress and beggary, and a greater change in the landed property of Bengal, than has perhaps happened in the same space of time, in any age or country, by the mere effect of internal regulation." Thus we see that the "purposes" of Lord Cornwallis "have not been attained, and could not be attained," and that it is the "duty of the legislature to take it (land) away."

The argument that the vast sums exacted by the zemindars from the ryots as land-rent and illegal cesses are spent in the country, and that, therefore, there is no necessity for repealing the Permanent Settlement and removing them, is scarcely worth a hearing. Still we would refute it. The luxury of the zemindars, which wastes away the greater part of them, is one of the greatest calamities, that befall the country, and does not contribute, in the least degree, to the comfort and happiness of the millions, who produce them, while not a small part is locked up in various shapes in iron chests, which only engenders pride in the minds of their possessors. But what is still more forcible, the Mahomedans should have a preference to the English, because what the former collected was spent in the country, while part of what the latter bring into their treasury, reaches the shores of England.

Though we blame Lord Cornwallis for his ill-considered



Permanent Settlement, yet we should not forget, that he was a man. To err is human, and we do not wonder, that he committed a mistake; but to adhere to it after it has been detected, is at once absurd and out of the acknowledged principles of human nature.

Those who are of opinion, that the Government will be guilty of a breach of trust in repealing the Permanent Settlement, should consider, that the zemindars have been guilty of breach of trust, are still being so, and will ever be so first on their part—that the obligations imposed on them by it have not been fulfilled, are not being fulfilled, and will never be fulfilled. Those obligations have now fallen on the state, which has had to undertake what they have failed in. They were expected to improve the condition of the ryots, and to seek their happiness and welfare; but on the contrary, alas! credulous Lord Cornwallis! they have trampled your vain expectations under foot, and proved their unexampled selfishness by screwing sixty crores of rupees annually out of the life-blood of the most wretched millions of Bengal. Oh poor ryots! what great sin you committed in your former births, as to deserve such punishments in the hands of your relentless zemindars and their underlings? The zemindars have also incontestibly proved their total unfitness for the powers conferred upon them by that settlement. Can any right-thinking man, in the face of these facts, charge the Government with a breach of faith, if it be set aside?

If the Government really wishes to save the people of India from the worst death of starvation, and not to drift itself into insolvency, let it root out the zemindari system from India and confer proprietary rights upon the actual cultivators. Then and then only it will be able to give a death-blow to that worst enemy of mankind—to that giant famine—which has commenced to devour the unfortunate millions of India at intervals of two or three years. We humbly request all the real well-wishers of India to think seriously and calmly of the gigantic evils, which have resulted from it during the last eighty-four years, even under the benign rule of one of the most civilized nations



in the world, and also of the injurious effects both upon the bulk of the people and upon the Government, if it is allowed to prevail for even forty or fifty years more. One of the inevitable consequences will be either the worst death of starvation of the millions, or the insolvency of the Government. Either of them will be attended with most serious calamities, the magnitude of which it is impossible to conceive in our mind. Now as the Government has commenced to feed the millions to save them from the dreadful consequences of famine whenever there is a failure of a single crop, it is most probable, that it will drift itself into insolvency, or very heavy taxes will be levied from the people. But the remedy of all these calamities lies within the power of Government, and that remedy is to root out one by one the zemindari system from all provinces of India wherever it prevails.

Were the oppressed and down-trodden millions of Bengal in a position to demand compensation from the Government for the terrible injustice, that has been done to them during the last eighty-four years by handing them over to the tender mercies of the zemindars—by ejecting them from their allodial rights, and subjecting them to proverbial zemindari rapacity,—it would shrink with horror at the very outset of the calculation of the mountainous sum, that it has invested the zemindars with powers to exact from them. Even the most stone-hearted would break down under the calculation of the terrible loss that they have suffered at their hands. Is there any Government in the world, which can fully compensate them for their loss and sufferings? Certainly not. Balance the terrible injustice, that has been done to them—balance their loss of hundreds of crores of rupees, that have been extorted from them; balance the terrible loss of life with which the Orissa famine of 1866 was attended; balance the everlasting stain upon the glory of the British nation, that has been the just consequence of that loss of life, to say nothing of eight or nine crores of rupees, which were spent in the famine of 1874; balance the thousand atrocities, to which they have been subjected by the zemindars and their underlings, on the



one side; and that nightmare and vain sentimentality of breach of trust in repealing the Permanent Settlement, on the other; and need we tell you, that the latter will kick the beam. Does our Government think, that by adhering to the Permanent Settlement, it is faithfully discharging its duty towards the vast millions, who have been entrusted by Almighty God to its care and protection? If it does, certainly it does not at all deserve that trust. If the ryots were in a position to represent, with undaunted courage, their grievances to the Government—if they had had a British Indian Association and a Hindoo Patriot to thrust their interests to its attention—they would have certainly challenged the authority of Lord Cornwallis to reduce them, by a single stroke of his pen, from their position of allodial proprietors to that of mere tenants-at-will of the zemindars; nay they would have gone further: they would have charged Her Majesty's Government with violating the fundamental principles of its institution—with depriving the vast millions of their just rights and privileges, and aggrandizing a few at their expense. It is true that their half-starved persons and wretched huts are *partially* protected from the violence of thieves and others, but their most valuable property—their landed property—from which even the Mahratta horses and the terrible Moslem rule were unable to dispossess them, has been snatched away from them for filling the coffers of a few idle and worthless drones of society. But what, we ask, has our Government gained thereby? It has gained the most just and severe censure of all right-thinking men; it has violated the trust of God, who has placed them under its care and protection; it has raised an everlasting monument of British injustice by subjecting those very people to proverbial zemindari rapacity, and thereby reducing them to extreme poverty and wretchedness, who are, to speak the truth, the real source of their vast wealth and unexampled prosperity. But we firmly believe, when the real state of things will be known to the British people, who are celebrated throughout the world for their magnanimity, kindness, virtue, and all other noble attributes of human nature, the law of the Permanent Settlement



will be treated as not worth the paper on which it is written—it will be torn to thousand pieces. Is it possible, that the British people—those great British people—who gladly paid from their own pockets twenty crores of rupees for the emancipation of a few millions of slaves, held thousands of indignation-meetings to protect the Servians from the Bulgarian atrocities, and gave thousand other proofs of their magnanimity, but above all, who, in order to protect the people of Europe, defeated the Great Napoleon Bonaparte in the great battle of Waterloo, will shrink from doing their duty towards the two hundred millions of their fellow-subjects in India? We do not want from them twenty crores of rupees; we do not request them to hold thousands of indignation-meetings; we do not urge them to fight a great battle; we want from them only a few words of their mouth—a single stroke of pen of her Majesty's Secretary of State for India,—to emancipate us from the grasping slavery of a few timid, debauched, and effeminate zemindars, talookdars, and malgoozars. If there is anything truly worth the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to India, the assumption by Her Most Gracious Majesty of the title of Empress of India, and the grand Delhi Durbar, it is not the creation of a few Roy Bahadurs, Khan Bahadurs, and Rajah Bahadurs, but it is the emancipation of millions on millions living and millions on millions unborn from the grasping slavery of a few idle and worthless drones of society. So long as we shall be subjected to thousand zemindari oppressions, so long as we shall be deprived of our fruits of labour, so long as we shall be kept on the verge of starvation, so long as we shall be dependent on charity, and, in short, so long as we shall live as slaves of the zemindars, so long we must charge the Government, nay, we will go far and say, we must charge the British people, whatever befalls our lot, with breach of trust not only with us—the oppressed and down-trodden millions of India—but with that Almighty God, who has placed us under their care and protection. He has created us, not that we shall be ejected from our just rights, and subjected to thousand zemindari oppressions, not that we shall be deprived



of our fruits of labour, not that we shall be turned into instruments of vice and luxury of the zemindars, and suffer moral degradation, not that we shall work in the fields like beasts, create wealth, and yet die of starvation, but that we shall enjoy all our just rights and privileges, and live in comfort and happiness. The Permanent Settlement will ever be recorded by all right thinking men as the blackest spot and everlasting stain upon the glory of the British nation for the unfortunate manner, in which it sacrifices the interests of two hundred millions of Indian cultivators, who look up to them for protection. Is there anything in this world more to be regretted than to see the vast millions of India—richest India—die of starvation, and that under the rule of one of the most civilized nations in the world?

Let there be a permanent settlement direct with the cultivators provided with a modification (as the expenditure of Government must increase in time) of slight increase, say 6 or 9 pie per rupee, after a lapse of seventy or eighty years, and the land revenue of Bengal be raised to $6\frac{1}{2}$ crores at the maximum. Then there will be a surplus of 3 crores, which should be annually distributed among the zemindars according to their respective income. The land revenue of other provinces should be reduced by two crores, which the Government could easily effect by reducing the expenditure of its various departments. Thus justice with regard to the land revenue will be done to all the provinces of India in proportion to their area and population. The permanent settlement should also be extended to the other provinces provided with the above modification. At the time of increase there should be no necessity for remeasuring the land. The cultivators, with the proprietary rights conferred upon them, will try their utmost to make improvements of their holdings, without which hundreds of Land Improvement Acts will be of no use whatever. Then the land will certainly produce abundant crops. India (which the *Times* designates as the land of famine) will wear a quite different shape, and, in fact, be a land of plenty. With the proprietary rights conferred upon the two hundred millions of cultivators, the foundation of the



British empire in India will be stronger and down-trodden millions, who are degraded by pandering to the vicars, by giving false evidence in courts of justice where they are dragged by them, and by not shrinking, owing to their extreme poverty and wretchedness, to lose their sense of virtue for trifling gains, will shake the earth by their shouts of joy and gratitude to Her Majesty, make utmost endeavours to improve their lands, and hoot out famines from the shores of India. They will no longer look upon the English as foreigners filling their own pockets at their expense, and treating them as hewers of wood and drawers of water; they will consider them as their greatest benefactors, a gift sent down from heaven to relieve them from their sufferings and distress; they will no longer grudge their chain of dependence; indeed they will consider it as one of gold. Instead of rising against them, as they did in 1857, they will join them in repelling their common foe from India. With the aid of Bengal, Oude, and Central Provinces redeemed Government would only clear its path for any exigency whatever, that maybe in store for it in future. Those who will be able to carry out this measure will reign in the hearts of "millions on millions living and millions on millions unborn" Their names will be engraved there in golden characters. Then and then only the glory of the British administration in India will be resounded throughout its whole length and breadth. The zemindars will certainly suffer considerable loss, but they are a drop in the ocean. Sooner they are removed from their present position in which they are utterly unfit, the better for the people as well as for the Government. The oppressed and ignorant natives of India will rise to rebellion, but they will never raise their voice. It is most surprising, that a measure, which is politically, commercially, morally, and what not, a failure, has been allowed to spread ruin and desolation throughout the land for forty-four years. It is needless to tell our readers, that the Government is, no doubt, strong enough for rooting out the zemindari system: its few words are only wanted to emancipate



ing slavery of the zamindars. If the
in this matter, we strongly urge it on
behalf of the wretched millions to appoint a Royal Commission to enquire into their condition, and into the results of the Permanent Settlement in all its bearings with other provinces of India.

We will certainly ill-discharge our duty towards the vast millions, whose cause we are now advocating, if we do not offer our most sincere and heart-felt thanks on their behalf to those noble-minded and kind-hearted gentlemen, whose writings, speeches and evidence, fill this volume. We firmly believe, that time is not very distant, when God will smile upon them—when their noble efforts for alleviating the distress and the sufferings of the poor millions will be crowned with success. We deeply regret that many of them are not in this world to share in their shouts of joy. May they enjoy eternal peace and happiness in heaven. We offer our most sincere prayers to God to confer His highest blessings upon those, who are now living. May they enjoy long life and happiness.

"The feeling of sympathy for the people of this country is growing and strengthening here and elsewhere. They who will gather and stand firm to advance their interest—to penetrate deeply into the nature and depth of their grievances—to trace every effect to its cause—to subject every evil to the best possible remedy—those who, thus informed of the *ecotens* and *esoterics* of the zamindari system, will carry on the work of reform—uninfluenced and undaunted—will not only have the approbation of their own conscience, but have the heart-felt blessings of millions on millions living and millions on millions unborn heaped upon them. Ignorance and iniquity may for a time darken the dominion of God, but they must give way to the effulgence of knowledge and truth. Improvement is destined to roll on; and the causes interrupting its bright career will cannot, be perpetual. Such has been and will be the course of events. In the application and devotion of our heart and what ennobles man and extends the moral kingdom of God



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be assured that, in every movement we make, every step we take, we act, as it were, under providential direction:—

‘Heaven’s banner is over us.’

God of Providence smiles upon such efforts—we meet with
of his goodness and favour; and success, sooner or later,
ain.” *The Calcutta Review*, Vol. VI., p. 352.

THE END

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