



destitute alike of the sympathy of others and of all hope in himself, the Bengal Ryot is an infinitely more wretched being than the English farm-labourer or the Russian serf. We very much doubt, indeed, whether the misguided legislation of 1859 has not placed him in a worse position than before. To look upon the great body of ryots in Bengal as in any sense peasant proprietors, would be a great mistake, that argued a very superficial knowledge of the country and of the working of Act X. of 1859. The above is no sensational picture of the average Bengal Ryot. The archetype may be seen in every village on any day in the year. Our description will be endorsed by every zemindar, who knows anything of the Mofussil. And yet it is the agricultural classes, that compose the people of Bengal, and it is as much for the good of these classes, as for that of any others, that we profess to be in India at all. What then have we done for their elevation physically, morally, or intellectually. Are they richer, wiser, or more contented, than they were before we ever set foot in the country." *Ibid.*, p.p. 75-76.

"The whole system (of sub-letting) was, to quote the words of William Blunt, 'profit upon profits.' Mr. Butterworth Bailey, when Magistrate of Burdwan, says:—"I have met with more than one instance of a village being held in portions by six or eight individuals as a dur-dur-dur-putnee talook; and the consequence was, that the ryots were several degrees removed from the zemindar, to whose care they had been committed by the Permanent Settlement. There was a regular ferreting and squeezing out of their earnings, and they had to feel the whole onus of imposition, in consequence of the different grades of farmers making the most of each other. The inconvenience, insecurity, and oppression, caused by this system of sub-letting were serious. It is one of the principal causes of his impoverishment; agriculture can never prosper, while the peasantry are so much harassed and crushed down 'Even a bad sovereign,' says Dr. Smith 'feels more compassion for his people, than can be expected from the farmers of his revenue.' Depopulation and the increase of crime are, and must be, inseparable from the cruelties practised upon the ryots by the





farmers and under-farmers. 'All these under-land-holders,' says Mr. A. Fraser Tytler, (who held the Office of Assistant Judge in the 24 Pergunnahs) 'independent of the high rent demanded, have various means of oppressing the ryots and making the best of their lands.....Their devices for making money are innumerable.' *Ibid.*, vol. VI. Art. *The Zemindar and the Ryot*.

"Mr. W. Dampier, the Superintendent of Police, in his Report for 1843, says:—"The sub-letting system, which relieves the zemindars from all connection with their estates or ryots, and places these in the hands of middlemen and speculators, is striking its roots all over the country, and is grinding the poorer classes to nothing but a bare subsistence, if it leaves them that." In another part of the Report, he refers 'to the sub-letting system, which, leaving the ryots very little subsistence (the rents being higher, and the price of labour lower than in other districts,) exposes them to the temptation of robbing when they are in penury, and also the minor Talookdars and Sub-holders, who receive themselves but little from the soil, countenancing and protecting the gangs.'" *Ibid. Ibid.*

"The bane of the landed interest in India, that is, of all those who are primarily interested in the land, the land-holders on the one part and the actual cultivators on the other, is the creation of sub-tenures for the benefit of those, who seek to lease rents, not lands; who speculate upon the opportunity they may be enabled to command of realizing extortionate rents; and who, being neither landlords or cultivators, are permitted to absorb such an amount of the profits of the land as is calculated to paralyze the efficient operations of those with whose prosperity, the prosperity of the entire country is most nearly identified." *A. Sconce, Esq. Papers Regarding the Consequences to Under-tenures of the Sale of an Estate for Arrears of Revenue*, p. 140.

"The wretchedness of the ryot was consummated by the system of sub-letting, which came in with the Permanent Settlement. The sub-letting often descended to the fourth grade. The accumulated demand was extorted from the cultivators by





every ingenuity of oppression." *Marshman's History of India*, part II.

"All the profits of these middlemen (Zemindars, Putneedars, Dur-putneedars, &c.) are squeezed out of the unfortunate cultivators." *Hugh Stark Esq. Answer to question 222. Minutes of Evidence, Revenue, Commons, 1832.*

"The indigence of the peasantry appears not one of the least of the causes, which contribute to the frequency of crime in this, and the adjacent districts, arising in no small degree from the system of farming lands, that obtains in those districts. Those acquainted with the landed tenures of Bengal will at once understand the train of evils attending the system of letting in putnee tenures. These tenures are created by the zemindar, letting his lands to an individual who is termed a Putneedar, he lets it to a Dur-putneedar, he again to a Se-putneedar, and he not unfrequently to a Dur-se-putneedar. The Putneedar, in acquiring his tenure, is obliged to pay for it in proportion to the profits it may yield; so that, if the rent is Rs. 10,000, and the profits only Rs. 1,000, he pays Rs. 10,000 for the tenure, which is the market price for land yielding a clear profit of a thousand rupees. The least he expects for his money is twenty-four per cent., the rate of interest paid for money in the Mofussil; and in sub-letting to the Dur-putneedar, he adds the interest Rs. 2,400 to the rent, making the rent payable by the lessee Rs. 12,400, which not only absorbs the profits, that the estate yielded to the Putneedar, but leaves a balance of Rs. 1,400 to be realized in excess of that sum;—and whence is this sum to be realized, but from exactions in the shape of mathots and abwabs, or by an enhanced assessment of the ryots' rents? The Dur-putneedar also pays for his right to the estate, if not for a profit shewn to exist in the actual or probable avails of the estate, at least for the proprietary right which is transferred to him. The transfer into the hands of the Se-putneedar, and then into those of the Dur-se-putneedar, all add to the amount, which it is intended shall be collected from the lands. Every intermediate lessee exacts a certain profit over the rent at which





the zemindar parts with his lands, till the rental swells into a sum far exceeding the existing assets, and induces the necessity of enhancing the rent of the ryot. The attempt to realize this sum entails a series of litigation, which sometimes ends in the abandonment by the Talookdar of his lease; but more frequently in the total ruin of the tenant, who had in vain contended for the permanency of his holding, but which, he finds, extends only to the mere right of occupancy, so long as he pays a certain rent, and that rent is not below the pergunnah rate. I have not leisure nor space to describe *all the misery, wretchedness, and suffering*, which this system has induced. It has ruined the peasantry, and rendered them almost *a nation of paupers*. Were it not for the *Ayama* tenures (lands assessed at a moderate rent at the Decennial Settlement under peculiar circumstances) and for the rent-free tenures, which are still preserved to the country, the people must from dire necessity, have more generally resorted to violent means for a livelihood. Add to this, the absence of all education among the lower classes, and the consequent low state of their morals; and can it be doubted, that it is the extreme indigence of the people, that occasions many of the dacoities, that take place in this and the adjacent districts!

This mode of letting lands commenced with the Rajah of ———, whose principality from its size, rendered it impossible to be managed except by dividing the proprietary right with others. But the almost inextricable perplexities and embarrassments into which the Rajah's affairs had fallen, induced the interference of Government; and Regulation VIII. of 1819 was enacted to enable him to retrieve his affairs. That Regulation introduced order and system into his mode of collecting the revenue; but the protection it afforded to the interest of the intermediate holders converted the system into a means of speculation, and eventually into a curse against the people: The same system, under another name, obtains in districts remote from B———; but from the Regulation not having been expressly extended to their cases, they have escaped the withering effects





of its baneful influences." *A Correspondent of the Englishman*, July 4, 1848, quoted in the *Friend of India*, July 27, 1848.

"There is another great evil, that has been increasing of late years, and is being carried to a ruinous extent as far as it affects the ryots. I allude to the sub-letting system. The evils attending it have been brought to the notice of Government, who ought to take some measures to rescue the ryots from abject poverty. The law again steps in, in this case, to aid the oppressor, the poor ryot being helpless. A single instance will suffice. A Zemindar lets a mehal in Putnee, the Putneedar again relets it in Dur-putnee, now as a profit is to be made by all these parties, not to mention the payment of *salamee*, &c., it stands to reason the greater the number of hands the mehal goes through, the more will the ryots be squeezed; the Dur-putneedar, finding under these circumstances a difficulty in realizing the rents, applies to the Collectory for assistance by means of Regulation VII. The Collector is helpless, and issues the dustuks, and some few poor devils are apprehended, on seeing which the other ryots already harassed past bearing, rise and rescue the unfortunates, in doing which, a life is, perhaps, lost and a few limbs are broken. The Magistrate is called in, who, although sympathizing with the poor ryots at their hard lot, must bring them to punishment for their having taken law into their own hands, although it would be difficult to say what other law they could have taken." *A Correspondent of the Friend of India*, June 4, 1846.

"The system of sub-infeudation and sub-division of joint-interests accompanied by severalty of right, prevails universally throughout Bengal. One result of this is a condition of perplexity of landed interests, which is probably without a parallel elsewhere. And a still more serious consequence is, that the so-called owner of the land has the least possible motive for doing anything to benefit it. It will be seen, that the rent paid by the cultivator for the use of the soil does not go to one person bearing the character of an English landlord, but is distributed among a series of owners, namely, the middle tenure-holders with the revenue-paying zemindar at their head, each independent of the others,





and each probably, consisting of several persons with independent rights among themselves. Why should one shareholder out of this lot advance money for improvement, the advantage of which, if any, will be shared in by many others, over whom he has no control or influence, to a greater extent than by himself." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. LIX., p. 368.

"Was it from the Zemindar they (Planters) took the lease?—The Zemindar may rent his land to three or four people. The Zemindar lets it to what is called an Izardar or farmer; the Izardar again to what is called a Dur-izardar or under-farmer; and each gets a considerable property on the lands, and the Natives are in consequence very much oppressed." *Hon'ble Andrew Ramsay. Answer to question 3505. Minutes of Evidence, Select Committee of the House of Lords, 1830.*

"Do you think, that a Zemindar would be induced to give a longer lease than for 21 years?—I never knew them give a lease of that period." *G. Harris, Esq. Ibid. 4309. Ibid.*

"Is it usual for the Zemindars to let their lands to Izardars and Dur-izardars? Yes; it sometimes happens many Zemindars keep the lands in their own hands, and collect their own rents, and do not farm them out." *Ibid. Ibid. 4318. Ibid.*

"Does each of these classes of persons demand an increased rent from the class immediately below them?—Yes; there is an increase put on by each individual; one takes it from the Zemindar on purpose to make a little bonus by it, and he lets it to another man." *Ibid. Ibid. 4319. Ibid.*

"What power has he to make him pay an increased rent? There is no power for it; but he is told: 'I have been obliged to pay the Zemindar so much more than the rent of the village; you must make good some of it.'" *Ibid. Ibid. 4321. Ibid.*

"Indolence, inexperience, and indebtedness, make Native Zemindars prefer the system of putnees and ijarahs, because it saves trouble, and brings money to meet their immediate wants." *Babu———. Ibid. 3764. The Indigo Commission Report, 1860.*



*The Zemindar.*

When the zemindar is five or six years old, he is sent to school always with a servant or in a carriage. His servants having called him Maharaja all along from his infancy, he thinks so he is. However as it is impossible for him to elude the vigilance of his parents, and that of his private tutor at so early an age, so he regularly attends his school, and pays attention to his books. But his ardour decreases as he advances in years. With the advance of his age, he loses his taste of books, and acquires that for pleasures. Not being in want of money, which he always gets from his parents, or saves from his tiffin allowances, he buys dogs; after a year or two he drives away the poor creatures, and brings, in their place, pigeons and kites. Now he does not regularly attend his school. He now and then bribes his servant, who is sent with him to the school. The poor fellow being thus satisfied informs his parents, that his Babu has attended the school; and they take no more notice of him. In the meantime the Babu, to satisfy his curiosity, goes, accompanied by several others, to visit the Asiatic Museum and the Fort William. So far it is good. But alas! he often goes out of school to smoke and chat at adjacent shops, or school tiffin rooms. Having thus beguiled the school hours, he returns home at regular time as if from school. Thus he wastes away the most valuable years of his life, and deceives himself and his parents for ever. Keeping aside his books, and hastily taking his food, he madly indulges himself in the pursuit of his pleasures. In the evening the poor unfortunate private tutor comes to teach him; but his pupil being engaged in kite-flying, pigeon-feeding, card-playing, and so forth, he must have to wait for at least quarter of an hour with occasional calls, before he sees him in the reading room. As soon as he comes there, he begins to talk of his great skill in kite-flying, card-playing, and so forth. And if he is fond of pigeons, he begins to talk of them: how he has fed or made them fly, how he has stolen a good one, or whence and at what price he has bought it, that such a one has laid eggs, or hatched its young ones, and so forth. The poor tutor urges him at intervals





to attend to his lesson, but who hears him? If he is foolish enough to say or do anything unpleasant to his pupil, he is almost sure to be insulted or dismissed from his service: a charge of neglect or ignorance is almost sure to be brought against him. His father, in most cases, without making any enquiry whatever into the grounds of his complaint, sharply warns or dismisses him as best suits the whims of his worthy son. Those who have served for some time in the capacity of a private tutor, know very well, that their services hang upon a hair—upon the whims of their pupils. So they shape their course as best suits their interests. In this way the Babu beguiles his time in conversation on various subjects he is fond of, as occasion gives rise to them. After an hour or two, his tutor gets up, thinking in his mind, that his pupil would be a good-for-nothing fellow, that he is not to blame for that, and that as soon as he would be in a better position, he would resign his service. We leave it to our readers to judge of the education, which our zemindar receives in this way. As soon as he arrives at the age of fifteen or sixteen, he begins to kill himself by debauchery. He dares not at once leave his school from fear of his parents. But he pays so little attention to his books, and attends his school so irregularly, that it is the same thing, whether his name is on the roll or not. As it is impossible to check him any longer, so his parents entirely leave him to his fate. Taking his food at the regular time, he goes out. Where? Not to his school, but to———. In this way he passes a year or two, and then leaves his school, and, with it, all study for ever. Such is the education and training of our Cornwallis aristocrats, on whose will depends the happiness and well-being of the vast millions.

Now freed from all the troubles and anxieties consequent on attending the school, our zemindar keeps aside his pigeons, dogs, and other childish things, and acquires taste for pleasures in driving the most sumptuous equipages in the streets of Calcutta, seeing theatrical performances, in garden parties, and other luxuries too numerous to be mentioned here. Many sycophants, who are generally known by the name of *Moshahebs*, begin to surround





him, and, within a short time, turn his bosom-friends. The sole object of these men is nothing but to lay traps to catch our lord of the soil: to induce him to spend money like water in visiting most beautiful prostitutes, in feasts, garden parties, and so forth. It is here needless to remind our readers, that the education and moral training of our zemindar are not good enough to resist the charming influences of vice, by which his *moshahebs* always try to kill him. Mistaking his real enemies for his friends, he enters into the world with a vast annual income varying from tens of thousands to lakhs. It is a fact, the truth of which no one can deny, that those who acquire wealth by their own exertions, are acquainted with hard labours, troubles, and anxieties, consequent on its acquisition, and consequently are very frugal in its expenditure, while those, who inherit large properties, and know nothing of worldly troubles and anxieties, spend money like water. Our zemindar, who belongs to the latter class, is consequently not a man to shrink from extravagant expenditure in pursuit of his pleasures. Thus the object of the *moshahebs* to rob their master is gained: he buries himself in debauchery. He is too ignorant to know anything of the conditions of the Permanent Settlement; nay, we doubt very much, whether he knows the very name of the father of that settlement. Indeed he knows nothing but that his forefathers have bequeathed him zemindaries with an annual income of so much. He looks upon his estates as the goose giving him golden eggs every day to meet the demands of his extravagance and luxury whenever he is in need of them. And for all this, he has nothing to do but to order his Naibs and Gomastahs, that he is in need of such a sum of money, and that he wants them to exact it from his tenants. He is too great and luxurious to take upon his shoulders the troubles and anxieties consequent on the proper management of his estates, so he entirely leaves it to the care of his agents. Though very extravagant he is in other respects, he is very sordid—nay he is the last man in the world to adequately remunerate them for their labours: so they are paid less than even the peons of the Government Offices. As a consequence thereof, those who have conscience to bite them





for exacting money by foul means, care very little to be the agents of the zemindar—to be our “village tyrants.” Those only who are devoid of conscience—always ready to sacrifice it before the altar of Plutus, and who have no fear either of God in heaven, or of man in this world to brand them with infamy, seek, like hungry vultures, after the services under him. He so madly indulges himself in his sensual pleasures and other luxuries, that we doubt very much, whether he ever dreams of making enquiries into the means, which his agents employ for exacting his illegal demands, or into the feelings and the wretched condition of his tenantry, or of making improvements of his estates for bettering it. His sole object is nothing but to exact money, by fair means or foul, that matters little. It has been said before, that his agents are not adequately remunerated; most of them recoup themselves by exacting much in excess of the demands, that are made upon them by him, reserving the surplus to themselves. Besides there are many illegal cesses, which are peculiar to the nature of their duties, and in which their master does not take any share whatever.

It seems from a close observation of the life of the zemindar, that God has created him that he should enjoy only its luxuries. He rises from his bed at nine or ten o'clock in the morning, and spends an hour or two in bathing and taking his food. Then he lays down his huge body upon his bed, chewing his *pan* and smoking his *albata*. After half an hour or so, sleep comes on and fascinates him for three or four hours. He then awakes from his slumber, takes some food, chews his *pan*, smokes his *albata*, and chats till five or six P. M. Just before evening, he, accompanied by his bosom-friends, drives his most sumptuous equipage, stops here and there, and at last returns home in a state of drunkenness at eleven or twelve o'clock in the night. In this way several zemindars notwithstanding the vast annual income bequeathed them by their forefathers, incur debts, which it is very difficult for them to liquidate; while their underlings in the *mofussil* apparently raise themselves to the position of zemindars, exact the utmost farthing from the ryots, and, within a few years,





acquire wealth. At last some of them are even obliged to sell some of their estates in order to liquidate their debts, and to save the rest from passing into other hands. Far from visiting the estates to enquire into the condition of his ryots, if any one of them comes to him, and presents a petition with *nazarana* to settle anything, he is looked upon as too mean or troublesome to approach the sacred precincts of his grand parlour, or to vex him with his little interests, and is invariably referred to his *Deewan*, who shapes his course as best suits his interests. It also happens, that a ryot coming for settling anything must have to wait for several days, and to bribe his servants, before he could be able to see his lord. Such is the interest, which our zemindar takes in the welfare and happiness of his ryots. Those zemindars, who are obliged to sell some of their estates for liquidating their debts, try their head and heart to make up the loss by enhancing the rents of the cultivators already reduced to extreme poverty and wretchedness by their agents; while love of wealth and senseless cupidity disturb the slumbers of most of their brother-zemindars by visions of squeezing the life-blood out of their tenants. If they are wise enough to tamely submit to their demands, however extravagant they are, so much the better for them; otherwise they are sure to take upon their head the terrible vengeance of thier masters on the very first opportunity. As it is out of the acknowledged principles of human nature to submit to such demands without making any struggle, so the ryots naturally resist them, and, as a consequence thereof, litigation ensues. Forcibly cutting the crops, plundering the houses, arson, and illegal confinement, are often resorted to as means for frightening them to submission, while suits upon suits, charges upon charges, are heaped upon those, who lead the opposition, till they, harassed by thousand ways, submit to pay the increased rents together with the expenses of litigation. Having thus appropriated by far the greater part of the wealth arising out of increased cultivation, our Cornwallis aristocrats next hanker after titles—to be Roy Bahadurs, Khan Bahadurs, Rajahs, and Maharajahs. As it is impossible to have them conferred upon them without the strong recommendation of





high Government Officers, so they first try to propitiate them by lending them money, subscribing large sums to memorial funds and so forth. Thus they, within a short time, often succeed in gaining their object—in seeing them honoured with the titles in Government Gazettes. Although they have buried the conditions of the Permanent Settlement in the oblivion, yet there is a strong desire in their minds to appear before the public and the Government as philanthropists. In order to gain this object, the services of a few very able men have been secured to conduct newspapers, who do not at all scruple to represent the zemindars as angels. Having thus taken preliminary steps to gain their object—to appear before the public as philanthropists—our Cornwallis Aristocrats shape their course as best suits their interests. They strongly oppose almost every measure of the Government however calculated to do public good, in the name of the people of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, nay of India too. It provides fund for the education of the masses, and our patriots at once forward a petition even to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, bewaring His Grace of the danger, with which the country is threatened thereby. There is a famine yawning its horrible mouth to devour the unfortunate millions, and our patriots at once come forward with a petition in their hands to advise our noble Government upon its duties in the calamity, of which, it will be our painful duty to prove statistically in proper place, they are not only the cause, but also take advantage of for enhancing the rents of the cultivators, thereby undoing its measures for preventing its dreadful consequences. The famine is over, again they come forward to congratulate the Government of the victory, it has gained over that giant. The *Hindoo Patriot* boldly proclaims to the world, that the zemindars have proved themselves by their benevolent measures in the terrible crisis worthy to be showered with honors: that they have 'vindicated the Permanent Settlement'!!! It seems on perusal of the *Hindoo Patriot* of 1874, that the angels came down from heaven in the persons of the zemindars, to save us from the dreadful consequences of the famine. In this way they throw dust in the eyes of the public and the





Government, and appear before them as patriots. Such are the men to whose tender mercies, the Government of Lord Cornwallis handed over, by a stroke of his pen, the vast millions of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, and thereby reduced them from their position of allodial proprietors to that of mere tenants-at-will. We must here admit, that there are a few zemindars, who really help their tenants, and deserve the approbation of all. With these brief remarks, we place before our readers the following extracts, which will throw much light upon the subject.

"To expect of Bengal zemindars the duties of an English landlord, to build and plant, and introduce improved agriculture and improved machinery is a mere chimera. Those are not the functions of a native landlord. If a man encourages or protects the ryots, who break up his waste and till his lands, and deals faithfully and equitably by them, he is considered to do his duty. If he further acts the part of a capitalist money-lender, and advances money and seed to be repaid with interest at harvest time, he does something more; and if the interest exacted is not exorbitant, he is a model landlord. The virtues of a Bengalee landlord are rather negative than positive." *Sir George Campbell.*

"In Bengal the purchase of a zemindari is a sort of speculation, and looked upon as the goose giving golden eggs every day. It must either be farmed at a good profit, or placed in the charge of a collector, who becomes the *de facto* zemindar. Few, very few, zemindars reside in their zemindaries. Some of them spend their days and nights in their closets, doing actually nothing in this world. Some live in this city in the capacity of Banians to mercantile adventurers, to whom they advance thousands and lakhs of rupees . . . . They aim at serving the civilians so as to render them instrumental in the promotion of their interests. Such is the way in which the zemindars make themselves aliens to the internal economy of their zemindaries. Ask them questions as to the agricultural, manufacturing, or fiscal statistics of their estates, and the answer is sure to be, that their Naibs know every thing about the matter. It is to be questioned whether they even minutely look into the accounts rendered by their





collectors. They are fond of ease, and not at all times accessible to their ryots. If petitions complaining of, or praying for, anything, be presented with *nazarana*, they are not seldom referred to the *Dewan*, the head officer of the house, who participates in the gains of the *Naib*, and disposes the matter as he feels influenced." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. VI. Art. *The Zemindar and the Ryot*.

"Without an iota of education, or public spirit, or desire to do good to the people, the typical village zemindar considers it the aim and object of his life to extort the last penny from the impoverished ryot. In this calamitous year (1874) when the Government of India and the Government of Bengal tried head and heart to save millions from starvation. What did our zemindars do? A few enlightened zemindars remitted or promised to remit a portion of the rent due. Self-seeking and selfishness, a cruel disregard for the sufferings of the ryots, a most startling unconsciousness of the moral duty imposed on every one at this terrible season—These characterize the mass of the zemindars." *Babu Romesh Chunder Dutt's Peasantry of Bengal*.

"The majority of Bengal zemindars had no love for the cares and troubles of management; many of them had never seen their estates. Their great object was to derive as large an income as possible with the least risk and trouble." *The Administration Report of Bengal, 1872-73*, p. 36.

"The zemindars are very sweeping in their claims." *Hugh Stark, Esq. Answer to question 199. Minutes of Evidence, Revenue, Commons, 1832*.

"The practice of showing (by the zemindars) false accounts to the Collectors is very general." *Henry Newnham, Esq. Ibid. 2758. Ibid.*

"Do they (zemindars) indulge in European luxuries and European mode of life?—Some few do; and I have understood (it is a matter of mere heresy) that they consume a considerable quantity of wine and cherry-brandy. They do so secretly of course." *R. D. Mangles, Esq. Ibid 606. Minutes of Evidence. The Select Committee of the House of Lords, 1830.*





"There are natives of very great wealth." *Ibid.* *Ibid* 617. *Ibid.*

"They are generally the large landed proprietors; almost every rich native in Calcutta is a landed proprietor." *Ibid.* *Ibid* 618. *Ibid.*

"They are fond of large bodies of retainers and fellows running after them." *Ibid.* *Ibid* 659. *Ibid.*

"The zemindars were men quite unfit for the place into which they were put; they were not men of business, nor men of agricultural knowledge in any respect." *Ibid.* *Ibid* 751. *Ibid.*

"The landlords will not surrender their correct rent-roll; and we, in consequence, had recourse to conjectural estimates, which is rather a clumsy contrivance." *Hugh George Christian, Esq.* *Ibid* 863. *Ibid.*

"Various frauds practised in the process of sale, collusive transfers take place; and frauds have been practised both in the sale and purchase." *Ibid.* *Ibid* 903. *Ibid.*

"They (zemindars) were becoming much more extravagant." *W. M. Fleming, Esq.* *Ibid* 1155. *Ibid.*

"If we carefully examine the general pursuits and habits of the wealthy zemindars, and the manner in which they are brought up to manage their extensive concerns, we would assured be convinced that, very few amongst them are duly qualified for the important task imposed upon them by virtue of hereditary rights and possessions. Though the British have restored them to their original station in society, (for under Jaffer Khan all the principal landholders were dispossessed of their lands) and established on a firm and permanent footing their proprietary right in the soil, yet they are generally so inattentive and unequal to the efficient discharge of the important functions of their situation, that the grossest abuses are practised with impunity by their confidential servants, to the great detriment of the poor ryots, and the general agricultural prosperity of the country.

The Landholders' Society is composed of men, who are possessed of vast zemindaries in the different districts of Bengal, but if any of them be asked, what is the actual produce of his estates,





what are the rules for fixing the rent in his district, what is the assessment of a particular pergunnah, how much the cultivation has progressed or declined, what is the moral and intellectual condition of the agriculturists, what is the population of his zemindari, how is the Police administration conducted, and, in short, what are the internal details of business in the mofussil, his replies, if he can give any without consulting his *subjanta* (all knowing) Dewn, would betray such a degree of ignorance, as if he had never entered his zemindari. Accustomed to spend his time in pampered ease, and habituated to indulge in the voluptuous enjoyments of an oriental, all his thoughts are absorbed by the single consideration of where he shall find wherewithal to support his expensive establishment, and keep up his extravagant style of living. Subterfuges and evasions are resorted to for the purpose of obtaining a remission of Government demand, but no plans are devised to improve and augment the resources of the land.

Almost all the affairs of a zemindar are managed by his confidential servants, who, taking advantage of their master's ignorance and inattention to business, often rise from a state of poverty to that of affluence. A Gomastah receiving a salary of from 3 to 16 rupees a month, always finds means by his nefarious practices to accumulate a fortune after a service of ten or twelve years. The ryots have seldom access to the liege-lords of the soil. They may force an intrusion with petitions, but they are dismissed instantly with a reference to the superintending Dewan, who is the only important personage, that disposes of, after the most summary process imaginable, the complaints of the ryots. He often sits in secret conclave with the purse-proud zemindar, and concert means how to obtain an abatement of the sudder jumma, by pleading to Government his inability to pay it, on the score of the decline of cultivation and other frivolous excuses. Living at a great distance from his zemindari, and indifferent to what is passing around him, or at the seat of Government, the zemindar has seldom any opportunity of ascertaining, by personal observations, the actual condition of the poor cultivators of the soil, and the grievances under which they labour. For information on





this point, he is entirely dependent on his accredited Naibs or Gomastahs on the spot, who, as their interests dictate, often deceive their master by garbled statements. The one is a perfect automaton, moving, as he is moved by, the other, a proficient adept in chicanery, duplicity, and fraud, capable of making the white black and the black white. A zemindar may be virtuous, benevolent, and upright, but what will these good qualities avail, if he is wanting in a knowledge of his own affairs, and has no inclination to be engaged in the active pursuits of life. He must have studied human nature to little purpose, who does not know, that the best qualities sometimes remain as 'silent unproductive virtues' for want of due application and proper exertion. We have heard of——— Babu, whom the Hindoos are almost apt to deify for his great virtues, but what monument of piety did he leave behind him, except his dedicating a few temples in Benares to the service of the Hindoo deities and their pampered priests, the Brahmins. He was possessed of vast zemindaries in the several districts of Bengal, but is his name linked with any great improvement—solid permanent improvement—that he had introduced into his estate? Did he raise any work of public utility, whereby his estimable character and venerated name would be remembered with thankfulness by posterity? And how can we account for the deficiency in the character of an individual, who is said to have devoted his life to the cause of piety and virtue? Simply by bearing in mind the truth, that his good qualities were never brought into active play, either for want of sufficient discernment or practical application." *A Native Correspondent of the Calcutta Courier, May 18, 1848, quoted in the Friend of India, May 21, 1848.*

"What would a beegha of early or of late rice give in a year?—I could not tell without asking my servants." *Babu———, Zemindar of———, Pubna. The Indigo Commission Report, 1860, p. 151.*

"Rent Free Tenures. We have been requested by the writer to publish the following letter addressed by him to the Private Secretary of the Governor-General:—





'To

Thomas Pakenham, Esq.,

Private Secretary to the Governor-General.

Sir,—The subject of this letter will, I trust, plead a sufficient excuse in requesting you to do me the favour to lay the accompanying copies of correspondence before the Right Honourable the Governor-General for his Lordship's perusal and retention; and should his Lordship deem the perusal in the least worthy of his attention and consideration, it will afford me unfeigned pleasure in laying before his Lordship, in as concise a manner as possible, the best and surest mode to be adopted in bringing to light the first great exposure of the names of unassessed villages so fraudulently kept out of Lord Cornwallis's settlement for these past thirty years, by the forefathers and others of these very Talookdars and Zemindars, who are now, and have been for some-time, calling out so loudly and vehemently to the British nation, through their agent,———, and others, against a violation of what they call common justice, and a breach of faith by the Supreme Government of India, with the native inhabitants since 1828. Nothing, Sir, can be more monstrously absurd than the false and most wicked calumnious aspersions of these hired villifiers against the Government of India; and for such temerity, I trust, the period is not distant when every and all of such unassessed villages will not only be resumed by Government, but to a village will be transferred to more honest men, in which case, it will be necessary to give a permanent *nerik*, or quantity of land per Rupee, throughout Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, to the poor ryots, who have been beggared to the veriest degree by the long and studious oppression of these very Talookdars and Zemindars, particularly since the renewal of the Honourable Company's Charter in 1813, and re-appointment of the Cannongoes in 1814, in direct violation of Lord Cornwallis's settlement; consequently there can be no breach of faith in Government now resuming all and every one of such unassessed villages, and either retaining them under their own Collectors, or placing the whole under the direction of others; for by so doing, it would not only be an act of justice, but





the greatest blessing Government could bestow upon the cultivators of the soil, independently of the additional Land Revenue Government would derive; and such revenue Government has been fraudulently, and, for the worst purposes, most surreptitiously deprived of, for such a lengthened period. Strange it is in these times when so much has been said and written lately in the daily papers about Land Revenue, Perpetual Settlement, Resumptions of *Lakhrāj* and *Chūr* lands, &c., I am not a little surprised, that not one amongst the many writers has written one word about the grand fraud in Government Land Revenue, *viz.*, the unassessed villages throughout my Lord Cornwallis's settlement. I humbly presume (when well understood) it was granted, in a great measure, for the express protection of the ryots against the then Talookdars and Zemindars, or perhaps more properly speaking, designate them the mere Government Tesildars." *The Friend of India*, April 12, 1838.

"By a loathsome revolution, which we shall attempt to describe in the following pages, their (real proprietors') places have been gradually filled up by adventurers, who desolate the land, as bears and tigers are seen to prowl amid the ruins of fair marble palaces and scenes once instinct with the healthful life and activity of happy multitudes.

The occupation of landed property by evil adventurers, whose relations to the peasantry are, in principle, destitute of the protective elements of patriarchy, and in practice, notoriously infamous for cruelty, violence, fraud, and every crime. This vitiated and disordered state of the mutual relations between landholder and peasant it is, which is the distinguishing feature of the condition of the Indian multitudes. Unutterable are the horrors of which it is the parent, for India is a land of peasant tribes, not of manufacturers. The children of the soil live, wholly and solely, by the fruits of the soil. Whatever destroys agricultural efforts, threatens life, and brutalizes the condition. The character of a landholder is, therefore, to the Indian peasant, not a matter of curious speculation, but a concernment of life and death—a vital condition of comparative ease and content, or all that life





holds of unutterable woe... Let us turn aside then, to catch such glimpses, as we can, through this Police Report, of the character of native landholders. First let us see their ascendancy over this villainous constabulary force :—‘ One Darogah, one Jemadar, and two Burkunduzes have been removed from the Police during the six months. The Magistrates of this district (Purneah) and of Chumparun have a difficult task to keep their Police Officers from collusion in cases where the Rajahs of ———— or ———— are concerned, as by their influence or money, they try to get the ascendancy. The Rajah of ———— is the least troublesome by far of the two; but the disputes between these two opulent zemindars have a very serious effect on the state of the two districts.’ Here is another characteristic sketch with the Superintendent’s opinion generally of the whole tribe of zemindars. Verily, it unfolds a most enchanting state of rural society ! ‘ Subornation of perjury is a favourite trick among these respectable native gentlemen, who keep the Police obsequiously in their pay. With the zemindars and the Police on one side, and the peasantry on the other, there is likely to be an equal contest indeed. ‘ In the fifth is entered one case of coining, which was a false charge got up by the influence of ————, commonly known by the name of ————, and his brother ————, against one D, to whom the first was deeply indebted, and to whom he also owed a grudge for not making up two cases of illegal imprisonment pending before the Magistrate, in both of which the Babu and his brother were subsequently punished. The person who made the charge, has been convicted of perjury and punished; but the instigators, whose Mooktyar took a prominent part in the proceedings, being respectable zemindars, have not been touched, and are received amongst their friends just the same as usual. In fact, from the Rajah down to the lowest Talookdar, with very few honourable exceptions, no zemindar in the Lower Provinces would hesitate at subornation of perjury to procure his own ends. It is one of their modes of attack and defence, to which apparently they attach no moral delinquency.’

In the next extract, we are expressly told, that the land-





holders are 'engaged and interested in the concealment of crime.' This is a fact, which in India is so well-known and admitted, that even the most conscientious zemindar will not boast that he is an exception to the rule. It is sometimes pleaded, that the difficulty of obtaining justice — the delay and inconvenience occasioned by the remote situations of the Courts, are so great, that he is actually driven to these shifts. But what are we to think of the state of society, when the least vicious of the zemindars unhesitatingly acknowledge their frequent resort to subordination of the Police and concealment of crime !

Proper information is not given in this district of the occurrence of crimes of all grades against property. The landholders and others are engaged and interested in the concealment of them, and the people are in too great awe of the principal gangs to attempt to give notice of such crimes, and thus incur their danger ; none of the Returns, therefore, either in the 2nd or 3rd class, are to be really depended on.

We wish that there were nothing worse than this. Acts of positive oppression, of cruelty, of rapacity, of vast unendurable outrage, are committed every day by the landholders upon the luckless labourers on their estates. The annexed extract from Mr. Dampier's Report shews, in the strongest colours, the extent of daring crime, to which the bad passions of the zemindars strengthened by a sense of their immunity from all control by the Police,—nay, of their protection by that body when in the actual commission of crime—hurry on these licentious tyrants. The ryots are not very easily moved to acts of open rebellion. They must have suffered before they resorted to the violence, which is described ;—' The second class is composed of one dacoity and two cases of attack at night and plunder of property. The dacoity was committed by the same party of *Kecheuks*, who perpetrated the same offence at ———. They were tried for both the offences at Dacca. One of the cases of attack at night was of a most serious nature. A body, stated at no less than 800 Ferazees, the ryots of one ———, collected together and attacked his house, plundered it of every thing, and carried off





his brother———. They were not instigated by a desire of plunder, but of revenge for the oppression and exaction practised on them by this zemindar, and if a tenth part of what they, after their conviction, stated to me in a petition extenuating their conduct, were true, I am only surprised, that much more serious and general disturbance did not occur. I directed the Magistrate to inquire into the facts alleged, but after the disturbance, the people named by the prisoners as witnesses of the truth of their statements, declined saying much for fear of being thought implicated in that offence. I have no doubt, however, of the general truth of the statements, and the zemindars appear to have done everything, that could degrade these men, their religion, and their females. The Magistrate arrested 117 on this charge, and made over subsequent to the half-year 106 for trial before the Sessions, of whom 22 were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment with labour in irons. In such a tumult at night, it is almost impossible to recognize distinctly the parties engaged. This outrage shows the combination existing among this sect:—they assembled from all quarters most suddenly and secretly, and after the attack, dispersed in the same manner. The Magistrate must keep a strict watch not only over these people, but also over their zemindars, particularly if Hindoos, as the latter are very apt to resent the non-payment of these men of pooja expenses, &c., which they consider encouraging idolatry by a very gross ill-treatment. In fact, the Ferazees consider the payment of rent at all, especially to an infidel, as opposed to the word of God; and where a zemindar cares not for his ryots, or for anything beyond extorting all he can from them by any means, a re-action on the part of a fanatical and ill-treated body of men must be expected. In the other case 27 persons were arrested, 2 released, and 25 awaiting a reference to the Nizamut.

Ignorance is the first symptom to be combated—ignorance not in the obscure recesses of village life; but ignorance in high places—ignorance not among the poor and the oppressed, whose cause we are now articulately pleading; but ignorance among the rulers of the land, to whom these helpless sufferers turn





imploringly but hopelessly for redress. If we can, with earnest endeavour and after much toil, clear away but some small portion of this vast jungle of ignorance, we shall, let the cost what it may, in due season, reap our reward." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. I., p.p. 189-217.

"The wealth of the district of ———— may be said to centre in the ———— of ————, whose net income is estimated by the Collector to amount to about £100,000. The ———— is the proprietor of the greater portion of the land in the district, and also owns extensive estates in other parts of Bengal. The under-tenure-holders, such as, Putneedars, Dur-putneedars, who hold their lands under a perpetual lease and without liability to enhancement of rent, are, as a body, far wealthier than their superior landlords, the zemindars. All the ————'s estates are let out in putnee, and many are again sub-let in dur-putnee, se-putnee, and chaharam putnee." *Dr. Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal*, vol. IV., p.p. 67-68.

A Correspondent of the *Shulava Shamachara* of Jaisto 24, 1278, says:—Sir,—“Many of your readers know very well the great audacity and the virtues of the zemindars, speaking generally, whose belly is so full of them. Whatever be said in their presence, else the people bless them in such a manner, that if it were the age of the ancient *Munis* and *Rishis*, great dangers would have befallen them. However to-day I will inform your readers of one great-minded, the words of whose virtues, if heard, will open the eyes of many zemindars; and our mind too will derive much satisfaction.

He is one of the zemindars of ————. His name is Babu ————.” The correspondent then gives a somewhat long description, which fully proves the Babu's noble mind. He concludes thus:—“Sir, a zemindar of his stamp is very rare. The people of the village have been subdued by his virtues. Those who have obtained the bestowment of their lives, and are still obtaining, are now trying to raise subscriptions for offering him a watch. Though it is a trifling matter to him, yet he will not refuse it, being the sign of gratitude of the hearts of all.





Now we pray, that many zemindars would imitate their humble and patriotic brother."

"The *Shulava Shamachara* is consecrated not for writing amusing tales. One of our chief aims is to do good to the poor, especially to the poor ryots of this country. We know that this undertaking will make us unpopular to the rich, especially to the zemindars, and that they will not cease to find fault with us. Indeed in this world, a friend of the poor is sure to be an opponent of the great men. We can distinctly and sincerely say, that we are not engaged to attack and abuse the rich, especially the zemindars, being vexed with some one of them. Let no one think, that some particular person has fallen in our poison-sight, and that we will not drink water without proclaiming his fault. Our mind is specious like the field surrounding the Fort William. We love all, the king and the subject, the rich and the poor. We use severe language when necessary, but on the very sight of the zemindar, we do not say "murder murder," nor do we grumble, and give vent to our anger at the very scent of the Government. But if we find fault, how can we, in our senses, conceal it with affection. We do not respect any body whoever he be, be he king or vizier, *Burra Lat*, or *Chota Lat*, or *Jhangli Lat*. Whoever is in fault, whether he be white or black, rich or poor, our little pen will be like a sharp sword for cutting and correcting their faults. *It is not un-true, that the zemindars of this country oppress the ryots in the cruelest manner, whenever they find the slightest opportunity. Their oppressions have been proved not only in the Courts of Justice, but also they have been written in the blood of thousands of helpless widows and orphans.* We are not men, if our hearts are not moved with pity on hearing the cries of the poor ryots. We are worthless, if we, on hearing them, do not endeavour to remove them. We will consider ourselves successful, if we can, by writing, effect a little good of our poor brothers. We will never shrink from undertaking this great work. We will, undaunted, do our duty, so long as the *Shulava* will last." *The Shulava Shamachara, Asshin 16, 1279 Hegira.*





"The zemindars and their subordinates, under the cover of obligations, which they had been deprived the power of fulfilling uprightly, were soon found to be the perpetrators or abettors of half the crime in Bengal. The Government were left without a practical alternative. By the proclamation of December 7th 1792 re-enacted by Regulation XII. of 1793, it took the Police of the country directly into its own hands, and deprived the landholders by law of all the authority, which had been attached to them as Officers of the State." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. LVI., p.p. 89-90.

"The connivance and collusion of the Police, and the assistance and protection afforded by the Naibs and Gomastahs of the zemindars enabled the dacoits to pursue their nefarious avocations with impunity. Not only the zemindari Amlah but several petty landholders were receivers of stolen property; and as they were in the habit of melting down gold and silver ornaments as soon as they came into possession of the same, it was difficult to identify the articles. Several families in——— and other villages in Rajshahi accumulated wealth by receiving stolen property." *Ibid.*, p. 19.

"The voice of history is, we believe, with us. Aristocracies have been, as a rule, selfish always lending to maintain a monopoly of power and knowledge, and to use it for controlling the masses. How long should we have waited ere the polished educated slaveholders of America voluntarily renounced their ill-gotten gains in human flesh. Even the noblest aristocracy in the world, the English, only conceded the Reform Bill, when they saw the alternative was reform or revolution, and that to delay the concession might imperil the existence of their order. Or select the more recent case—the abolition of serfdom in Russia. When the policy had long been in Russia to filter down to the mass through an educated *noblesse*, the nobles were polished and refined, but what was the case of the serfs?—they continued degraded, debased, the victims of their masters' luxury and profligacy. No stir consequently was made in the stagnancy of Russian aristocratic life, until the present Czar Alexander, the Liberator, as he is styled





by his own countrymen, took the matter into his own hands by initiating, in spite of the violent hostility of the educated nobles, the great and glorious measure of serf-emancipation, which has placed the Russian peasant in a far higher political position than that of the Indian peasant...They (zemindars) have set themselves in deadly array having inscribed on their banners—hostility to popular education.” *Ibid.*, vol. II., p. 109.

“The zemindars in those days (during the latter part of the eighteenth century) were invested by Government, unfortunately for the country and people, with Police jurisdiction, but they harboured dacoits, sent them on expeditions, and got one-third of the spoil for their share. One of these worthies used to assemble men under the pretence of apprehending dacoits, and let them loose on his own ryots. Another, when any of his zemindaries was put to sale, ordered the *Chuars* to plunder those inclined to purchase; whenever he failed in lawsuit, he made the ryots pay the costs, sometimes amounting to Rs. 4,000.” *Ibid.*, p. 113.

“I have invariably found the zemindars of Bengal, as a class, hostile to any movement, which would secure either knowledge, freedom of thought, or freedom of action for the ryots.” *Rev. James Long. The Indigo Commission Report, 1860*, p. 159.

*Who is Greater, Zemindar or Lât Sahib.*

“No one, on observing the habits of the zemindars of our country, can think, that *Lât Sahib* is greater than they. Their pomp of bathing, wearing cloths, and sleeping, is of the zemindari manner, which even his forefathers never saw. When the servants smear them with oil, their neighbours come to the knowledge of it; they are so shameless, that it is not proper for any gentleman to stand by them at that time. No one can supply them with thin cloths, unless he gets orders beforehand. At the time of wearing the cloth, such outrages are committed, that the servants cannot tuck the lower garment, unless they run behind them with it in their hands for four miles. Making provisions for meal is only for sleeping. The more they pant with their body, which has grown as huge with milk and clarified butter as the heap of earth, the more they derive pleasure. The more the





belly grows large, the larger are the pillows made. When a zemindar snorts after laying his huge body upon the huge pillow, the house totters with the horrible noise."

Then the editor maintains the great superiority of the Governor-General over the zemindars, and advises them to imitate his noble virtues, and to do their duty towards their tenants. He concludes thus:—"Do not neglect your own interest in thoughts of smearing oil, wearing thin cloths, and enlarging the belly; let not your object be the tears of the poor ryots." *The Shulava Shamachara, Pous 4, 1279 Hegira.*

With the permission of our readers, we quote again the following lines from the *Friend of India, August 14, 1873*:—"Woe, especially to the peasantry of large absentee zemindars, who are killing themselves by debauchery in Calcutta, as the native papers so often lament, while their unjust stewards lord it over the tenantry, and there is no human ear that will hear the cry of the poor."

"Surely it cannot be the interest of Government to confer legality upon all the wild, waste, and spendthrift acts of a debauched proprietor, or to give such additional encouragement to his vice and extravagance, and superadded facilities to effect his own ruin and that of his family, by removing every obstacle to his obtaining large loans." *C. W. Smith, Esq. Papers Regarding the Consequences to Under-tenures of the Sale of an Estate for Arrears of Revenue, p. 71.*

"A remarkable pamphlet on the relation between the zemindar and the ryot has come to our hands. It is entitled 'zemindar and ryot,' and is the substance of a speech delivered before the National Society by Babu Nil Comul Mookerjee. The author is a member of the Jorasanko Tagore family, an enlightened man himself, who has spent some years in studying the zemindari system as it exists in the mofussil. More than half the value of the book is derived from the air of dispassionateness, which characterizes it. Though a zemindar himself, he has none of that partisanship, which makes the ryot a scapegoat of all the calamities that befall Bengal. He had adjudged the relative





blame and deficiencies of both the parties, and we are glad to say, he has accomplished his task honestly and fearlessly. At the present moment, when the Pubna riots are still fresh in our mind, it may be well to take a glimpse of the actual zemindari system in that district.

The first part of the pamphlet laments the degeneracy of the present generation of zemindars. It will be remembered, when we speak of degenerate zemindars, that we do not refer to all of that class. Far from it...With these remarks we think it safe to follow our author. 'It is high time,' says he, 'that the zemindars should shake off their indolence, and introduce into their estates such improvements in agriculture, as the progress of society, makes eminently necessary. As at present seems, most of the Zemindars are indolent; they do not like the trouble to enquire into their concerns, but entrust their whole affairs into the hands of agents, as ignorant as, if not more tyrannical than, themselves.' The great curse of the present system, as we gather from the pamphlet, is ignorance; and from it proceed those evils of absentee landlordism, which have brought disgrace on the system itself. Babu Nil Comul is expressively eloquent, when he exhorts his brethren to remove this disgrace. It is evident that their intelligence is not sufficient to induce them to study the laws of Government; hence it is that they rely for everything on their agents, whose tyrannical disposition they altogether overlook, money being their sole object. 'These agents,' says the author, 'throw the ryots into such unbearable troubles as melt even the most stone-hearted. It is impossible to calculate the stratagems, which they employ to oppress the ryots. Who does not know, that a ryot's trees and fruits, &c., are not safe against the avarice of tyrannical landlords and their men? Those zemindars who do personally inspect their estates, look only to the return of their income, and never turn their eyes to the improvement of the ryots or their country.' Another great curse to the ryot is the avarice of the Mahajans, from whom he borrows money. These men supply money at rates of interest, which vary from 25 to 30 per cent., and sometimes more. The author says that these





rapacious men ought to be at once divested of their fangs, and the zemindars should do the duty of the Mahajan, only with greater mercy. We believe the author is right; only we fear lest it supplies another illustration of the proverb—From the frying pan to the fire. It is, indeed, extremely desirable, that this benevolent function should be taken up by the zemindars. But the time, when this consummation will take place, is yet distant, when we look to the formidable list of illegal cesses described by the author, which they extort from the ryots." *The Indian Mirror, August 9, 1873.*

It is needless to tell our readers, that Babu Nil Comul Mookerjee is a most honourable exception to the rule.

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*The Bengal Villages and the Underlings of the Zemindars.*

Having placed before our readers the picture of the zemindar, we now proceed to give them one of his agents. We have already said, that those only who are devoid of sense and conscience, and have no fear of God in heaven, or of man in this world, to brand them with infamy, accept services under him. Almost all of them are trained not in schools, but in *patshalas*. We doubt very much, whether they ever touch a single book on literature, and they have not the power to do so. Their education consists only of reading and writing *pottahs*, *kabuleuts*, receipts, and letters, on subjects familiar to them. Such is the education and training of the men, who really rule the destinies of the vast millions of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. And mean as is their education, so also is their remuneration: even the menial servants of the Government Offices are better paid than our village lordlings. It seems from a close observation of their conduct towards the poor cultivators, that God forgot to implant in their hearts the sense of virtue, kindness, and other noble attributes of human nature, when He created them. It is impossible to calculate all the stratagems, which they employ to squeeze the life-blood out of the ryot. Our 'village-tyrant,' the Gomastah, knows very well, that it is impossible for a poor and simple ryot to make a bold stand against his demands, however unjust and extravagant





they are, when he has in his back the village headman, whom it is almost always his wise policy to propitiate by giving him a little share in his plunder. If the ryot is foolish enough to refuse them, he is sure to get a sound beating, and to see his rice cut, or his house plundered. If he again dares resist him, our lordling, as if to give a finishing stroke of his inhumanity, brings a charge of theft against him in the Police! With a command of formidable power over the unfortunate tenantry, and the village chowkeedar at his heels, it is not difficult for him to prove it. He drags a few of them to his Cutchery in order to suborn them in support of the charge he has brought against his victim. Who dares speak a single word unpleasant to the man of dignity? If any one does, he is also made to feel the consequences of his rashness. In this way he not unoften succeeds in putting him into jail. Such is the punishment, which an ordinary peasant meets at the hands of his zemindar's underlings whenever he refuses their demands. We will give a few illustrations on this head. A poor ryot has incurred the displeasure of the Gomastah, and he is fined five rupees. If he evades the payment, which he seldom does, the man of dignity resorts to ingenious tricks. The poor fellow comes to pay his rent, say ten rupees, due by him to his zemindar. The Gomastah first takes it, and gives a receipt of only five rupees, crediting the remainder in the fine books of the Cutchery. The ryot asks for a receipt of ten rupees, but is reminded of disobeying his orders by not paying the fine of five rupees imposed on him in such a month. He is quite at a loss what to do. He has no influential man in his back to strongly demand the receipt of ten rupees; so he shapes his course in the humblest way possible. He, with his *Gamcha* (scarf) thrown round his neck, and with folded hands, implores his lord in the most glorious terms: that he is the incarnation of justice, that he is his *ma bap*, that he can kill or save him at his pleasure, and so forth. But who hears him? When the poor fellow learns to his great misfortune, that it is impossible for him to make straight his wry mouth, he returns home highly dissatisfied cursing his lot and the Gomastah. Such





is the way in which the innumerable illegal cesses are exacted, and, in course of time, the ryots have been accustomed to look upon them as legal rights of the zemindar and his underlings. However there are two or three respectable ryots almost in every village, who are generally known by the name of village *munduls*, whom, as we have already said, it is the wise policy of the Gomastah to propitiate in order to back him in carrying on his exactions. If, at an evil moment, a dispute arises between these men and the Gomastah, it is thought unwise to punish them in the ordinary way. Forged documents too ingeniously got up to be detected are often resorted to as means for making them feel the consequences of quarrelling with him. He begins to instigate his master, that the ryots have combined not to pay rents, that it is impossible to collect them so long as these headmen lead the combination, and that there is no other means of punishing them than that of forging documents. The zemindar, who almost always places implicit confidence in his worthy agent, and is too ignorant and luxurious to take the trouble of enquiring into the real state of things, gives his consent, and the fate of the men is sealed: certain ruin is to befall them at no distant future. And if he is virtuous enough to shrink from giving his consent to such a forgery, suits upon suits for arrears of rent are unnecessarily instituted against them in the Courts of Justice, the real object of which is not so much to realize the rents, as to ruin them by the expenses of litigation. Poor cultivators! what great sin you committed in your former births, as to deserve such punishments at the hands of the zemindars and their agents. We shall try our best to place before our readers in proper place the innumerable pretexts resorted to by our village-tyrants in order to enrich themselves and their masters. We must here admit, that there are a few noble exceptions. We need not make any further remarks; we have only to quote the following passages in support of them.

“To one who has never been out of town, the prospect of the open country must be striking and pleasant. We do not see here the undulating hills and vales, the green pasture-lands with





sheep and kine grazing on them, and the beautiful hedge-rows and clusters of cheerful-looking cottages strewn about here and there, that greet the eye of the traveller in England; but in their stead, we see, on both sides of the main road, extensive paddy fields spreading their sea-like expanse as far as the eye can reach, with waving corn shining under the golden tints of the morning Indian sun—the scene being hardly checkered by a single tree or hut. Far off the view is bounded by a line of thick vegetation and tangled woods and trees of various kinds covered with luxuriant foliage. Concealed in the thick shade of this beautiful green canopy of nature, our poor and simple villagers have their clusters of neat though humble dwelling houses. Let us then leave the main road; we cross a number of paddy fields, and in about half an hour reach one of the shady villages. It is impossible to describe the calmness and tranquility, that reign in this rural scene. The thick canopy of branches and leaves ward off the rays and heat of the sun; solitary foot-paths meander among clusters of neat and low-built villages; and here and there a stagnant pool covered with green plants, or full of beautiful lotuses proudly lifting up their heads, attract the attention of the visitor. The only sound audible is the continual rustling of the leaves, and the no less continual voices of birds of various kinds and of rich plumage issuing from bush and tree like the flood of cheerful music. A spot so secluded seems devoted to peace and rural happiness:—alas! it is the hotbed of oppression and the home of poverty and suffering.

We cannot help reflecting with pain, that the little interest, which our zemindars take in the country, has not only prevented the improvement of the condition of our villagers, but has also deprived the mass of the people of that privilege of representation, which is, to a certain extent, enjoyed by the educated classes. The village *patshalas* and the village municipalities will, we feel confident, help our villagers to resist the extortions of the village-tyrants—the Gomastah and the tax-gatherer. None, who has not an intimate acquaintance with villages, is sufficiently aware of the extent to which the tax-gatherer, when he has oppor-





tunity as well as the zemindar, or rather his underlings, carry on oppression and extortion among the villagers. The Gomastah is a lordling in the villages from which he collects rents, and rules his kingdom with an iron sceptre. Employed by his master, the zemindar, to collect rent from the villagers, he would ill-discharge his duties, if he had any degree of kindness or humanity in his nature; and be it said to his credit that, an efficient officer that he is, he does not entertain any such weakness in his heart: as a rule, he succeeds in collecting a great deal more than he is required to do—the surplus he, of course, considers as a legitimate reward for his efficiency. It almost exceeds the power of arithmetic to enumerate the ways in which a Gomastah receives his perquisites. Is a villager guilty of any offence or indiscretion? He must be taken to the Thanah, unless he pays something to the Gomastah. Is a market to be held in the village? Each shop-keeper must pay something to the Gomastah. Refuse to comply with these modest demands of the man of power and dignity, and you get a sound beating, and there is brought a charge of theft against you in the Police? For our worthy Gomastah, be it remembered, is not an unfrequent visitor of the Courts, and is perfectly aware of their ins and outs. He knows the Courts too well to appear himself as the prosecutor or the plaintiff; in most cases a third party is instigated by the Gomastah to bring a complaint against the man, who may have incurred his displeasure,—and a Gomastah's instigation is often tantamount to compulsion; and few are aware of what a large proportion of the criminal cases, that come to our Courts, are got up by the instigation of our worthy Gomastah. And yet it is only in extreme cases, that he proceeds to Court. Generally speaking, to drag the villager to the Gomastah's house or Cutchery, and to beat him or confine him till he complies with the Gomastah's orders, are the means adopted by him; and this practice is so common, that the villagers, in course of time, have come to consider, that the Gomastah, in doing so, only exercises his legal right. Nor can we quite exculpate the zemindar from all blame. He sometimes practises the same things in his own vicinity, and





generally connives at the doings of his Gomastah; in fact, it is his interest to do so, because the more the Gomastah is dreaded, the more certain will be the due payment of rents by the villagers. Poor cultivators! Who will save you from the tyranny of the zemindar's Gomastah? Who will bring to light the thousand and one ways, in which you are robbed to enrich the Gomastah? We need not go into the extortions of the tax-gatherer. We may lay it down as a rule, that a direct tax is seldom levied from the villages of Bengal without almost necessitating cruel extortions." *The Bengal Magazine*, No. 4, p. 150.

"The zemindar keeps a Naib at the same pay that he gives to a gate-keeper; the Gomastah's pay is somewhat less than that of a menial servant. They support themselves by resorting to illegal cesses." *The Bungo Darsana*, quoted in *Babu Romesh Chunder Dutt's Peasantry of Bengal*.

"The zemindars keep Naib and Gomastah, but they do not enquire into their character. They can appoint any man on security. But in too many cases, their name is stained owing to their fault. They, thinking themselves zemindar's men, exercise great authority, and, therefore, never shrink, in the least degree, from relinquishing their sense of virtue. Any one, who speaks against their opinion, incurs their enmity. If incurred, there is no rescue. The Naib and the Gomastah begin to make the zemindar's ear heavy (to instigate him) against such a man. The zemindar placing implicit confidence in his Amlahs' words gets angry without any consideration at all. If he gets angry, complete ruin is sure to befall him. Here the man, who has incurred the zemindar's displeasure, is always anxious, on what day what danger will befall him. They no more take his rent. The adversary is entreating them to receive it. Who hears him? There will be arrears of rent. The Gomastah informs the zemindar, that such a man is not paying rent. There is no other means than that of instituting suits for recovering it. The zemindar, who knows nothing, of course, gives his consent to the proposal. Thus the ryot is ruined by suits for arrears of rent, and by other oppressions. We know several instances, in which the ryots, on





refusal of the Gomastah to receive their rents, went to the zemindar's house to pay them, but did not succeed. At that time he ought to have considered that, when the ryots came to his house to pay their rents, his Amlahs must have been in fault. Therefore, in such cases, if the zemindars write their Amlahs to receive rents, and enquire into them, they may blot out a part of their stain. The reason of using the word 'stain' is, that there are very few unstained zemindars in Bengal." *A Correspondent of the Education Gazette, Choitra 12, 1282 Hegira.*

"*Shomeprokash* advises the zemindars to reform their officers and introduce men of principle and education to manage their affairs. Most of the men they have now are harpies devoid of sense and conscience. It is a pretext to say, that educated men do not understand zemindari business. If they have proved efficient Deputy Magistrates and Deputy Collectors, Munsiffs and Sub-judges, surely they will also be good zemindari managers. Most zemindars far from visiting their zemindaries, do not know even what number of ryots they have, their condition, and circumstances." *The Hindoo Patriot, December 18, 1876.*

"These agents," says, Babu Nil Comul Mookerjee, "throw the ryots into such unbearable troubles as melt even the most stone-hearted. It is impossible to calculate the stratagems, which they employ to oppress the ryots."

#### *The Destitution of Education.*

"Mr. Adam appointed by Lord William Bentinck in 1835, as Government Commissioner, to conduct enquiries into the state of native education, thus impressively sums up the results of his enquiries at Nator in the district of Rajshahi:—The conclusions to which I have come on the state of ignorance both of the male and female, the adult and the juvenile population of this district, require only to be distinctly apprehended in order to impress the mind with their importance. No declamation is required for that purpose. We cannot, however, expect that the reading of the report should convey the impressions, which we have received from daily witnessing the mere animal life to which





ignorance consigns its victims, unconscious of any wants or enjoyments beyond those, which they participate with the beasts of the fields, unconscious of any of the higher purposes for which existence has been bestowed—society has been constituted and government is exercised. We are not acquainted with any facts, which permit us to suppose, that in any other country subject to an enlightened Government, and brought into direct and immediate contact with European civilization, in an equal population there is an equal amount of ignorance with that, which has been shewn to exist in this district.' And Rajshahi was not a backward or an exceptionally illiterate district. It was and is occupied by an industrious and intelligent population; it boasts of several influential Rajahs and large zemindars, and is the seat of an extensive trade in silk and cereals.

The Rajshahi of Mr. Adam is only an average specimen of all the districts of Bengal. Similar enquiries in the other localities selected by him led to nearly similar results exhibiting a vast and nearly illimitable intellectual waste." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. LVI., p. 32.

"Mr. Arbuthnot, Director of Public Instruction at Madras, states on this subject:—'I cannot but think it, therefore, almost certain, that the only result of a system, which educates a few highly and leaves the rest of the population without any elementary instruction, is to render all the superior acquirements of that few made moreover at an enormous cost to the State, barren and fruitless as to any general influence upon society.'" *Ibid.*, vol. XXX., p. 5.

"In spirited language, Indophilus, referring to the Sepoy outbreak, thus remarks:—'What decisive evidence have we in all this, of the slow progress, that has been made during a whole half century, in enlightening and elevating the sunken masses of the people. With what resistless force ought the cry of 'educate, educate, and educate them, diffuse amongst them the seeds of high intelligence and moral virtue—to bring in the ears of our rulers and all the real lovers of India's welfare! A profoundly ignorant people, like the ocean in a calm, may proudly bear upon





its bosom the vessel of State; but like the ocean in a storm, the same people moved by some sudden gust or hurricane of senseless delusion may, in blindfold fury, dash the noble vessel to pieces, amid the surging billows, that strew themselves along with it, like shattered wrecks upon the shore." *Ibid.*, p. 6.

"Indeed the ryots are universally uneducated and ignorant, and in an extreme degree susceptible to the influence of authority. The relation between them and the zemindar is eminently feudal in its character. He is their superior lord, and they are his subjects (ryots) both by habit and by feeling." *Ibid.*, vol. LIX., p. 199.

#### *The Evil Effect of the Educational Destitution.*

"In 1851 a school was established at Nator by the Deputy Magistrate of that Sub-division. It was afterwards amalgamated with Prasanna Nath Academy, which was inaugurated on the 24th January 1852. There was a large gathering of the European and native gentry of the district on the occasion. The Deputy Magistrate having been voted to the chair rose and said:—"Gentlemen, I thank you for the honor you have done me in voting me to the chair, and though I could wish you had selected an abler person to fill it, yet I must not shrink from the duty you have imposed on me. I welcome you, gentlemen, a right-hearted welcome to this hall, in the name of the enlightened proprietor of the institution, whose inauguration we are assembled to celebrate, in the name of the pupils, who have this day been admitted here, and in the name of the great cause of education. I conceive it is the duty of every person interested in the welfare of the country, especially of every native, to endeavour his best to promote that cause. The happiness and prosperity of the people are intimately connected with it. I do not pretend to believe, that education is the panacea for all the evils with which they are afflicted, for the disease of India is a complicated disease, and requires both moral and physical remedies. I know also, that climate and centuries of Mahomedan oppression have largely contributed to produce her degradation, but I am strongly persuaded, that ignorance and





superstition have had more to do with it than anything else. Why was it, that the people are oppressed by the zemindars, fleeced by the mahajans, and victimized by the Police. Why does the appearance of a *chaprass* frighten the whole village, and enable its holder to extort money with impunity? Why is the Thanah Burkundaz so much dreaded in the mofussil, that when he is deputed to investigate a death by snake-bite or drowning, his threat to report it as murder and *challan* the villagers to the *huzur* as implicated in its commission and concealment, elicits a bribe from them. Why but because the people are ignorant of their rights. Teach them their rights, and they will assert them manfully. Give them knowledge, and they will realize the Baconian aphorism: Educate them and they will cease to be oppressed and trampled down." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. LVI., p. 33.

*The Necessity of Imparting Education to the Mass of the People.*  
The education of the mass of the people is one of the most important subjects, that can ever engage the attention of a ruler, who has really the good of the country in his heart. On their education depends the scientific and improved agriculture, on improved agriculture depends the improved commerce, and on improved commerce the prosperity of a country. But alas! notwithstanding this supreme importance of the education of the people, our rulers seem to have never seriously taken it into their consideration. More than hundred years passed away, and nothing whatever was done. It is no exaggeration to say, that much of the oppressions and the horrible outrages perpetrated by the zemindars, their underlings, and the myrmidons of the Police, may be laid at the door of ignorance, in which the people have hitherto been kept. At last Sir George Campbell, one of the few rulers, who had really the good of the country in heart, stepped in to their aid, and provided a grant of three or four lakhs of rupees a year for their education. Though we are really grateful to His Honor for the benefit, which he has thereby conferred upon them, yet we cannot help thinking, that it is almost nothing, when we seriously compare it with the 66 millions





minus the upper ten thousand: that it is a drop to the ocean; that it has reached only one out of twenty or twenty-five villages. The aid of two to three rupees granted to each patshala, with two or three more paid by the pupils, is too small to attract men, who are really worthy of the name of teachers, while the education imparted to them does not at all deserve its name, and is little better than what was imparted to our forefathers. Thus our rulers may justly be charged with having done a very little for the education and moral training of the vast millions, for whose happiness and well-being they pretend to be in India at all. We, therefore, in the name of God and of the vast millions, whom he has placed under their care and protection, humbly request them to take effectual measures for their education worthy of its name. We here mean 'by education worthy of its name,' that Government should establish vernacular schools, which should reach the people: that it should teach them literature, history, geography, arithmetic, and agriculture.

"To render education productive of all the utility, that may be derived from it, the poor ought, in addition to the elementary instruction now communicated to them, to be made acquainted with the duties enjoined by morality and with the circumstances, which occasion that degradation of ranks and inequality of fortunes that usually exist. And they should, above all, be impressed from their earliest years with a conviction of the important and undoubted truth, that they are really the arbiters of their own fortune—that what others can do for them is but as the dust of the balance compared with what they can do for themselves—and that the most tolerant and liberal Government, and the best institutions cannot possibly shield them from poverty and degradation without the exercise of a proper degree of prudence, fore-thought, frugality, and good conduct on their part. That the ultimate effect of such a system of education would be most advantageous, there can be no doubt; though it would be unreasonable to expect, that it should produce any very immediate effect on the habits of the multitude. If, however, there is but little room for the formation of sanguine hopes of early improvement, there is none for





despondency. The harvest of sound education may be late, but in the end it will be most luxuriant, and will amply reward the patriotic efforts of those, who are not discouraged in their attempts to make education embrace objects of real utility by the difficulties they may expect to encounter at the commencement and during the progress of their labours.

Mr. Sumner has excellently observed, in reference to the diffusion of education, that 'of all obstacles to improvement, ignorance is the most formidable, because the only secret of assisting the poor is to make them agents in bettering their own condition, and to supply them not with a temporary stimulus, but with a permanent energy. As fast as the standard of intelligence is raised, the poor become more and more able to co-operate in any plan proposed for their advantage, more likely to listen to any reasonable suggestion, more able to understand, and, therefore, more willing to pursue it. Hence it follows, that when gross ignorance is once removed, and right principles are introduced, a great advantage has been already gained against squalid poverty. Many avenues to an improved condition are opened to one, whose faculties are enlarged and exercised; he sees his own interest more clearly, he pursues it more steadily, he does not study immediate gratification at the expense of bitter and late repentance, or mortgage the labour of his future life without an adequate return. Indigence, therefore, will rarely be found in company with good education.' *McCulloch's Principles of Political Economy*, p.p., 360—61.

Let no one think, that in advocating the cause of education of the vast millions, we deprecate the noble efforts, which our rulers have all along been making to impart high education to the upper and middle classes. Indeed, we shall be very sorry to see them abolish a college or high school. Here we cannot help making a few observations. Thousands of young men, who come out yearly from our colleges and schools, are growing very discontented for not being able to gain a decent livelihood, which they had all along cherished in their minds. Their discontent has increased so much of late years, that it is not uncommon to hear





our speakers as well as high Government Officers address them in public meetings insisting upon them the necessity of having recourse to agriculture as one of the best means for gaining a decent livelihood. But have they ever succeeded in the least degree in their attempts to persuade them to listen to their advice? Certainly not. And the reason is not far to seek. One of the greatest objections to their having recourse to agriculture, is the exorbitant rate of land-rent, which the zemindars are exacting from the cultivators. They see with their eyes wide open, that this exorbitant land-rent has handed over the vast millions to the tender mercies of the money-lenders, and reduced them to extreme poverty and wretchedness. The average income of a ryot is fixed by the highest authorities at sixty rupees per annum, with which he supports himself, his wife, and three children, and for which he is forced to labour hard from morning to sunset. Perhaps the best proof of small profits from the cultivation of land is the proverb, that 'the Banians do not cultivate land calculating its expenses and profits.' And this is very true. The speakers may for a time impress the minds of their audience with the importance of agriculture, but as soon as they come out of the lecture-halls, and seriously think of having recourse to it, the miserable condition of the ryots frightens them from a distance, and they shrink back from it. We do not think that any educated young man ever seriously thinks of cultivating the land at all. The English education has certainly freed his mind from the trammels of superstition, which engrossed the minds of his forefathers. He does not think the cultivation of land beneath his dignity; nay, he looks upon it as an honourable profession. But the wretched condition of the ryot stands in his way as the insurmountable barrier of his having recourse to it. It is absurd to think, that he will condescend to drudge from sunrise to sunset for the paltry sum of sixty rupees per annum. We do not hereby mean to say that agriculture is a mean profession. Far from it. We are here only giving the reasons, which act powerfully upon the minds of our educated young men, whenever they seriously think of driving the plough with their own hands, or of superintending





the cultivation of their lands. We firmly believe that if the condition of the ryots were like that of the peasant proprietors of Europe, they would little care for a clerkship of fifteen or twenty rupees per mensem, and would gladly cultivate lands for gaining a decent livelihood; and what is far more important, agriculture would improve. The noble efforts of our Government to educate the mass of people will never be attended with complete success, unless their condition is first improved. They do not send their sons to schools, not that they are unwilling to give them proper education, but that they cannot afford to pay for it. In their present miserable circumstances, they would gladly prefer the little assistance rendered them by their little children, however detrimental it may be to their future prospects, to sending them to patshalas or schools. For present want knows no futurity. Therefore if our rulers are really anxious for the prosperity of the country—for bettering the condition of the people, giving them good education, and removing the growing discontent of thousands of educated young men, who come out yearly from our schools and colleges—let them reduce the land-tax by rooting out the zemindari system, the greatest obstacle, that stands in its way. All other measures will prove abortive. In support of the remarks we have made, we quote the following lines from the *Administration Report of Bengal, 1876-77*, p. 340 :—

“In the whole number of schools aided from the primary fund, there are above 338,000 pupils, of whom it is estimated that two-thirds or 225,000 are in the lowest stage of instruction; 110,000 are able to read, write, and understand, easy sentences out of a book, while at least 3,000 have reached a higher stage than this.

In the indigenous schools existing all over the country, upon which the system introduced in 1872 by Sir George Campbell was founded, instruction of an almost fixed and constant type had for generations been imparted. It was not a liberal, but a special and technical education: indeed it was not education at all in the proper sense of the word, but rather instruction in some of the most necessary arts of life.”





*The Ryots are Unable to Protect Their Rights Through The Courts of Justice.*

There are several causes of the inability of the ryot to protect his rights through the Courts of Justice. The first cause is his ignorance, the second his poverty, the third the great distance of the Courts of Justice from his house, the fourth the delay of decision, the fifth the very great difficulty of getting witnesses, and the sixth and last the terrible vengeance of his zemindar. Here it ought to be remarked, that the Courts of Justice are nothing but a plaything in the hands of the rich. The zemindar and his agents are thoroughly acquainted with their ins and outs. Besides he has his muktyar and pleader in the Court to plead his cause, while the poor ryot has neither the knowledge of it, nor the means to advocate his cause. First of all, he must have to pay for a stamp paper; then he will have to pay to get his petition written out. The power of the zemindar in the mofussil being omnipotent, there must be not only very great difficulty in inducing witnesses to give evidence, but also he will have to pay them at least double the usual fee. As he gains his livelihood solely from the cultivation of his land, so he cannot spend several weeks or months, which must elapse before the decision of a case, in attending the Court, without doing great injury to his crops. He will have to defray the lodging expenses not only of himself, but also of his witnesses in addition to their fee. Moreover he cannot expect success without bribing the Amlahs of the Court. In this way the expenses of a lawsuit, the loss of time, and the troubles and anxieties consequent thereon, are too great to be borne by a poor and simple ryot. And for all this he is not at all sure, that he will gain the case. Suppose that 'by some extraordinary chance' he gains it. But what will be its consequence? He will be marked out by his zemindar as a victim of his terrible vengeance, which is sure to be wreaked on him on the very first opportunity. During the absence from his house, his rice is almost sure to be cut, his cattle driven, or his house plundered. As if these are not sufficient to allay his passion, civil and criminal suits, which had existence nowhere except in the fertile brains and forged documents of his zemindar





and his agents, will be heaped upon him, till the poor fellow is forced to leave the village as a consequence of his rashness in contesting the demands of his master. Or if he dares not punish him in this way, the latitude of appeal allowed by the Civil Code is resorted to by him as a legal means for making him feel the consequences of incurring his displeasure, till the poor fellow, reduced to beggary by the expenses of litigation, is forced of his own accord to do whatever his master bids him. The ryots know very well, that such is the consequence of contesting the claims of the zemindar however sweeping they are. The only case to which they are very unwilling to submit, and which they resist at least in fifty cases out of every hundred, but very often without success, is the wholesale raising of rents (we lay stress upon the word *wholesale*). In remaining fifty, the very name of the zemindar often frightens them to submission. In other comparatively trifling matters, in nine hundred ninety-nine cases out of every thousand, they meekly submit to his demands without questioning their legality or otherwise. In support of our remarks, we quote the following passages:—

“If the rights and interests of the agriculturists had been previously ascertained, and means taken for their maintenance by a summary enforcement of penalty at the instance of a public prosecutor, the practical adoption of the principle of limiting the demands of the State would have realized many of the advantages held out by the theory. But it is easy to legislate in the closet; and in the formation of the Revenue Code, the adoption of the principles of English Common Law interposed an almost insuperable barrier to the participation by the ryots of any of the benefits, which it was undoubtedly the intention of the legislator to extend to them, by leaving them to seek redress by a civil action for any injuries or infractions of the Regulations, or for encroachments on their vested rights and ancient privileges, which they might experience at the hands of newly created aristocracy. The prosecution of a suit at law involves expenditure of money and time, neither of which could well be spared by the agriculturists, while the latitude of appeal allowed by the Civil Code enabled





the richer party to protract the ultimate decision of the case to an unlimited period:—in fact, to refer the cultivators to the Courts at law for a remedy against the zemindar was tantamount to a denial of justice." *A Memoir on the Land Tenure and Principles of Taxation*, p. 93.

"It is vain to say," observe the Court of Directors, "that the ryots are protected against harassing and vexatious proceedings by the Courts of Justice, for the loss of time, the expense incident to a legal process, and delay of decision, will, in nine instances out of ten, prevent the ryots from appealing to the Courts." *Revenue Selections*, vol. I, p. 638, quoted in *An Inquiry into the Alleged Proneness to Litigation of the Natives of India*, p. 22.

"On opening the Courts under the new judicial system, complaints without end, were preferred, and many thousands redressed, and, I suppose, many hundred thousands unredressed." *Sir H. Strachey. Ibid.*, p. 23.

"With regard to the effects of increasing the institution fee and other law charges, it seems highly probable that, if litigious suits have been somewhat checked, a greater number of just complaints have been kept from the inability of some of the lower classes of the people to defray those charges, without greater sacrifices than they have found it worth their while to make." *T. H. Ernst, Esq. Ibid.*, p. 29.

"I think the expenses of prosecuting ought to be diminished, and the number of efficient tribunals ought to be increased." *Sir H. Strachey. Ibid.*, p. 55.

"Regarding the expense of suitors, I am of opinion, that it should be reduced. To restrain litigation by imposing expense is in fact to encourage injustice and oppression by rendering redress inaccessible. The law charges are felt with peculiar severity by the ryots and other poorer classes of the community." *J. D. Erskine. Ibid.*, p. 89.

"Some of the Judges, in their answers to Lord Wellesley's queries, have stated, that the process of the Courts is not too expensive; but what they call trifling costs is not trifling to the





native. The average of the rent paid to Government by the whole body of the ryots does not amount to five pounds sterling for each individual. If we say that the rent is only one-third of the produce, his income cannot exceed ten pounds. It is easy to conceive how heavy the costs and delays of laws must press on such men. When a ryot has a suit, he sets out taking with him the few rupees he has in ready money. They are probably exhausted in charges to the Vakeels and Officers of the Court before his trial comes on; he is ashamed to plead poverty, and he returns home ruined as a farmer." *Colonel Munro. Ibid., p. 119.*

"Our judicial system has failed in the most important object of all law, the securing the great body of the people from oppression. It may truly be said, by the heavy expense attending it, to put them legally out of the protection of the law. The great mass of the ryots, who are the people most exposed to wrong, must suffer in silence, because they cannot afford to complain. Under every Native Government, though occasionally subject to the most tyrannical exactions, they could in general obtain redress free of expense; it is only under a new Judicial Code framed expressly for their benefit, that they are utterly excluded from justice." *Ibid.*

"I conceive that the Government did not place sufficient confidence and authority in their judicial servants. The Regulations are too full of distrust with a desire to guard against what are called erroneous decisions. The gradations of Courts of Appeal, and the openings for reference to higher authorities, tend to clog the administration of justice." *G. Reid Esq. Ibid., p. 122.*

"And when the multiplicity of the forms and processes of those Courts, the expensive barrier of fees, stamp duties, and other charges, through which justice is to be approached, as well as the fact, that the complaints of the great body of people are under ten pagodas value (many hundreds of them not half so much) are also considered, it is not surprising that, being unable to spare the time and money necessary to encounter those barriers, the natives should complain, as they do, that they have only a mere semblance of justice."





To render justice as speedy and easily accessible as possible to these people, is equally essential to the security and permanency of the public revenue; for almost every individual contributes to it directly, more or less; and in proportion as they are unprotected in their little rights and privileges, so will the finances of the State fall short, and the realization of even a diminished revenue be precarious. It should never be forgotten, likewise, that while at least 50 per cent. of the gross produce of land is taken as the customary tax of Government, it is the more incumbent on the State to secure the remaining fifty to the people, which, God knows, is little enough, if enough, even in a country where wants are so few and so cheap, to provide for the common maintenance of a large family, which most have, and to meet the expenses of agriculture." *J. G. Ravenshaw, Esq. Ibid., p. 132.*

The Committee of the House of Commons observe: "We are certainly most desirous not only to see the ryots duly protected in their rights, but also to see them thrive and prosper, for upon this more than anything else depends the welfare and improvement of the country.

It is well-known (and even if it were questionable, the practices which have more lately fallen under our dominion, would set the doubt at rest) that the cultivating zemindars were, by a custom more ancient than all law, entitled to a certain share of the produce of lands, and that the rest, whether collected by pergunnah zemindars, or by the Officers of Government, was collected as the *huk* of the Sircar. This indefeasible right of the cultivating proprietors to a fixed share of the produce was annihilated by our directing, that pottahs should be executed for a money payment, in which all the claims of the zemindars should be consolidated. The under-proprietor was thus left to the mercy of the zemindar, to whose demands there were no prescribed limits. The zemindar offered a pottah on his own terms (*vide* Report of the Acting Judge of Burdwan). If the under-proprietor refused it, he was ejected, and the Courts supported the ejection. If the under-proprietor conceived that he could contest at law the procedure, a regular suit, under all the disadvan-





tages to which he is known to be exposed, was his only resource; but when after years of anxiety and of expense, the case was at last brought to a hearing, he lost his case, it was proved, that the pottah was offered and refused, and there was no criterion to which he could refer as a means of proving, that the rate was exorbitant." *Appendix to Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons, Revenue*, p. 130.

"It is well-known, that the great body of the ryots will submit to extra assessments as long as they can pay them, rather than seek redress from the Courts. There cannot be a stronger proof in support of this observation than the occurrences in Coimbatore for some years past; where though at least 80,000 ryots have paid extra assessments, and numbers have been compelled to part with their sheep and cattle without compensation, very few of all this number, probably not twenty, have ever sought redress from the Zillah Court, though the Judge is acknowledged to be a most active and zealous public servant. It is, therefore, impossible to resist the conclusion, that our institutions are inefficient, and that the same abuses, to a great or less extent, must prevail in every province under the Government." *Sir Thomas Munro. Ibid.*, p. 589.

"Do you think, that a ryot can contend fairly with a planter," we may add, or with a zemindar, "for his just rights in the Fouzdery Court or in any other Court?—Never, never; it is a hopeless case, because the planter or the zemindar has his Muktyar in the Court. The ryot has not the means of employing a Muktyar to plead his cause. At the same time, it must be remembered, how difficult it is for a ryot to bring any case into Court. He has first of all to pay for a stamp paper, then to get the petition written out, for which he has to pay; he has, besides, to deposit six or seven rupees for the witnesses, and if he does not bribe all the Amlahs in the Court over to his side, there is no chance of his obtaining satisfaction. But suppose that by some extraordinary chance he gains the case, the man is marked, and cannot live any longer in the village, because he will be persecuted by the planter or the zemindar."





"As an instance of this, I would mention what a Magistrate of Krishnagur, who had been full three years full Magistrate there, mentioned to me one day, saying that he could look back with satisfaction to only one case which he decided, when he was an Assistant Magistrate. He went to the spot where an outrage had been committed, and having fully satisfied himself of the merits of the case, he gave his decision, which was afterwards appealed to the Judge, and the Judge reversed the order. At last an appeal was made to the Sudder Court, and then the Magistrate's order was upheld, simply because he had been to the spot, and satisfied himself about the case there." *Rev. C. H. Blumhardt. The Indigo Commission Report, 1860, p.p. 121-22.*

The gentleman had an experience of twenty-one years in the Mofussil.

"The zemindars and their agents own such a formidable armory of weapons for the oppression and harassment of ryots in so many ways, that it would be simple infatuation in a poor ryot of a peaceable disposition to incur the risk of his zemindar's anger, even for the certainty of exemption from the payment of any illegal cess or cesses." *The Indian Mirror, October 23, 1875.*

"A very intelligent Officer of Government, Mr. E. A. Samuells, in giving his opinion on the Bill (which was introduced by Mr. Currie in 1857, and passed into Act X. of 1859) remarked: 'We have had abundant experience of the provision, which enables the ryot to sue his zemindar for a pottah; and we know that the privilege is nearly valueless. Men who are powerful enough to sue their zemindar for pottahs, are not the people for whose protection this Bill is intended to provide. The want of a pottah is an uncertain evil. To incur the enmity of a zemindar is a positive one. *Ninety-nine ryots out of one hundred will choose the lesser evil of the two.* Besides why encourage litigation? You think it is right, that there should be an interchange of Pottahs and Kabuleuts. Then why not take the simplest and most obvious method of securing the object by refusing to entertain any suit not founded on a Kabuleut, or in which the





absence of the Kabuleut cannot be satisfactorily accounted for.”  
*Babu Sunjeeb Chunder Chatterjee's Bengal Ryots.*

*The Ryots are Mere Tenants-at-will.*

We have proved, perhaps, to the satisfaction of our readers, that the ryots are unable to protect their rights through the Courts of Justice. Consequently they are, as a matter of necessity, forced of their own accord to submit to the demands of their masters. And if they think them beyond their means, the only course left to them is to quietly leave their dear homes only to be sold by the zemindars to glut their cupidity. We have nothing more to say on this subject, but to quote the following passages in support of our views.

“The report made on the subject in 1814 by Mr. Cornish, the 4th Judge of the Court of Circuit, is very relevant and pertinent. He declares:—‘The assertion may appear extraordinary, but it is nevertheless certain, that the rights of the ryots remain to this day unexplained and undefended. It is true, that there is something like a provision for preventing the rents of the lands of the Khudkasht ryots from being raised, unless the zemindar can prove, that they have paid less for them for the last three years, than the *nerik* of the *pergunnahs*. But what is this *nerik*, or how to be ascertained? It is a mere name and of no kind of use in securing the rights of the ryots. The *Paikasht* ryots are altogether left to mercy of the zemindars. Was this intended? If so, what can possibly be the objection to its being declared by a Regulation, that the ryot is a mere cultivator and tenant-at-will, and that, if he refuse to take a *pottah*, he may be ousted by summary process; and that further, on the expiration of his engagement, the zemindar may demand whatever rent he thinks proper to ask.’”  
*The Calcutta Review*, vol. VI. Art. *The Zemindar and the Ryot.*

Mr. Mill in his evidence before the Select Committee of 1830 said: “The ryots are mere tenants-at-will of the zemindars in the permanently settled provinces.” Quoted in *Ibid.*

“The usual opinion is that I last stated, that the ryot is the mere tenant of the zemindar, and he may do as he pleases.”





*John Sullivan, Esq. Answer to Question 101. Minutes of Evidence, Revenue, Commons, 1832.*

"They (ryots) have, in a great measure, become tenants-at-will." *Hugh Stark, Esq. Ibid. 436. Ibid.*

"I think they (ryots) may be considered, practically, almost as tenants-at-will."

"The zemindar frequently exercises an influence over his ryots; and sometimes an European, like any other man, probably has a ryot in his debt, and he teases and threatens to prosecute him, and thereby endeavours to force his cultivation in the way he desires." *R. Davidson, Esq. Ibid. 3788 and 3835. The Select Committee of the House of Lords, 1830.*

"Dacca. The husbandmen seldom change their holdings, and the same land generally descends from father to son; so that most of the cultivators may be said to have a sort of right of occupancy, although when a dispute occurs with the superior landlord, the cultivator generally loses the case. The number of husbandmen who are acknowledged to hold their lands with a right of occupancy, and as such registered in the Courts, is only 214. The cultivators of the *chur* or alluvial lands have no right of occupancy, as they frequently change their place of abode. None of the husbandmen have been acknowledged as possessing a right to hold their lands in perpetuity without enhancement of rent.... They, as a rule, are in debt." *Dr. Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal, vol. V., p.p. 92-3.*

"Sunderbuns. Very few of the husbandmen hold their lands on a permanent tenure, or without being liable to enhancement of rent. No class of small proprietors is found in the Sunderbuns, who own, occupy, and cultivate, hereditary lands, without either a zemindar or superior landholder above them, or a sub-holder or *krishan* or day-labourer under them." *Ibid., vol. I., p. 337.*

"Midnapur. Very few husbandmen, however, hold their lands free of liability to enhancement of rent." *Ibid., vol. III., p. 83.*

"Hughli. The Collector is of opinion, that about four per cent. of the cultivators in Hughli district hold their lands in perpetuity, and without liability to enhancement of rent." *Ibid., p. 342.*





"Bancura. The peasantry are almost invariably in debt. Very few cases occur of small proprietors, who own, occupy, and cultivate, their hereditary lands without either a superior landlord above, or a sub-tenant or labourer below, them. Up to 1871 only 38 husbandmen have been acknowledged by the Courts as entitled to hold their lands in perpetuity without liability to enhancement of rent." *Ibid.*, vol. IV., p. 248.

"The object of the zemindar is frequently to collect as much as he can."

"Practically are the ryots in Bengal tenants-at-will? No doubt, they are practically." *F. L. Beaufort, Esq. Answers to Questions 191 and 231. The Indigo Commission Report, 1860.*

#### *Security of Property.*

"Security of property is the first and most indispensable requisite to the production of wealth. Its utility in this respect is, indeed, so obvious and striking, that it has been more or less respected in every country, and in the earliest and rudest periods of society. All have been impressed with the reasonableness of the maxim, which teaches that those who sow ought to be permitted to reap—that the labour of a man's body and the work of his hands are to be considered as exclusively his own. No savage horde has ever been discovered, in which the principle of *meum* and *tuum* are not recognized. Nothing, it is plain, could ever tempt any one to engage in any laborious engagement—he would neither domesticate wild animals, nor clear and cultivate the ground, if, after months and years of toil, when his flocks have become numerous, and his harvest were ripening for the sickle, a stranger were to be allowed to rob him of the produce of his industry. No wonder, therefore, that the utility of some general regulations, which should secure to every individual the peaceable enjoyment of the produce he had raised, and of the ground he had cultivated and improved, suggested itself to the first legislators. The author of the book of Job places those, who removed their neighbour's landmarks, at the head of his list of wicked men: and some of the earliest profane legislators subjected those, who were guilty of





this offence, to a capital punishment." *McCulloch's Principles of Political Economy*, p. 74.

"The finest soil, the finest climate, and the finest intellectual powers, can prevent no people from becoming barbarous, poor, and miserable, if they have the misfortune to be subjected to a Government, which does not respect and maintain the right of property. This is the greatest of all calamities. The ravages of civil war, of pestilence, and of famine, may be repaired; but nothing can enable a nation to contend against the deadly influence of an established system of violence and rapine." *Ibid.*, p.p. 77-8.

"It is the security of property," to use the just and forcible expressions of an able writer (Bentham), "that has overcome the natural aversion of man from labour, that has given him the empire of the earth, that has given him a fixed and permanent residence, that has implanted in his breast the love of his country and of posterity. To enjoy immediately—to enjoy without labour is the natural inclination of every man. This inclination must be restrained; for its obvious tendency is to arm all those who have nothing against those who have something. The law which restrains this inclination, and which secures to the humblest individual the quiet enjoyment of the fruits of his industry, is the most splendid achievement of legislative wisdom—the noblest triumph of which humanity has to boast." *Ibid.*, p. 84.

"Security of property, freedom of industry, diffusion of sound information, and moderation in the public expenditure, are the only, as they are the certain, means by which the various powers and resources of human talent and ingenuity can be called into action, and society made continually to advance in the career of wealth and civilization. Every increase of security, freedom, and intelligence, is a benefit, as every diminution, whether of one or the other, is an evil. It is by the spontaneous and unconstrained, but well protected efforts of individuals to improve their condition, and to rise in the world, and by these efforts only, that nations become rich and powerful. The labour and the savings of individuals are at once the source and the measure of national





opulence and public prosperity. They may be compared to the drops of dew, which invigorate and mature all vegetable nature. None of them has singly any perceptible influence; but we owe the foliage of summer and the fruits of autumn to their combined action." *Ibid.*, p. 418.

"Among the secondary causes, which determine the productiveness of productive agents, the most important is security. By security I mean the completeness of the protection, which it affords to its members. This consists of protection by the Government and the protection against the Government. The latter is the most important. Where a person known to possess anything worth taking away, can expect nothing but to have it torn from him with every circumstance of every tyrannical violence by the agents of a rapacious Government, it is not likely, that many will exert themselves for much more than necessities. This is the acknowledged explanation of the poverty of many fertile tracts of Asia, which were once prosperous and populous. From this to the degree of security enjoyed in the best governed parts of Europe, there are numerous gradations." *Mill's Political Economy*, vol. I., p.p. 137-38.

It would appear on perusal of the foregoing extracts, that security of property is not only the foundation of society, but also the source of all prosperity of a country. It excites all men of all professions to make utmost endeavours for improving their own circumstances. It excites the cultivator to cultivate his lands in the best way within his means, because he knows full well, that he alone will enjoy the fruits of his own labour. It excites the merchant to defy the huge waves of the ocean, because he is sure, that the profits from the sale of his commodities will go to his own pocket. The lawyer tries his best to bid down the brethren of his profession being fully assured, that there is no body else to share in his fees. In this way security of property excites every man to make utmost endeavours for bettering his own condition. But it will be our painful duty to prove hereafter, that this security of property the Bengal ryot has not,





and that as a consequence thereof, he has reached the utmost limit of his poverty and wretchedness.

"Has not the East India Company made repeated and anxious exertions to improve the state of the ryots? The Governments of India have been most anxious upon that subject, as well as the Court of Directors in this country. The orders of the Court of Directors abound with able and humane instructions to their Government abroad for a just administration of their territories committed to their charge. Many of these very able letters are now in print, and do great credit to the Directors of the East India Company. I particularly refer in this place to those which treat of 'Protection to the Ryots.' But the circumstances which I have mentioned—the oppressive nature of the land tax—the numerous host of subordinate public servants necessarily employed to realize and collect it—the total impossibility of controlling those servants by the authority of the European Collector, and the exactions and fraudulent impositions and oppressions committed by those persons on the ryots, have hitherto presented an insuperable bar to the benevolent wishes of the Court of Directors and the local authorities in that country being carried into effect." *R. Richards, Esq. Answer to Question 3961. Minutes of Evidence. The Select Committee of the House of Lords, 1830.*

"I consider myself the security of the ryot to be indispensable to the general prosperity of the country." *Henry Newnham, Esq. Answer to Question 2738. Minutes of Evidence, Commons, 1832.*

"I should say decidedly, that the hand of Government must be active in the protection of the cultivating classes, arguing from the mode of Government of the Mussulmans, and that at one time was very effectual." *Ibid. Ibid. 2776. Ibid.*

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#### *The Police.*

The duty of protecting the persons and the property of the people devolves upon the Police. The organization of this department has no other object in view than that of detecting and





punishing the bad characters, and thereby securing the persons and the property of the people from the violence with which they are always liable to be threatened. But that it has lamentably failed in fulfilling the objects for which it was organized, is a notorious fact. It exercises its authority for the sole object of making the best use of it in filling its pockets. Almost all the subordinate officers from the Darogah down to the lowest village Chowkeedar, who really come in contact with the people, are nothing but an instrument of oppression in the hands of those who pay them best. Their education and moral training as well as salaries are not good enough to enable them to look with contempt upon the bribes, which they can easily extort, and which are not unoften thrust upon them by the persons, who feel it their interest to do so, while the overwhelming power of the zemindar in the mofussil often frightens them to do whatever they are commanded. They think, and perhaps rightly too, that it is impossible to exercise their authority to their best advantage without the co-operation of the zemindar and his agents. Indeed most of them, especially the Chowkeedars, are looked upon by the people as their slaves. The latter are so completely at their mercy, that they never dare report a single case without first consulting them; and they shape their course as best suits their interests. The visit of a Darogah on an investigation into a case of theft is really considered by them as a greater calamity than the visit of a thief; so by far the greater number of crimes remains unreported. We can positively state from our own personal knowledge, that almost all criminal cases, except those of murder, death by drowning or snake-bite, dacoity, and others of a serious nature, are hushed up; the zemindar, his agents, headmen, Faridar, and the Chowkeedar, all extort bribes from the persons guilty or supposed to be guilty of them, and divide them among themselves according to their respective ranks in society, the zemindar always getting the lion's share. We shall try our best to give in proper place minute details of a few cases, as we have got them from their very victims. So the failure of Police may safely be laid at the door of the zemindars. With these remarks we leave





it to our readers to judge of the security of property from the following extracts, which will throw much light upon the subject.

The Mofussil Police. Babu Dwarka Nath Tagore called in and examined by the Police Committee.

"Have you ever resided in the Mofussil? Yes, in various places, such as, Commerecolly, Pubna, Rampur, Bauleah, Dacca, and other districts.

You have had then many opportunities of observing the condition of the Police—state what do you think of it?—I think that from the Darogah to the lowest peon, the whole of them are a corrupt set of people—a single case could not be got out of their hands without paying money—the wealthy always get advantage over the poor. In quarrels between zemindars and indigo-planters, large sums are expended to bribe these people—when any report is called for by the Magistrate from the Darogahs, even in a true case, that report could not be obtained without paying a large sum of money, and should the case be between two rich parties, the richest or he who pays the highest, would get the report in his favour. If a Jemadar or peon is sent to a village for an enquiry, there is immediately a tax levied by them on all the ryots of the village through the Gomastah of the zemindar, and this mode of extortion has so long prevailed, as almost to give it the character of a just demand:—so much so that not a single ryot will ever make an objection to pay it. Indeed they look upon it as an authorized tax. If a dacoity takes place in any neighbourhood, the Darogah and all his people will go about the villages, and indiscriminately seize the inhabitants, innocent and the culpable, and it often happens, that persons so taken, although of the most suspicious character in the particular transaction, are released on some money inducement being given to the officers. Besides the levy of the tax above mentioned, formerly in every petty theft the same process was observed, but since (by Regulation II. of 1832) that local enquiry is done away with, their perquisites are a little reduced in that quarter. In short, nothing can be done without





paying for it whenever they are called upon to interfere." Quoted in the *Friend of India*, April 26, 1838.

"It is the true estimate and instinct of this calamity by the people, that enables such incredible sums to be raised by the villainous native agents in charge of the different Police stations within a district. The slightest threat by these ruffians of sending in a man to the Magistrate will not unfrequently induce him to sell all he is worth, and even to borrow at 75 per cent. to raise money to bribe himself off. The following descriptive passage, which appeared in the *Friend of India*, shows the manner in which evidence is collected:—'As soon as any heavy crimes have been reported, the Darogah repairs to the spot, and his advent is as if the regent of death had come up from his own place in search of his victims. The Darogah makes the most careful enquiry into the matter of the burglary, or assault, or robbery, or murder; and having also ascertained who are possessed of money in the village, declares, that the matter must go up to the presence (*huzoor*) thirty, fifty, seventy miles off, and that the most substantial house-holders must go with it as witnesses. Then commences the bargaining. Every man, who can satisfy him—in native phrase—who can make his 'wry mouth straight' is let off, and when the field has been sufficiently reaped, a report is made of the inquest, and some of the poorest wretches are sent up, as accomplices or witnesses, to vindicate the Darogah's public spirit. That which robbers have spared, the Darogah gleans. Hence there are few objects more dreaded than a visit from this personage; and the inhabitants of the village exercise all their ingenuity to protect themselves from such a visitation. Examine his situation if he refuses—he is subjected to every indignity in the first place, to which caste, custom, and social prejudices, can render him vulnerable. Time and space would fail, were we to enumerate half the horrors to which the atrocious and unchecked cruelties of the native Police subject the population. But laying all these aside, the victim is threatened with the destruction of his crops and a thousand losses, which nothing but personal superintendence at his home can avert. He has to travel in, under





charge of a Police myrmidon, who, unless he is paid, will not allow him to perform the necessities of nature. The distance from his home may be sixty or seventy miles, which he must travel at his own expense, plundered, as he proceeds, by the Policeman in charge—arrived at the Magistrate's station, days and weeks may elapse before his case be brought up for hearing. Before even this first stage in his case's progress, he has either been plundered by the native Officers of the Magistrate's Court, or else subjected to every hardship and indignity, which secret cruelty, impossible to prove, legally can inflict. As a class, the Police agents are infamous for every crime. And it is from these agents alone, that nine-tenths of the evidence is derived.

Fearlessly and honestly analyzed, it will be found, that in no civilized country of the earth, or dependency of any such country, does there exist a spirit of such utter disregard to the rights and happiness of such stupendous masses of our fellow-men, as that which marks the principles and process of the present Government of India. Exposure of evil is the prevailing terror of the Anglo-Indian Government—if by such name the crazy mass of delusions can be called, over which an inexperienced Governor and his secret Council preside, under circumstances subversive of all means of which Government, properly so called, is the end." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. I., p.p. 197-203.

"As regards the alleged inefficiency and corruption of the native Police, we will make some extracts from the Police Report in order as we find them; and the first we have marked relates to the district of Shahabad. It is a mere ordinary case of corrupt concealment of crime by native Police Officials; such cases are plenty as blackberries. The Superintendent of Police says:—"I do not think the returns satisfactory, as regards the murders the Police seem to have failed in very many cases in tracing out the perpetrators of the crime where they might, I think, with care and vigilance, have succeeded, and, in one instance, the accused parties escaped solely owing to the corrupt misconduct of a Jemadar acting directly under the orders of the Magistrate who





reported, that the girl murdered had fallen into a well, when subsequent examination proved, that she had been strangled."

Next we have from Tirhut another foul case of corruption—a number of Police Burkundazes clearly proved, in a case of inhuman murder, to have been accessories after the fact. The Superintendent sets down, in general terms, bringing forward this particular case in illustration, that for a small sum of money, the subordinate Officers of Police will actively engage in the work of concealing the most horrible crimes:—"In the murders 9 persons were said to have been concerned, and seven were arrested—in one case the party had been convicted by the Nizamut Adalat, two were awaiting their trial before the Sessions Court, and the investigations as respected four were yet pending before the Magistrate. The Sessions Judge had since referred the proceedings regarding the two committed to the Superior Court for sentence, and the four, who were before the Magistrate, have been released from the want of evidence, the failure to convict them having been entirely owing to the misconduct of three Police Burkundazes, who were charged as accessories after the fact. Suspicion of some foul play fell on the defendants in consequence of their having, without any reason, filled up a well, which they had just dug for the irrigation of their fields, and the Police Officers were sent with orders to dig out the well, which they reported as giving no cause for suspicion. The Moherer, however, having gone on the same day to a village near, learnt that a woman, who appearing to be travelling, had stopped for the night at the prisoners' cattle shed, and that they had murdered her for the sake of her ornaments and thrown the corpse into a well, which they had then filled up. He immediately proceeded to the spot, and had the well dug out to the bottom. The effluvia left no doubt as to the corpse having been deposited there, and a quantity of long hair was also found, but the body had been removed, and no trace of it could be discovered, nor could all the subsequent endeavours of the Magistrate procure any clue to the identity of the woman. I have mentioned this to show how the subordinate Officers of the Police, being without proper control,