



will, in the most serious cases, allow their duty to be set aside for a small sum of money.

The following extract, though at first sight it may appear to contain no very great atrocity, is worthy to be pondered on, as illustrative of the enormous power of the Police, and the awe with which they are regarded by the villagers. There is nothing, which a Police Official may not wring from these unhappy industrial classes. The abject peasant knows well enough that to resist the tyranny and extortion of the Police in these little matters, is to bring upon himself tyranny and extortion far more difficult to endure. It is better to pay a small tribute of fish or other petty commodity than to be dragged before the Magistrate as a witness, or peradventure, as a criminal, in a case of which he knows nothing:—
'One Moherer had been dismissed for demanding from a vendor of fish a considerable quantity of fish without payment. This practice of levying contribution from all vendors of food, who may have occasion to expose their commodities for sale, or to pass near to the Thanahs, is very prevalent, and this was accidentally brought to notice from the fisherman having got drunk and abused the Moherer publicly. Rewards had been bestowed on one Thanadar and three Burkundazes for activity in particular cases.'

The payment of small tribute to Police Officers is found ever to be the safest plan. See what the result of refusal may be. A murder is committed, the real offender is, perhaps, well-known; but he has murdered to some purpose, and out of the proceeds of the spoil, he can afford to pay his hushmoney down. The offence must be charged upon somebody, and evidence must be got up. There are, doubtless, some obnoxious parties at hand—some who, peradventure, have resisted the extortionate demands of these Police harpies, on whom to charge the offence, and from whom to extort evidence. The thing is as easy as lying; an unfortunate budlee is marked out to expiate the offences of a real offender, who, in the meantime, is quietly making himself scarce, or perhaps actually sheltered beneath the protective wings of the Police. We have now before us a letter from an intelligent and zealous Magistrate, one of the few really honest



men engaged in this disheartening work of counteracting, as far as in them lies, the atrocious rascality of the native Police, in which the writer says:—‘I have reported my jail as being full of budlees; and I believe, that every jail in the country is alike.’

But anonymous testimony it is no part of our intention to give; else might we produce a mass of it—anonymous testimony, we mean, as far as the public is concerned; for in our repositories this evidence bears names, which, were we at liberty to use them, would carry as much weight of officiality, even as that of the doughty ‘Superintendent’ himself. Yet what need to resort to any evidence, which unbelieving men might question, when we have published official documents before us.

Let this case, briefly recorded, under the head of Rajshahi, be pondered on:—‘Two Darogahs and one Moherer had been dismissed by my orders in cases, which occurred during the previous six months, one for extorting confessions in a case of murder implicating an innocent person, another for falsifying a report in a case of dacoity, and the third for neglecting to investigate a charge of murder.’

With one more case from the report of the Superintendent, we must close our string of official evidence against the Police. The case is one of unexampled monstrosity notorious enough in Bengal, but of so convincing a character, that we desire it should be read in all parts of the world. The horrid event occurred in the Murshedabad district, and is thus officially narrated by the Superintendent of Police. Comment need it none from us:—‘One of the cases here entered is that dreadful case of torture by——, Darogah, and others, the Police Officers of Thanah——, to extort a confession from one—— of a dacoity, which had never been committed, in which from the consequences of the horrid treatment, which he received and the subsequent detention at the Thanah to evade detection, the toes and fingers of the poor victim rotted off, and he is left a cripple and a pensioner on the bounty of Government for life. The fingers and toes of the man were first tied together, and wedges being



driven between them to the greatest extent of tension, he was laid out on his back in the sun; this not producing the desired effect, his hands and feet were dipped into boiling water, the ligatures were unloosed and bandages dipped in oil tied round the fingers of both hands and the toes of the left foot; and this not forcing him to confess, he was, as if to prevent any hope of his recovery, detained several days at the Thanah, without any remedies being applied, and when brought in by the orders of the Magistrate to whose knowledge the case had been brought, his hands and feet were in a state of mortification, and ultimately his fingers and toes rotted off.

This is, perhaps, an extreme case of torture, and I am happy to say, that all the Police Officers, though not the others concerned, have been severely punished; but acts of torture by *Bansdollah* and other brutal and indecent means are of frequent, too frequent, occurrence by the Police; and what can be said of that system of total want of check and control, which could admit of a Darogah with the other Police Officers adopting such measures towards a party falsely charged to his knowledge of being engaged in a daccity with any hope of non-detection and escape? Before the poor victim was sent in, he was compelled to sign a paper stating that his hands and feet had been injured by severe binding without the knowledge of the Darogah." *Ibid.*, p.p. 209-11.

"Under its operation, however, the great majority of crimes against property remain unreported and uninvestigated, and our Police Returns afford no criterion of the actual amount of crime in the Lower Provinces...For activity and intelligence, they can scarcely be matched by any similar body of men in the world; it is in the quality of honesty, that they entirely fail. With very few exceptions, they are notoriously venal and utterly indifferent to the means by which their avarice is gratified. They are always understood to be at the command of the highest bidder. They would allow the most notorious offender to escape for a sufficient *douceur*. In local investigations they make their object is to discover not the real offenders, but the most substantial



men of the village or town, whom they fleece without mercy by the threat of sending them as witnesses to the Magistrate's Court, where they are likely to be detained without indemnification for a long and inconvenient period. The Darogahs are the great terror of the native community, who regard a visit from them with far more dread than a visit from the robber.

Besides the Regular Police establishment of Government, the strength of which, including Darogahs and their subordinates and the Constables, may be estimated at 8,200 men, there is a large body of village Chowkeedars, whose numbers have been estimated at one hundred and seventy thousand; and we cannot better describe their functions, their character, and their utility, than by quoting the strong, but perfectly sober and correct language of the Minute written by Mr. Halliday in 1838, and printed among the Police documents. "Theoretically, these Chowkeedars are appointed, paid, removed, and controlled by the village communities, subject at the same time to an incompatible control by the Government Police, and through them by the Magistrates. Practically, they are sometimes controlled by the Thanah Officers, oftener by the villages, frequently by neither. For all practical purposes of Police properly so called, they are absolutely useless. Here we have a force of about a hundred and seventy thousand men taken by a custom, which so long as the name of village Chowkeedar exists, will be immutable from the lowest and vilest and most despised classes; drawing annually from the people in legitimate ways, not to mention irregular modes of taxation, upwards of sixty lakhs of rupees; under no practical control but that of irresponsible and ignorant communities, of whom they are by turns the petty tyrants and the slaves, thieves by caste and habit and connections; totally disconnected from the general system of Police, unorganized, depraved, worse than useless." *Ibid*, vol. III., p.p. 183-89.

"It is from the Chowkeedars," says Lord Hastings "it is from the Chowkeedars that all information of the character of individuals, of the haunts and intentions of robbers, and of everything necessary to forward the objects of Police, must ordinarily



be obtained; they are the watch and patrol to which the community looks for its immediate protection, and on the occurrence of a crime, the Darogah's only mode of proceeding is to collect the watchmen of all neighbouring villages, and to question them as to all the circumstances, with a view to get from them that information which they only can afford. The village Chowkeedars are the foundation of all possible Police in this country, and upon their renovation, improvement, and stability, depends the ultimate success of all our measures for the benefit of the country in the prevention, detection, and punishment of crime." Quoted in *Ibid.*, vol. LVI, p.p. 94-95.

We now quote the following passages from the Reports of the District Magistrates:—

“Behar. The watch has been shamefully neglected, having almost fallen into disuse, though generally useful and good servants, when the means of maintenance in their own villages are confirmed to them.

Shahabad. They are most inefficient, nothing occurs in the village without their knowledge, but being the creatures of the headmen, reports are only made conformably to their wishes.

Saran. No department requires a more thorough reform, they are sadly neglected, seldom remunerated, and never incited to an useful degree of activity, unrewarded too for faithful service, they often league with the most notorious thieves and vagabonds, not unfrequently being themselves ring-leaders and participators in the crimes they are appointed to prevent.

Chumpana. They were in the worst possible state compelled for a livelihood to become thieves.

Bhaugulpur. The state of the village watch is by no means good, they are badly and irregularly paid.

Dinajpur. They are often thieves from necessity, and the good they do is very problematical.

Malda. The character and situation of the village watch is anomalous; they are inefficient, and are able to suppress many things in their reports to the Darogahs, which they turn to account, inadequately remunerated as they are.



Murshedabad. Inefficient.

Birbhum. The Chowkeedars are parties to almost every robbery that takes place.

Mymensingh. The state of the village watch is bad.

Dacca. All the honest men among them would gladly relinquish their employment.

Sylhet. The watch in Sylhet is very imperfect.

Noakolly. The present system is a total failure, there is hardly a theft committed, or a crime perpetrated, in which a Chowkeedar is not concerned, besides concealing crimes for a consideration to a large extent.

Nuddea. The Chowkeedars having to collect the sum allowed them, the full amount fixed is rarely obtained.

Midnapur. The watch is far from being on an efficient or sound footing.

From the Returns of District Magistrates, it appears that their nominal pay was and still is three rupees per mensem, but they can only realize from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 rupees per mensem." *The Criminal Statistics of Bengal, 1847.*

"That the Police in India has lamentably failed in accomplishing the ends for which it was established, is a notorious fact; that it is all but useless for the prevention, and sadly inefficient for the detection of crime, is generally admitted. Unable to check crime, it is with rare exceptions unscrupulous as to its mode of wielding the authority with which it is armed for the functions which it fails to fulfil, and has a very general character for corruption and oppression. There is, moreover, a want of general organization; the force attached to each division is too much localized and isolated, and the notion of combination between any separate parts of it, with a view of accomplishing the great objects of a body of Police, is seldom entertained.' This was the unfavourable verdict passed upon the old Police establishments of India by the Court of Directors in 1856. It is hardly less applicable to the present condition of this traditionally unsatisfactory department." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. LVI, p. 87.



“The corruption of the Police is often complained of, but few are aware of the extent to which it prevails in this country. Few have realized to themselves the astounding fact, that not one per cent. of the constables and head constables are above corruption, and that even among inspectors and sub-inspectors an honest man is an exception.” *Babu Romesh Chunder Dutt's Peasantry of Bengal.*

The Hindoo Patriot, January 14, 1878, in commenting upon the Bengal Police Report of 1876, says:—“Since the celebrated Police Minute of Sir Frederic Halliday, we have not had the good fortune of coming across any document of the Bengal Government, which tells the truth about the Police so frankly and uncompromisingly as the Resolution of Mr. (now Sir) Ashley Eden on the last Police Administration Report does. In noticing the Municipal Police the Lieutenant-Governor remarks that ‘no force can possibly be efficient if it be renewed every two or three years, and that there must be something radically wrong in the organization of a body, of which the members desert or resign in this wholesale manner.’ With regard to the Rural Police His Honor observes:—‘Only 182 village Policemen were rewarded during the year, while the number punished was very much greater. In the Burdwan district alone, as many as 950 were punished for various derelictions of duty. This is very unsatisfactory, and appears to point to the infliction of either capricious or petty and insufficient punishments. Mr. Eden fears that very many of the persons convicted were really innocent, and an examination of some cases, which have come before him, quite confirms him in the belief, that a vast amount of bitter wrong and oppression has been wrought upon the people.’”

“Mr. Eden finds in the bare figures of the present Report (Police Report of 1876) abundant proof, that a lamentable amount of suffering and wrong has been caused; and looking to the vast number of false cases of different kinds instituted all over Bengal, he is determined that this fearful engine of oppression shall not be left uncontrolled in the hands of the Police, but shall only be used under most effectual safeguards. Instances have repeatedly come to the notice of Government, in which cases have failed



through sheer force of dishonesty, where genuine evidence has been twisted and distorted, and the progress of the enquiry misrepresented, until the whole case for the prosecution has been discredited, and lamentable failures of justice have ensued. Numberless instances in which the subordinate Police over-reach themselves would probably never occur, if the investigating officer knew, that the prompt submission of his diary would be insisted upon, and that it would be carefully scrutinized by his superior." *The Bengal Police Report, 1876. The Government Resolution*, p.p. 11-13.

The Zemindari System, the True Cause of the Failure of Police.

"We at once see that the Police is inefficient to afford that protection to life and property, which the inhabitants of Bengal have a right to expect, and is incapable after the perpetration of crimes of collecting evidence sufficient to ensure the conviction of criminals...If a crime occur and the perpetrator be unknown, and the landholder have a quarrel against any one, the whole village is bent by promises or intimidation to bring the crime home to him. The zemindar, perhaps, himself gives notice of the crime at the Thanah, the superior Officers of the Police arrive, perjury and forgery are put in force by him, and the Police Officers being totally misled, innocently forward a report to the Magistrate in accordance with his wishes. If, on the other hand, the zemindar is baffled by the superior penetration of the Police, and his plot is discovered, or if before their arrival the delinquent is able to appease him, the engines of perjury and forgery are turned upon the Police, and they are sacrificed by some false but well authenticated story of oppression on their part in his stead. A crime has been reported, and a victim must be found. This is no overdrawn picture, but one of every day occurrence." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. III., p.p. 147-52.

"No one," says Colonel Pughe, "has so many means of hearing of the commission of a crime as a landholder, nor possesses more influence than he does as regards the persecution of crime and tracking of criminals." *Ibid.*, vol. LVI, p. 96.



We now quote the following passages from the Reports of the District Magistrates :—

Patna. The Mofussil Chowkeedars are represented as very inefficient, and little dependence can be placed on them, as they are at disposal of the highest bidder, besides which they are more looked upon as slaves of the zemindars than servants of the Police.

Burneah. The tax being collected by the Chowkeedars themselves, or by the munduls or putwarries, is a very bad system, as the Acting Magistrate fears, that the Chowkeedars thus seldom receive their pay, and are consequently driven to thieving, &c., for a livelihood. To the same source also is owing the undue influence of the zemindars and their people over the Chowkeedars.

Tirhut. The Chowkeedars are nominated by the zemindars at the rate of fifty houses to each Chowkeedar, a reform is urgently called for, as the present Chowkeedars are generally *dosads, dhunnacees*, and other low castemen, often themselves thieves.

Rajshahi. Very inefficient and scarcely worthy the name of a watch, most of them being employed all day by the zemindars, or in agricultural pursuits, are unable to perform their duty as watchmen at night, they are also entirely under the control of the zemindars, headmen of the village, &c., without whose sanction they do not report anything.

Pubna. There can be nothing more inefficient than the village watch ever since the abolition of corporal punishment. The Chowkeedars are believed to be concerned in almost all the heinous crimes which are perpetrated. The system is altogether a bad one; the honestest Chowkeedars are obliged for subsistence to weary themselves by labour in the field, and thus incapacitate themselves for their duty, whilst the less scrupulous league with robbers. They are moreover under the control of the zemindars; nothing can, however, be worse than it is at present.

Furreedpur. The village watch are in the last stage of inefficiency, but the greatest present evil is their dependence on the heads of villages and zemindars.

Backergunge. The state of the watch is unquestionably bad, and its improvement will be a work of time, yet without a com-



plete change in the nature of the watch, the Chowkeedars can never be an efficient body, they are at present the servants of the zemindars and talookdars by whom they are appointed, and the Magistrate has sometimes found the houses over which they watch scattered in different villages and a large extent of country, because the estates of the individuals who appointed them are so situated. They are the chief actors in affrays, and bring to light or conceal crimes according to the wish of their principals. They are often thieves, receivers of stolen property, or bought over to silence.

Tipperah. The village watch is efficient as it is possible to make it under present circumstances. They are under the control of the zemindars, and look to them in the first instance for orders.

Hughli. The Chowkeedar is generally the concealer or active instrument of crime at the dictate of the zemindar, whose rents he fatigues himself in collecting, rendering himself unfit for the duty of watching.

24 Pergunnahs. Very inefficient, but under an improved system, the Chowkeedars might afford a good material for forming an efficient arm of the Police. They are at present undoubtedly too much under the influence of the zemindar and his Amlah.

Jessore. Very inefficient, they do not always get paid, and consequently they neglect their duty, whilst from the zemindar they dare not report the commission of crimes.

After receiving the lands appropriated in olden times for support of the Chowkeedars, they (zemindars) have done nothing, as appears from the amended Code of Regulations approved by the Governor-General in Council on the 23rd November, 1791: Section 37. The Chakran lands, or lands held by public officers and private servants in lieu of wages, are also not meant to be included in the exception contained in the 23rd article. The whole of these lands in each province are to be annexed to the Malgazari lands, and declared responsible for the public revenue assessed on the zemindars and talooks in which they are included, in common with all other Malgazari lands therein; and consequently equally liable to the village allotment of the land tax directed in the 43rd article of these Regulations. And further from the Circular



Order of the Board of Revenue, dated 13th October 1790, declaring that 'it is not intended by this annexation to increase the public revenue,' the zemindars appear to have entirely neglected to fulfil the conditions of this annexation of the Chakran lands; and instead of supporting the village watch, or in any way contributing to their remuneration, for which they enjoy this equivalent, have thrown the whole cost and expense of maintaining them on the villagers themselves; and this depends not for proof on any speculative assertions, but is evident from the Reports of the Magistrates before quoted, by whom it is sanctioned and authorized; the condition which should make the support of this body claimable from the zemindar alone having been, for a series of years, entirely overlooked by the authorities, and thus made a source of oppression and extortion so dreaded by rulers of the last century, opened and sanctioned by this. But the error goes even yet further, and allows to the zemindars the employment of these very Chowkeedars as private servants in the collection of their rents as appears also by the Reports... This much is certain, that the zemindars although pledged to their (Chowkeedars') support, and receiving an allowance from Government in making settlements for that purpose, entirely neglect such provision, as far as they themselves are concerned, and while employing the Chowkeedars on their revenue collections and other private affairs, throw them entirely on the people for support; at the same time under the present system, the Magistrate seldom or never interests himself about their remuneration or organization in any way; often quietly acquiescing in their (as he believes) receiving less than two rupees a month, although he must be fully aware, that such a paltry stipend must be utterly unequal to the support of a man and his family, unless increased by illegal profit derivable from abuse of power, or from the fruits of positive crime." *The Criminal Statistics of Bengal, 1847.*

"The Report (Police Report of the Lower Provinces for 1845) affords lamentable proof, that the non-success of our Police arrangements is occasioned not only by the want of all co-operation on the part of the people, but in many instances by their active



opposition. In some cases the wealthy natives themselves are the greatest obstacles to a good Police. Much of the inefficiency of the Police also arises from the protection afforded to dacoits by persons of apparent respectability among the natives. We are told that in the Maldah district, A, who is a notorious receiver of stolen goods, is supposed to be connected with a large gang under the protection of a man of considerable property, which carries on its depredations in Bhangulpur, Murshedabad, and Maldah. The exertions of Mr. Yule in the Joint Magistracy of Bogoorah furnish another corroboration of this fact. He endeavoured to seize the leader of a gang of dacoits, but his zemindar gave him a certificate, that there was nothing against him, the Gomastah swore that he was a most worthy man, and the tenantry were obliged in their evidence to follow the lead of their masters. Mr. Yule, however, kept his eye on the movements of the gang, and seized them soon after, as they were returning from one of their depredations laden with booty; and they and the Gomastah were sentenced to imprisonment in banishment. Mr. Yule punished the zemindar under Regulation VI. of 1810 for harbouring dacoits, but the man appealed, and the Sudder Court let him off. 'He is one', says the Report, 'of a common class, who began life as a zemindar's Moherer—or accountant—got one village, and then by harbouring dacoits, protecting thieves, receiving stolen property, and screwing his ryots, has managed to amass wealth and acquire property. There have been no less than twenty-nine dacoities in the Thanahs adjacent to the residences of this gang in 1840, and in the greater part of them it is almost certain they were concerned.' The difficulties which the Police experience in the discharge of their duties from the violence of powerful zemindars is again exemplified in Mr. Dampier's notice of the B———district, where we are told that two most violent men B and C have a regular jail in their house in D. They have persons watching the movements of the Magistrates and Police; and although the fact is notorious, no Magistrate has yet succeeded in detecting them." *The Friend of India*, October 8, 1846.



"Who can say for a certainty, that a resident zemindar is ever ignorant of the commission of crime near him, or that he is not in nine cases out of ten a sleeping partner in the spoil...It (the failure of Police) is because the zemindars bribe them into a taste for bribery, or frighten them into an hereditary and chronic dread of zemindari vengeance. It is because the Indian zemindar is the very reverse of the English landholder, has a fellow-feeling for every rascally thief, and receiver of stolen goods; and urged by this fellow-feeling, and perhaps too a share in the plunder, as well as by an innate dislike to all fairness or consideration for the public weal, does his best to screen offenders from justice, and to prevent the State from arresting crime. It is not because our Police are inherently and naturally more corrupt than Police elsewhere,—for they are not, and if not so bold, are far more clever and cunning; but it is because the zemindar and his ryots combine to pay him as little as they can, and to prosecute him and all that belong to him, should he annoy them by performing his duty." *A Correspondent of the Friend of India, December 10, 1846.*

"On this subject (Police) the remarks of Mr. McNeile are admirable and exhaustive. 'The great radical evil,' he writes, 'which has hitherto so greatly weakened the arm of the executive in dealing with crime, is one much wider in its character than the under-payment of village watchmen. It is the utter inability of the public authorities to secure the co-operation of the people in the administration of the law. This want of co-operation may, no doubt, be partly ascribed, as it has been often ascribed, to the fear existing among the people of the exactions of the regular Police, and to their aversion from all the other annoyances of a criminal investigation and trial. But it is in great part owing to the operation of a power, which is established throughout the land with a far firmer root in the minds and habits of the people than the whole authority of Government. This is the power of the landholders and their local agents, whose reign, silently acquiesced in, extends to every home in every village in the country, and whose influence is used in support of, or in antagonism to, the



law, just as may appear to be most advantageous to their interests. There are two ways in dealing with this *imperium in imperio*: one is to subvert it, the other is to recognize, confirm, and work through it. Hitherto we have been paradoxically working in both directions." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. LVI., p.p. 99-100.

"The responsibilities imposed on the landholders by our law still attach to them in their integrity. The power of discharging these responsibilities has, however, been very seriously impaired, and in fact necessarily diminishes, though almost imperceptibly, through the growth of public opinion in the Mofussil year by year. It is still very great. It is, indeed, all too powerful. For it is undeniable, that such influence as remains is more usually exercised in opposing and thwarting the Police than in assisting their endeavours. Our Magistrates, moreover, have not the practical means of insisting upon a due discharge from landholders of their responsibilities. It may have been suggested to restore to the zemindars their old authority as public officers under Government. But such a measure is now obviously out of the question. Only one course is before us, and that is to sweep away the whole body of this anomalous legislation, which imposes burdens, which it is undesirable that any subject should have strength to bear." *Ibid.*, p.p. 100-101.

Mr. Monro, the Inspector-General of Police, in his Report for the Year 1877, p. 38, says:—"It is with reference to this crime (rioting and unlawful assembly) that the culpability of those classes, who ought to aid the Police in preserving order, and who do not so assist, is conspicuous, and equally conspicuous with their culpability is the impunity with which they continue to commit crime. So long as the zemindars can abet and instigate such crimes without being punished in their persons for so doing, so long it will be extremely difficult for the Police to put a stop to them; but although much assistance can be given by Magistrates acting vigorously under Chapter XXXVII. against landholders and their Amlah, such measures of repression are not taken to the extent, which is required for the preservation of peace...These results (of Sessions trials) are very unsatisfactory. It must be remembered,



however, that in such riot cases connected with land, it is extremely difficult to get the evidence of unbiassed witnesses; witnesses even when procured are easily tampered with and bought over to deny what they said before the Police or before the Magistrate; those who do adhere to the statements are subjected to most stringent cross-examination from barristers and vakeels, whom the landholders, the parties generally interested in such cases, invariably employ (and Bengali witnesses, as a rule, stand severe cross-examination badly); and the whole influence of the zemindars is brought over to bear in every way against the successful prosecution of such cases, whether by intimidation, bribery, or corruption. With such powerful adverse influences to contend against, success in prosecuting riot cases at the Sessions is not easy of attainment."

The Commissioner of Chota Nagpur Division says:—"When the zemindars profit so far by their education as to cease being bribe-givers, the educated Police will cease being bribe-takers; when zemindari Amlah cease to look upon oppression as a legitimate concomitant of power, our Police Amlah will cease to think harshness to villagers and abuse of their authority excusable; when zemindari peons, Post Office peadahs, Civil Court process-servers, and Chaprassies, cease exacting *douceurs* in the shape of *khoraki talabana*, or *salami*, our Constables will cease demanding from the people anything in excess of their wages. I do not defend such malpractices: I condemn them, and would punish those who commit them with unsparing severity. But such malpractices as I have referred to above exist as a custom of the country; and the Police, like other natives of the country, commit them, and they will continue to commit them, in my opinion to some extent, in spite of the restraints of discipline and the vigilance of their superior officers, as long as the commission of such offences is customary amongst natives of the country, who are not in the Police." *The Bengal Police Report*, p. 123.



The Insecurity of Property.

"In the time of Maharajah Ram Krishna (of Rajshahi) crime was very rife, there was little or no security of life and property. Thefts, burglary, and dacoity, were very prevalent...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. The ignorance and the negligence of the Magistrate as well as his utter want of experience of the manners and customs of the people, was another cause of the insecurity enjoyed by the dacoits and murderers. The Sheristadar was often the *de facto* Magistrate, and his master was a tool in his hands. He could not only 'decree and dismiss' in civil cases, but acquit prisoners charged with the gravest offence.

Mr. E. Strachey thus reports to Sudder Court the prevalence of crime in Rajshahi:—

1. "It is with much diffidence that I address the Nizamut Adalat on the present occasion, for I have to propose measures, the nature of which they are, I know, generally averse to.

2. As the Nizamut Adalat, the Government, and the people of the country, look to the Judges of Circuit as well as to the Magistrates for the establishment of an efficient Police, I consider it to be my duty to call the attention of the Sudder Court to this subject.

3. I do not wait till the end of the circuit, when, in the course of official routine, I should have to make a report to the Court; because the evil, which I complain of, is great and increasing, and every instant of delay serves only to furnish new victims to the atrocities, which are daily practised.



4. That dacoity is very prevalent in Rajshahi, has been often stated; but if its vast extent were known, if the scenes of horror, the murders, the burnings, the excessive cruelties, which are continually perpetrated here, were properly represented to Government, I am confident, that some measures would be adopted to remedy the evil; certainly there is not an individual belonging to the Government, who does not anxiously wish to save the people from robbery and massacre, yet the situation of the people is not sufficiently attended to. It cannot be denied that, in point of fact, there is no protection for persons or property; and that the present wretched, mechanical, inefficient system of Police is a mere mockery.

5. The Dacoits know much better than we know how to preserve their power; they have with great success established a respect for their order by speedy, certain, and severe punishments, and by judicious arrangements for removing obstacles and for facilitating the execution of their plans.

6. Such is the state of things, which prevails in most of the Zillahs in Bengal; but in this it is much worse than in any other I have seen. I am fully persuaded, that no civilized country ever had so bad a Police, as that which Rajshahi has at present.

This Report is dated Nator, 13th June 1808, and addressed to Mr. William Butterworth Bayley, the then Registrar of the Sudder Court." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. LVI., p. 19.

"Speaking generally, there has been great disregard of rights in Bengal." *William Henry Trant, Esq. Answer to Question 2080. Minutes of Evidence, Revenue, Commons, 1832.*

"Are the Committee to conclude from your answer, that you think that the cultivators in the older provinces (Bengal, Behar, and Orissa,) where the Permanent Settlement prevails, are so completely under the jurisdiction of the zemindars, that they have little or no security in the property which they cultivate?—Certainly; I think that the operation of the Regulations (Permanent Settlement Regulations) has been such as to render the situation of the ryots generally in Bengal very insecure in the enjoyment of their land." *Thomas Fortesque, Esq. Ibid. 2274. Ibid.*



"By the Regulations of the zemindari settlement, the zemindars were exempted from the maintenance of the Police, which gave them a plea for seizing on the lands appropriated to that purpose. I conceive that much of the dacoity we hear of, owed its origin to the dispossession of the proprietors of their lands. Thus dispossessed they collected in bands, and made war on the villages wherein their rights were taken away. I draw this conclusion from what I have read, and from the conversations I have had with persons from Bengal, such as, Mr. Fortesque and others. Such appears to me to have been the origin of that peculiar system of gang-robbery, and that much of it arose out of the zemindari settlement." *Colonel J. Briggs. Ibid 4157. Minutes of Evidence. Select Committee of the House of Lords, 1839.*

"During the era of Mahomedan rule, these scum and offscourings (dacoits) of village society were prevented from consolidation into the pestilential and dangerous embodiments, to which the *fosterment and patronage of the modern landholders have raised them*. In those days banditti were to be found, doubtless, in vast numbers, and terrible was their scourge. But then, depredation was the law of the land, and the reprisals against them were proportionately severe. They were constantly slaughtered, mutilated, and impaled alive, by thousands and tens of thousands, and the landholder, on whose estates they were found, seized and executed. In those days, they were never allowed to remain unmolested in the tranquil bosom of village life to spread terror and demoralization around. Every true man's hand was against them—their abode was in impenetrable forests and impregnable forts, and a spirit of resistance amongst the peasantry made their trade one of danger and uncertainty.

It now remains for us to shew, in this respect of this portion of our task, *viz*, the setting forth the real relations between the modern landholders and the peasantry, the great secret of the absolute impunity enjoyed by these bad men—an impunity which not only screens from the vengeance of the law proper, were there such a thing in India, but arms them with an irresistible power to multiply and direct every element of crime to their own profit



and the gratification of that illimitable capacity inherent in adventurers divorced from every human tie, which can inflict remorse.

In the first place it will be found, that the landholders in every district of Bengal have established a reign of terror not very remotely analogous to that of the Robespierrian era of the French Revolution. Its foundations are the same, *viz*, an unlimited command of false witnesses, and a tribunal from which is practically banished every check, which can distinguish a Court of Law from a butcher's shambles. Against the combined treachery of every agent, by whom he is surrounded, what can avail the most angelic character of a solitary English youth of five and twenty, isolated in a vast district as large as the three Ridings of Yorkshire." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. I., p.p. 194-96.

"I shall mention what I consider to be some of the chief causes of the immense number of dacoities now taking place.

The wretched putnee system. So much has been written on this subject, that it is hardly necessary to say more. I need only state that I do not know of any populous country with a subtletising system, wherein misery and crime do not exist in abundance. Hughli and Burdwan, the head quarters of the putnee system, are the head quarters of dacoiti, and it will be found, that a large portion of the Dacoits in these districts reside in small putnee tenures. These facts ought to settle the doubts of all parties.

Almost every native with any money forthwith starts a pawnbroker's shop, and thus property acquired by dacoity can be disposed of without trouble. The Sirdar Dacoits make arrangements with the receiver, who is ready to take the property, and dispose of it on its arrival immediately after the robbery. I have heard of a receiver, who was such a 'top sawyer' in his profession, that he used to fix on a spot, to which he sent a *podder* and cooly to meet the gang and bring in the stolen goods. This man's character has been well-known for a long time; but he is still at large, for no evidence can be found against him.

The utter inefficiency of the Police taken as a body. There are a very few excellent individual Police Officers in Bengal, but what



can they do? Each Thanah has on an average a Daregah, a Moharer, a Jemadar, and 15 or 20 Burkundazes to take care of 1,00,000 people, and a precious mess they make of it. The numerous Chowkeedars paid with land in lieu of wages, born and bred in the villages, where they are employed, would, if honestly and properly paid, make splendid Policemen, for they must know of all the movements of bad characters, but from their land they receive a wretched pittance, and as they cannot be both good cultivators as well as good watchmen, they generally prefer trying to be the former as it best suits their interests. Almost all Chowkeedars are connected with gangs of Dacoits, and information regarding houses where good booty is to be had, is generally given by them." *A Correspondent of the Friend of India, April 5, 1849.*

"The Head Executive Officer is the Divisional Commissioner, who, in consideration of the power and extent of territory he is in charge of, might be called a territorial bureaucratist under certain restrictions of a civilized Government. Under him are the District Magistrates of his Division with their subordinates, through whom he is to receive every information of the people in the Mofussil committed to his care, and whose interests he is at all events to look for, which if he could not, for the pressure of routine business, do himself, he might with little condescension do of the well-to-do men of his district, who, if invited from time to time after the model of the plan of His Honor, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, would gladly impart to him the state of the much neglected people and their wants. The information thus collected, he might see whether it would tally with the report of the Magistrate. What shall I say of the people in the Mofussil when even their lives and property are not secure? Such is the slackness in the administration of justice. Security in what one earns by the sweat of his brow, is the backbone of the whole social fabric, because security no individual can do without, being the most indispensable of all necessities. And this security we have not in the Mofussil. The territorial aristocrats of Cornwallis are the soul-holders of the people in the Mofussil.



The Magistrate, indeed, although he is not exempt from the pressure of routine business, serves him as his informant, because he is seen once in every year in winter to come out on an excursion through the district over which he presides. But what has been seen of him in his winter tour, I am in a position to say that he is in a sad dereliction of duty, because he lacked duty, which forbids side-leaning. Although there is no identity of interests between him and the people over whom he presides, and who always look up to him as the guardian of their temporal interests, he should, considering the moral responsibility and the pay he receives at all events, see the interest of all alike, and not of those only who can court his favour, and have an easy access to him. The result of his winter tour as has been seen, produces no other visible effect than an interview with the zemindar, at whose garden-house he resides, and a flying visit to the winter crops of the country. When he intends to pay a visit to the Mofussil, the zemindars are informed, who, as a matter of course, make every arrangement for his reception. They adorn their garden-houses, where he would reside, keep the roads clean, and send order to Wilson to supply his table with delicacies. The expenses thus incurred for the reception and to give *bukshis* (rewards) to his servants, would all go on the head of the poor ryot, being included in the miscellaneous tax called *Mathuti*. He comes and the zemindar is at his heels, and after a day or two he packs himself off with the golden opinion, that all is right in the Mofussil.

Will the people go to him or he to the people? The first part of the "question" must be answered negatively. The people down-trodden, being under the despotic sway of the territorial aristocrats are too timid to approach the white faces with their grievances. Besides the zemindar is a terror to them, who on the least suspicion of their being moved in that direction, would bring ruin on their head. Indeed, many families have been ruined for having gone to Court. Say, Mr. Editor, that you will give me space, I would give you hundreds of instances to draw tears from your eyes. Besides distance and dearness of law, ignorance is not a less co-operator.



Now if the people are intellectually dull and timid to come up to the Magistrate with their grievances, it would be the duty of the Magistrate to come up to them and ask—‘How they are under the British Government?’ Colonel Dalton should be a model to all Magistrates. He was a friend to the Coles and loved them sincerely. He was seen in their cottages enjoying mirth in their home-bred ale. If the Magistrates had condescended to converse with the ryots in their hovels, and educate them in their political rights, their condition would long before have been improved. The gap between them and the ryot should be narrowed to the possible extent.” *A Correspondent of the Indian Mirror, January 30, 1877.*

The Operation of Lord Cornwallis's Code as it Affected the Ryots.

“To enable the proprietors to fulfil their engagements with the Government, it was, likewise, deemed expedient to vest them with certain extra judicial powers of great extent over their under-farmers and tenants (for the ryots, under the operation of the Code, can be considered in no other light than as tenants-at-will) by which they were authorized to attach their crops and all personal property (tools and materials of manufacture, cattle, seed-corn, and implements of husbandry excepted) without reference to the Courts of Law, and to cause the same to be sold by the ‘kazee’ or other person appointed for the purpose in liquidation of the arrears. It was supposed, that no undue or improper exercise of those powers would be resorted to in consequence of the severity of the penalties provided; but as these penalties could be enforced only on proof being given in a Judicial Court, an injured ryot, with neither time or money to spare, is ill able to bear the expense of both, which the institution of a suit and the necessary attendance involve; the chances of impunity are very much in favour of the oppressor, and those chances are enhanced by the denunciation of punishment for unfounded complaints, while the Code itself opposed an almost insuperable obstacle to the production of proof, by rendering it difficult, if not impossible, for the ryot to summon the zemindari Amlah to



substantiate his plaint. On the other hand, the severity of the penalties for resistance of attachment and for the removal or fraudulent transfer of the property, with intent to evade it, together with the certainty of their being enforced by summary process, rendered opposition hopeless. The ryots were subsequently subjected to further severities, and were rendered liable to personal arrest and imprisonment—their doors to be forced open by the Police, and their houses entered, in search of distrainable property; in the event of their being endamaged by the decision passed after the issue of summary process, they could obtain redress only by instituting a civil action, the expense and delays attendant on which (arising out of the latitude of appeals in a great measure) opposed obstacles, which, to a poor man, may be as insurmountable. If a sale of the proprietor's estate, in satisfaction for arrears of revenue, took place, the sale cancelled all previous obligations between him and the ryot, and the zemindars took frequent advantage of this claim by forcing a sale, solely to enable them to re-purchase, under a fictitious name, and to raise the rents fixed under former stipulations at a lower rate.

The necessity for these hard measures is said to have been indicated by defalcations of the revenue by the zemindars and other newly created exclusive proprietors, which they ascribed to the extreme difficulty alleged to have been experienced by them in realizing their rents from their under-farmers and tenantry. The preambles to the Regulations would induce the belief, that their complaints were well-grounded; there are, however, strong reasons for supposing, that much of the mischief arose from their own oppressive conduct and mismanagement. For instance, the newly created proprietors are known to have taken every advantage of the privilege conferred upon them of letting out their estates; their farmers re-let their farms in small portions to others; and as the object of all parties was to make the best of their bargains, and as the gains of each were drawn from the cultivating classes, the means of these last became insufficient to answer the heavy demands



made upon them; they fell in arrears to the middlemen, these again to the farmers, who could not fulfil their engagements with the zemindars, and a defalcation of the Government revenue was the necessary result. In many instances, the zemindars gave large portions of land at a quitrent to their immediate relations, and raised the rates upon the other ryots to cover the deficiency, a piece of oppression which they were authorized to inflict, as the latter were in a great measure placed out of the protection of the law, in consequence of their being unwilling to accept the leases, which the zemindars were directed to grant to them, with the *usul jumma* and arbitrary cesses consolidated into one sum, under the well-founded conviction, that in subscribing such engagements they would be resigning rights, which they had hitherto deemed, and, on the most substantial grounds, to be strictly allodial.

It had been, in the first instance, declared, that Regulations for the protection and welfare of the ryots and other cultivators would be enacted, but none have ever been effectually passed restoring them to any of their rights; even the single stipulation (VIII. 1793, cl. 2, sec. 60, LI. 1795, sec 10) most in their favour, which was intended to prevent the zemindar from raising the rents of *khodcasht* ryots, was so worded, that it gave every zemindar the means of enhancing his demands at pleasure.

In the pottah prescribed by the Code, the illegal cesses were consolidated with the *usul* or authorized and prescriptive rates; the ryots did not acknowledge the existence of a right to levy anything in addition to the regular established rate—the abwabs were exactions, which were submitted to of necessity, but which, as they were not sanctioned by the law, as it formerly stood, could not, according to their notions, be enforced by legal means, unless they acquiesced in the demand.

Supposing the ryot to have subscribed to the record of his future vassalage, he obtained no permanent benefit by his submission; the rate of average standard of rents paid in the Pergunnah might, at any time, be easily raised by compelling several of the inferior cultivators to take *khamar* or waste land at enhanced rates, and thus to raise the average of the village rates (this



was, and is, the common practice of the zemindars in Bengal), and after the expiration of three years, the oldest ryot might be compelled, by an action at law, to pay the same.

Proof of collusion would be assumed from an excess of land above the quantity specified in the pottah, or from the insertion of lower rates than are usually levied from lands capable of bearing the superior species of agricultural produce, though the one might have resulted from careless measurement, and the latter from the improvement of superior land, originally incapable of producing the more valuable descriptions of produce, by the more assiduous, or a scientific cultivation of the occupant; it has been said, that many zemindars purposely inserted low rates and smaller quantities of land than were actually held, in order to forward their own view, a procedure which is not improbable.

The lease afforded no protection against the consequences of a general Pergunnah measurement by any manœuvres of the description given, a real or fictitious enhancement of rents had been established, or, after a public sale of the grantee's interest and title in satisfaction for arrears of revenue. (The Cornwallis's Code limited the period of a lease by a proprietor to the ryot, to ten years; this limitation was subsequently abolished).

A zemindar could only be compelled to abide by the tenor of the pottah by a civil action, which might be kept pending by the usual course of legal artifice for a period co-extensive with the unexpired term of the lease itself, and the ryot would, in the meantime, starve for his presumption in venturing to assert what even the Code admits to be his just rights and privileges. In point of law and fact, the ryot can claim under the provisions of Lord Cornwallis's Code no rights at all; for the few privileges he may enjoy, he is indebted entirely to the forbearance, or to the fears of his taskmaster, the zemindar.

It is a most extraordinary circumstance, that averse as the people have shown themselves to any innovation, the utter annihilation of the rights and interests of by far the larger portion of the community, should not have been followed by a reaction at once destructive of the Code.



Did the effeminate timidity of the Bengalee character preclude all idea of resistance? Or was the letter and spirit of the Code misunderstood? The latter was, in all probability, the case; for the insurrections in Mymensingh and Rajshahi prove, that Bengalees will resist oppression. In the course of no very lengthened period, the Courts were overwhelmed by the petitions of the ryots against the zemindars, and of the complaints of the latter against the former; the zemindars, anxious to avail themselves of any subterfuge, to account for their failure to fulfil their engagements, would seem to have succeeded in inducing a belief, that their embarrassments were mainly attributable to the attendance of themselves and their agents at the Courts to answer the groundless or malicious complaints made against them by the ryots; for it was subsequently enacted, 'that if any ryot should wantonly, and without due cause, summon, or cause to be summoned, before the Courts of Justice, the chief or subordinate officers of the zemindars employed in collecting the rents, as witnesses, he should be liable to an action for damages with costs; and that all ryots, who should prefer litigious or groundless complaints against the zemindars, should be punished by fine and imprisonment.' This law, there is reason to believe, has prevented many complaints on the part of the ryots from reaching the ears of the Judicial Officers; or of the Government; the most competent witnesses, in support of charges of undue exactions and oppressions, were the very agents of the zemindars, whom the law made it dangerous to summon; and as the law declared the plaintiff obnoxious to punishment for an unfounded charge, the ryots seem to have considered themselves precluded from obtaining justice for any minor act of oppression.

'The extreme propensity evinced by the natives to litigation,' has often been quoted—oftener urged in excuse for the measures of severity resorted to with a view of preventing what appears to be an evil of unlimited extent; one of the least reprehensible is the Stamp Regulations, which prescribe, that all complaints must be prepared on stamp paper of a prescribed value. Perhaps the native character is not sufficiently understood:—may not the



overwhelming accumulation of civil causes be, with greater justice, attributed to the effects of a Code ill-adapted to the genius and prejudices of the people than to their love of legal strife? That an increase of criminality in Bengal, especially where the result of the operation of the Code has been more severely felt, may be ascribed to it, no one, who has had opportunity of seeing its effects upon the minor orders of the agricultural community, will deny.

Practical experience of its merits fully proves, that it has failed to gain for the Government the love of the most quiet and submissive portion of its subjects, while the influence possessed by the very powerful class of exclusive proprietors created by the Code, has more frequently been exerted to counteract the views of the ruling power than to support its interests. Much might be said upon this branch of the subject; it is by no means clear, that the transfer of the rights of the ancient allodial proprietors to a race of hereditary tax-gatherers and clerks to British houses of agency, and sircars and moonshees from the Writers' Buildings, has been productive of either advantage or reputation to the British name." *A Memoir on the Land Revenue and Principles of Taxation*, p.p. 99-101.

The Disadvantages of Lord Cornwallis's Code.

"The system of assessment prescribed by the Code in the first and eighth Regulations of 1793, is opposed to every principle of efficient fiscal management. It prohibited all reference to the detailed accounts of assessable assets in each estate, which had formed the basis of all previous assessments. By prohibiting measurements, it prevented the revenue authorities from obtaining information as to the actual extent and boundaries of the estates conferred upon the members of the landed aristocracy. By fixing in perpetuity, as the revenue of each estate, the Government share of the rental of cultivated land only, the claims of the State to any revenue on the vast tracts of uncultivated and waste land within the limits of estates in the permanently assessed provinces, are barred for ever. And as the limits of these estates bordering upon forests, were not correctly defined at the period



of the formation of the settlement, opportunities have been afforded to their proprietors of asserting titles to very large portions of land, which equitably belonged to the State.

It entailed upon the Government the whole expense of providing for the protection of the increased population, which the culture of the waste land has induced, while it has alienated the source of re-imbursement.

It has legalized an enhancement of the revenue upon the cultivating classes, though the State is precluded from deriving any advantage from the additional burden imposed upon the most interesting class of its subjects.

The landed aristocracy very early took advantage of their privileges of creating under-tenures, talooks, at low rates of rent, in favour of their relatives, connections, and dependents, and even in their own names. This procedure materially affected the value of an estate, if it were put up to sale in satisfaction of arrears.

A vast field for fraud and chicanery was opened to designing persons under the provisions of the earlier Regulations regarding partition, and the door is not yet closed against deception and trick by the later enactments in modification of them.

It was, and ever has been, easy to bribe the native deputies appointed for measuring the portions, as the salaries allowed to them have never been so high as to obviate all pretext for corruption; and some of the later Regulations have added to the evil by rendering it illegal to grant them, in remuneration of their services, anything in excess of a fixed percentage, *not on the value*, or even on the rental of the estate to be divided, but on the jumma or Government revenue, which, especially in those lands where fraud is most likely to be attempted, is frequently not one-hundredth of the value, or 120th of the rental of the property to be divided!

Availing themselves of the privilege granted by the Code of selecting their own portions, and of making their own partitions, the proprietors were and are in the constant practice of combining to burthen the unproductive parts of the divided estate with the heaviest portion of the revenue, by which means the smallest



amount of revenue became leviable from the most productive shares of the property; and then by arranging among themselves for the payment of the whole revenue for ten years, the parceners nominally separated can, after that period, give up to sale the unproductive part of the property burdened with the heaviest portion of revenue, and re-unite as owners in common of the richer share with least revenue. The worthless portion is put up for sale at the jumma recorded, and if no one purchases it, it falls on the hands of Government, and its revenue is lost for ever! The extent of the unproductive land originally forming parts of estates fraudulently sub-divided, and intentionally burthened with the greater portion of the permanent revenue of the whole, and left purposely in balance, to enable the proprietors to get rid of them, and to retain possession of the more valuable portions at a trifling quitrent, is truly alarming! It is all left upon the hands of the Government, and the revenue of it lost for ever! Vast tracts of waste and forest land not originally belonging to the estates of the proprietors, who have, by availing themselves of the opportunities tendered by the Code, got into possession of them, have, in like manner, been lost for ever to the State.

The greatest portion of the *nijjate* and *chakran* lands merged in the jurisdictions acquired by the landed aristocracy under the Perpetual Settlement without being accounted for, and are held by them absolutely without payment, they having ejected the public servants (Police, &c.,) who formerly held them, and who having no other means of subsistence, became robbers. (Reg. VIII., 1793, secs. 39, 40, and 41.)

There existed no reason whatsoever for sanctioning, as the Code does, the irregular and illegal alienations of the revenue by the revenue contractors and local officers: the amount of revenue lost for ever by the alienations in one district alone, (Burdwan), exceeded £30,000 per annum.

Under the ancient regime, there was an office of account in each village held by a functionary denominated putwaree: this person was appointed by the Malguzars with the consent of the



inhabitants of the place; it was his duty to keep open accounts with every individual cultivator or tax-payer in the village setting forth the stock, live or dead, in his possession; the quantity of land he held, and the several qualities of the soil, and the course of crops; the several descriptions of produce raised upon it each year; the amount of tax payable; the amount of cesses, ordinary or extraordinary, levied on the ryots; the sums contributed, and the statement of the balances due; these details were entered in 4 books, each being a check upon the other; the whole was entered in abstract in a 5th or ledger, from which the *hustobood* statement or details of past, and present assets, and the *wasil balkee* or account of payments made and the arrears due, on account of the revenue and cesses, were computed at the close of the year; these details were recorded in the Pergunnah canongo's office after copies had been taken for the zemindar's use; these documents, if properly kept, afforded a faithful record of agricultural and fiscal management and details, which could not be easily altered or changed without discovery. By the provision of the Code, the canongo establishment was abolished as useless:—the check upon the putwaree papers was thus destroyed.

The Code demands, that the landed aristocracy shall keep the putwarees under a heavy penalty; but it did not provide means for compelling the new proprietors to employ these officers, even to permit them to have access to the true village accounts; the landed aristocracy thought proper to appoint their own Gomastahs or accountants to whom the recording of all facts regarding village management was entrusted, and delivered to the putwarees for production before the Law Courts and Revenue Cutcheries such spurious accounts as best suited their own views. As the putwarees were allowed to have no others, these are the only detailed statements of fiscal management obtainable in Bengal. They are worse than useless to the Law Courts, because they misled the judicial authorities, and they are equally mischievous as revenue records, as tending to false inferences and unfair estimates, and are ruinous to the interest of the ryots, who



can scarcely ever have the means of refuting their fallacies and mis-statements.

The putwarees are, indeed, declared punishable for giving in false returns, and may be compelled to swear to the validity of those they produce; but although required to furnish faithful accounts of the statements of land and its produce, having neither access to, or the means of procuring, the real detailed statements, which the zemindars withhold, they can only swear that the papers contain such accounts as the landholders have caused their Gomastahs to make over to them; the putwarees throughout Bengal are the creatures of the zemindar, and though paid by the cultivating classes, are mostly opposed to their interests." *A Memoir on the Land Revenue and Principles of Taxation*, p.p. 112-23.

"There are lands to a great extent held by persons claiming the free enjoyment of the Government revenue under charters of special exemption or assignment, of which no complete record has ever been made; there is also much land held by zemindars in excess of what appears in the records of the settlement, in some cases, many entire villages." *Holt Mackenzie. Answer to Question 2638. Minutes of Evidence, Revenue, Commons, 1832.*

A Few Examples of Oppressions of the Ryots by the Zemindars.

"Meahjaun was the inhabitant of a certain village, the property of a Talookdar of Hughli. He was a poor man, and except the land whereon stood his humble cottage, he had not a single beegha for cultivation. He was the son of a Moonshee, and supported himself by teaching children to read and write, and chaunting the Koran during the festivals of Edyn and Ramzan. His Talookdar had newly come into possession by purchase at auction, and was anxious by screwing up the rents of all classes of the tenantry to indemnify himself in a short time for the money he laid out in the purchase. With this view, he served notices upon all his ryots calling upon them to enter upon new engagements, or on failure thereof, threatening them with ejection or increased rents, and their realization by summary arrest of



their persons, and the distraint and sale of their goods and chattels.

Meahjaun, who thought himself secure in the prescriptive exemption of his *kudmee* tenure from all chances of increase, was rather surprised that the Talookdar should have thought proper thus to have annoyed him, more especially as he was a popular man, and few had any cause of quarrel and disagreement with him. Curious to know the nature of the requisition, Meahjaun looked into the notice served on him, and was surprised to find, that the demand made upon him consisted of rents for cultivatable land, not a crunt of which was in his occupancy. He lost no time to repair to the Talookdar to remonstrate against the false demand. The Talookdar received him coldly, and told him to settle and enter into engagements with him. For what shall I settle with you, asked Meahjaun, I have only a beegha in my occupancy, and for that I pay the stipulated rent, which has known no change for more than twenty years. You must give me an increased jumma for your land, or else you must expect to be annoyed. My tenure is old and *kudmee*, replied M, and by the laws and usages of the country, you cannot increase my rents. Whether I can or not, you will soon find to your cost, unless you come to a settlement, replied the Talookdar. I have paid Rs. 5,000 for my talook, and if through inability to pay my revenue, it is put to auction, my property is lost for ever. One, two, three, says the Collector, and the hammer knocks down our property, and knocks us down indeed. Observe further, while my own collections are not above 30 per cent., the Government calls on me for a kist of 50. Unless, you, my ryots, enable me to meet the demands of the State, where do I go? Quarrel not therefore, but recognizing the urgency of my case, agree to a re-settlement of your jumma, or else you know how the law will take its course. I am fully aware of the liability under which the new law places every landholder, but surely you cannot, for that reason, enhance my rents. Your rents must be enhanced, replied the Talookdar, or else I cannot keep my property from sale. I cannot consent to it, returned Meahjaun. You will find it the safest course you



can adopt, reiterated the Talookdar. You received my notice, you have the alternative before you of either consenting to my proposal or quitting my ground. I shall do neither, retorted Meahjaun. You may try what the law will do for you. Saying this, Meahjaun went away.

For a week or ten days, nothing took place to shew the direction, in which the vengeance of the Talookdar was likely to explode. But he had not been idle. One fine morning as Meahjaun was sitting at his own door, the Gomastah of the Talookdar made his appearance, and asked him for arrears of rents. Before he could reply, a badged peon of the Collectorate entered into the scene. This is my *assamee*, said the Gomastah, take him into custody. And the brawny arms of the Chaprassee were upon the body of poor Meahjaun, grasping his waist-cloth in a moment. Secured from flight, Meahjaun was subjected to a long course of abuse and violence, and dragged to the Cutchery of the Talookdar with his hands bound behind him with a string.

Meahjaun was for the whole day confined in the Cutchery. In the evening the Talookdar made his appearance, and with him his myrmidons and the Chaprassee aforesaid. Meahjaun, said the latter, you are my prisoner, and I ask you whether you consent to enter into engagements with the Talookdar, or to go a prisoner with me to the station jail. You have had a little taste to-day of what you are to expect from contumacy, and you had better consult your own good by timely concessions. Do you agree? And as he said this, he accompanied it with a violent push by way of emphasis. Meahjaun fell on his face against the floor, and sobbing rose up again.

Another repitition of the Talookdar's proposal was again met with a refusal. Chaprassee, now do your duty, said the Talookdar, and the Chaprassee forthwith tightened the strings, which bound poor Meahjaun's hands, and the strain upon his arms became more painful. Lay him on his back, continued the same commanding voice, and Meahjaun was laid upon the ground. Now let one of you ply him with the shoe, while the stone does its task



upon his chest. Meahjaun began to groan, as he underwent this discipline. He essayed to cry aloud, but his mouth was gagged with cloth, and his friends were far out of hearing and reach.

That night passed sleepless to Meahjaun. Without food, and with ill-treatments, a prisoner and apart from home, where he had left his wife and young children, how could sleep wink in his eye, and bring rest to his body? Perhaps his oppressor had lighted with fury on his helpless family in his absence, and by seizure, proposing plunder of his few chattels and movables, made his domicile deny its shelter to their heads, who had none else to protect them from the sun and rain.

The morning dawned, but to see the wretched Meahjaun, on his way as a felon to the Sudder Station under the escort of the Chaprassee. At the close of evening, he reached town and was lodged in the house of the Talookdar's agent. Here again the scene enacted at the Cutchery was played over *de novo*, though in a miniature style, his mind being more plied with threats of what may be done in his absence towards his family, than his back was with blows, of which there was much diminution. Come to a settlement, Meahjaun,—the foil is but a few pice from you,—and once there, unless you bend, months will pass over your head. If you don't pay the full amount of our demand, I have instructions to accept a compromise. Yield but an increase, and I will let you go. Your bad example works on the minds of the rest of the ryots, and if you give us but a nominal increase, and on your return to the village, make a favorable report among them to the effect, that the demands of the Talookdar have been decreased by the cultivator, I will put in a *rajeenamah*, and the case will be immediately dropped against you. I shall do no such thing, replied the firm Meahjaun. Then expect the worst we can inflict upon you.

By 10 A. M. Meahjaun was taken before the Revenue Officer. Do you contest the demand made against you? I do. Can you lay down the amount, or will you give security, till a decision is



passed in the case? I can do neither. Then take him to jail, said the Collector. And the Chaprassee willingly obeyed.

Meahjaun had now been twelve days a resident of the jail, during which time he was only once tampered with by the agents of his oppressor. He continued to resist their proposals, and thought it misbecame him to yield after having been brought to the last resort, and so near a judicial settlement of the differences upon which he was at issue with them. His fellow-prisoners would sometimes dissuade him from his resolution by a representation of the unrequited hardships to be gone through, even though at last the ease upon which a man is confined should be proved to be false, for said they, the law awards no satisfaction for unjust arrest, and for forcible detention in jail as a felon, and withdrawal from all occupation, the last often attended with considerable loss to the ryot, and sometimes his irretrievable ruin. I have been an inmate of this house for defaulters for nearly six months, said one, on the complaint of a person, whom I never knew as my landlord, but had a quarrel with about the payment of a sum of money which I owed him. He fabricated a Kabuleet, and suing me before the Collector, had an exparte decree against me, while in the first instance neither my arrest was tried, nor the usual notice was served in my house or neighbourhood; and the Nazir's myrmidons gave in a receipt of the notice signed by certain people misnamed as the munduls of my mehal, who, being in the landholder's interest never let me know of the process taken out against me. In due course, the engagement was proved, and my silence, no wonder, being taken for consent, a decree was given against me for a demand, the first knowledge of which was drubbed through my backs by the peon, who arrested me in execution of the got-up decree. O Justice! said I, hast thou fled this earth, that I am held in durance vile at the fiat of the Hakim, who is bound to do justly. But my case admitted of no remedy—for the helling cunning, which had contrived the decree, had also made a part of the plan not to execute within the time allowed for appeal. Thus I am debarred flying from the injustice of one Court to take shelter in another, the time of representation having



passed away in blind ignorance. Thus the bolt fell suddenly against me when the summary decree had obtained the force of an incontestible decision, and the Courts were unable to hear my cries for its non-execution, unless I paid up the amount, or took my lodgings in the jail. Therefore I say to you, Meahjaun, contend not with the landlord, for the law has been made for his convenience and for our coercion. This recital was followed by another of his companions in adversity who declared—how many are forced to meet unjust demands, or to execute whatever their oppressors want them to do in the shape of *Kabuleuts* for land, bonds for money, &c. To tell you the truth, Meahjaun, I am convinced after a long course of experience, that the laws by which we suffer in common, not only assist the landlord in the realization of whatever he is pleased to call his just dues from his ryots, but they also most effectually serve him in ruling them with a rod of iron. By these laws, the new purchaser of land brings its poor occupants authoritatively into his grasp and enhances their rents; the wicked and powerful coerce their debtor, or glut their revenge, arresting the helpless poor under pretence of revenue demands. The next day it was about 11 A. M., as he was cooking his solitary meal, his release came unexpectedly upon him. The bearer of good news is always welcome. Acting on this well-known truth, one of the *Barkundazes* of the jail, whose swaggering insolence towards its inmates is always indicative of the love of office perquisites and *bukshes*, came with an officious air to our hero and said: *Halloo! You are Meahjaun, are you? Said the Barkundaz. I am a poor man, replied M., and God knows, I have but little to give. Come you, you have this day's khora-kee to spend, suppose you go away a free man within half an hour, would you give me your allowance for the evening? On the condition stated, said Meahjaun, you are welcome to your bukshes (reward).* At this the *Barkundaz* was highly pleased. I am your friend, said he, come along with me. Meahjaun, then putting up his pot, has led by the *Barkundaz* to the gateway of the jail, when to his surprise, he saw the *Naib* of the *Talookdar* J., with whom and Meah's landlord, there was a long standing dispute



about some patches of boundary land. And what can have brought you here, my good Naib, said M. to his visitor. Why your ownself, said the latter, I am come to see you, and if possible, to take you from this place.

Meahjaun, with ecstasy and gratitude at this speech, enquired. And pray, how do you to effect my freedom? That shall be as you shall see fit, replied the Naib. I have my master's orders to stand as security, and I have already paved the way by a *mulakat* with the Nazir, and he has agreed to take me for a *matabbar*. You know there is a dispute between my master and your Talookdar? Meahjaun said yes. You know also that your Talookdar has been screwing up the rents, and has already overhanded several of your neighbours to whom we claim as our ryots. Meahjaun nodded assent. The Naib proceeded to say that these had been arrested and brought to the station on demands of revenue to live on prisoner's fare in the jail, but that, at his master's orders, he had taken them off on security. What we want you to do, said the Naib, is this: that you declare for my master as those have done, and then we shall for ever rescue you from the oppressions of the Nilamdar. The present is a particularly good opportunity, continued he, as he (the Nilamdar) is but recently come into possession, and will be but ill-able to substantiate his claim. To all this and the like persuasion, Meahjaun yielded his full concurrence, and expressed an impertinent desire to know the state of his own affairs. They are not in the best state, I may assure you, you shall hear all. In the meantime, let me go and bring the perwanna, which will give you release from custody. The Naib departed, and Meahjaun reluctantly returned to his ward to complete his last meal at the expense of his oppressor.

In the course of half an hour, the Naib returned with the perwanna to the address of the Jail Darogah commanding him to release Meahjaun immediately from confinement. The prisoner had instant notice of the advent of this 'open sesame' from the faithful Burkundaz of whom notice has already been taken, and who, with outstretched hand demanded the completion on the



part of Meah of the covenant, he had entered into before. Meah, true to his word, forced out the half-anna, that was to have provided for his evening meal, and joyfully took leave of the prison walls in the company of his friend and patron, the Naib.

On gaining the road, his eager enquiry was 'what news of my home.' 'No longer yours. The thatches and other movables are attached and advertised for sale.' Meah staggered under the information. How are my family and children? Your family are pretty safe in your house, but your eldest son and his uncle are now quartered at the Darogah's under a charge of theft. 'A charge of theft,' cried out Meah as if thunderstruck, 'worse and worse still, now tell me at whose suit.' Are my movables attached and my boy charged with theft at whose?

'The Gomastah has done the first under a jumma wasil bakkee, and the Talookdar's old servant has brought forward the other. The Darogah has reported the case, and it awaits the orders of the Magistrate. The Darogah deep in the obligation and interest of the Talookdar, has of course lent his hand to the got-up case. You must be up and doing, Meahjaun, the combination against you is strong, and time not to be lost is wasting by moments.'

What is to be done? Instruct me, Naib Saheb, I know nothing of the ways of Courts, said Meahjaun.

You have now three suits to defend, you must remember. The first is the one for which you were confined, the second of the same kind, for which your goods are under attachment, and the third is the foudary case. Allah Akbar! God is great! said Meahjaun. I think my oppressor has let go his whole quiver against me, person, property, and reputation,—all—all are attacked and if he is not met with submission to his demands, I am in a fair way of biting the dust.

Fear not my poor friend, replied his patron, I am up to this kind of warfare, and if you can muster up patience for a time, I yet hope to set you free from the toils of the law.

Talking in this manner with his patron, Meahjaun walked up before a thatched dwelling house, which the other declared was his master's Sudder Cutchery and they entered together.



Meahjaun was led by his patron into the presence of the Talookdar already alluded to, who was very glad to see him, and to whom he expressed his great obligations in having interfered in his case, and given him his countenance in the hour of difficulty.

Many of your neighbours are in a similar predicament with yourself, Meahjaun, said Shaik J——, the Talookdar, but they had not had to go so far as the jail. I saved them from that path by offering their security. You shall soon see them here. As you love your own good, Meahjaun, I wish you will do as I tell you on this occasion.

I am at your disposal, Hakim, and you have but to say the word to ensure my perfect compliance with your pleasure.

At this the Talookdar called his Naib aside, and whispering into his ear for a few minutes, told him aloud to send for the Muktyar.

This worthy and a parcel of ragged ryots soon made their appearance in the room with three low *salaams*, each time touching the earth and their foreheads with the right hand in token of humble obeisance to the Talookdar.

Meahjaun immediately recognized in these ryots his neighbours of his village.

Well Muktyar, said the Talookdar, how speed my *sursory* cases? 'Sir they are pending decision. I have prepared drafts of the replies and counter-petitions to be filed, which await your inspection. The ryots plead that they do not hold land of the plaintiff, but are your ryots, and have paid up their rents. We claim them as our ryots, and acknowledge receipt of their rents.' Then turning to his clients, the ryots, he continued: 'Is not that the case? You were never the ryots of the Nilamdar, nor of his predecessor from whom he derives his right? You are the ryots of the Khan Saheb, and he acknowledges to have received your rents.

You are Hakim, you are *ma bap* (mother and father), roared the ryots at once. If you let us live in the home where we have been born at the jumma we have been always used to pay, we are content to be your ryots, and foreswear the Nilamdar.



That's it, that's it, said the Khan Sahib, I promise to take you under my protection, and to defend you from all aggressions present and to come. The ryots again expressed their clamorous acquiescence. Very good, very good, responded the Talookdar, do not fear, encouraging the ryots. Muktyar, he continued, I approve the drafts you have made, copy them out clean, and file them without delay.

The Muktyar signified his humble *bohoot khoob* to his master. But there is one thing, said he to the ryots, for you to do, your engagements must be filed with the *jawab*. You had better execute them immediately. Rajib! Rajib! he called out aloud to Moherer, who was busy writing cross-legged in a side room, here take the usual engagements from the ryots, mind they are ryots of long standing, and we have no balance against them.

At this speech which was understood by all parties, Rajib came forward with a bundle of blank old papers, and drew out in a trice the instruments, by which the ryot binds himself to pay rent to the landholder. One by one the victims of revenue oppression put their sign manual, the mark of the harrow to the papers handed to them by the faithful Rajib; a couple of attestors or witnesses were then called in from among the servants attending without, and in the presence and with the signified understanding of the several 'contracting powers', they gave their finishing strokes to the engagements by putting their marks thereupon in proper form. One witness with much simplicity declared himself unable to accomplish this feat, and as in such cases ruled and established, he touched the writing reed in Rajib's hand by way of making him his proxy, who drew out the cross-mark in a raw style to suit his principal. This done, the necessary *dakhilats* were prepared, and exhibited for the satisfaction of Meah and his companions now legal ryots of J——, Talookdar.

It is all right, my friends, at last broke out the self-same Talookdar. You may depend upon safety. Now go your way. When in a low tone to his Naib, he said, see that they are fed



and lodged in my compound, and kept out of the side of the Nilamdar's men, and of all opportunity for tampering or repentance, till matters are brought to an end.

Quick at the word of order, the ryots rose and crouched out of the room with many humble *salaams*. Meahjaun stepped behind, and with looks of distress reminded the Naib, that there were still two other snits hanging over his head, for which no measures were taken.

The Naib replied, true, true, and whispering in the ear of the Talookdar, wrote out a letter to the Gomastah at the talook, and handed over to the suppliant Meah. Take this, said he, and go home as quick as you can. The Gomastah will help you with the Amlah who has distrained your house, who will give you the necessary ticket of postponement of sale, when you must come back here without delay, and contest the attachment. Meah took the letter, and making his low acknowledgment as he did so, still lingered to say, 'and what is to become of my son and brother, who, you say, are now under the clutches of the Police Darogah.' That has been taken care of in the letter, answered the Naib. Besides that I shall see what can be done at the Fouzdary Peshkar's. Meah then after many genuflections withdrew." *A Correspondent of the Bengal Spectator, Noeember 1, 1842.*

Heads of the People—The Ryot.

"Was it for you to call arrears a debt,

To sell goods, houses, all that you can get,

*

*

*

Because they pay not what they cannot pay.'

India. By a B. C. S.

'Should you succeed in securing to the ryots those rights, which it was assuredly the intention of the Permanent Settlement Arrangements to preserve and maintain; and should you, in all cases, where the nature and extent of those rights cannot be satisfactorily ascertained and fixed, provide such a limit to the demand upon the ryots as fully to leave to them the cultivator's



profits under leases of considerable length, we should hope that the interests of that great body of the agricultural community may be satisfactorily secured.' *Letter from the Court of Directors, November 10, 1834.*

Within the embowering shade of a number of mango trees occupying about two beegahs of ground, and fronting a tank, there stood a cluster of thatched buildings neatly built round three sides of a square, which from their decent and comfortable appearance, seemed to be the mansions of the Village Chowdry. There were numbers of half-clothed peasantry sitting cross-legged under the trees; many were smoking out of tobacco pipes, and some had laid themselves down on the ground. Standing apart with their backs against a tree, were a couple of strong-made men, whose red turbands, tight waist cloths, and iron-headed clubs showed that they were the peadah servitors of the House, aids and assistants of the Tahsil Duffer, employed in summoning the tenants, coercing the unpunctual or refractory, and attaching the goods and chattels of the arrant ryot 'prepared to abscond.' They were evidently placed as sentries over their companions.

There were altogether about two dozens of squalid ryots under the trees. Some of them were conversing in low whispers among themselves and sometimes looking listlessly towards the door of the front cottage, from whence sounds as of men in high talk proceeded occasionally. They all seemed anxious, as if waiting the result of some event about to happen to them. Two or three of them had the air of superiors, and they were watched by the rest. 'We shall yield to no increase of rent,' said one. 'Not a cowry,' echoed another. 'We stick fast by the old *jurip nerik* (measurement and assessment rates) of 1230,' murmured a third. Words to this effect were exchanged between them in half-suppressed whispers, and the sentiment was instantaneously communicated to the whole body by the silent operation of the eyes.

The scene above described was one of a series, which commenced with Meahjaun's apprehension, torture, and transmission



to jail, on account of pretended arrears of revenue, the place and the principal actors still the same. The landholder, who had paid a high price as his purchase money for the sacrifice of all the uncared-for helpless peasantry, was determined to exert his prerogative to the utmost. Systematically following his object, he was taking them up in detail, after having experienced the failure of his expectation, that they voluntarily yield to his demands, and they themselves down on the altar.

The ryots, on the other hand, seeing him bent on exacting increased rents and enhancing the rates of assessments by main force, had naturally found, that union was necessary to resist encroachment on their means of support, and being driven out of their homes and dispossessed of their lands, exposed to oppression from time immemorial, it would have been strange indeed, had not their union received the form of a custom, and been impressed with a character of binding sanctity. The heads of the peasantry had accordingly met and deliberated; and having set up the *Dhurmo Ghot*, the emblem of Divine presence, pledged themselves to all the ryots, that they would abide by each other, and resist demand of increased rents.

But what avails the peaceful opposition of a heart-broken and trampled class, to protect whom from oppression has been deemed inconsistent with the security of revenue, to the measures of the landholder to increase his profits and facilitate his payments to the State? That State has established for his convenience a machinery of mighty efficacy to coerce that helpless class.

He was not idle.

It was evident, that some such compact existed among the ryots whom we have noticed, and that their assemblage and the scenes that were going on, were the result of a counter-irritation on the part of the Nilandar.

While those poor specimens of humanity were thus strengthening and reiterating their determination among themselves on, sudden cries and howls, as of men under ill-treatment, were heard, and the threatening voice of command and abuse to yield



or suffer more followed in quick succession. It is not necessary to describe what took place there. Its name is cruelty. A few minutes after, the Gomastah issued out of the room saying 'They had not been enough. Bring them out and confine them yonder. I shall see what an attachment of their property will do.' Two Peadahs, as have been sketched above, came out leading five ryots with their hands bound tight behind their backs, and their bodies covered with dust. They were led before their village comrades under the trees, and from thence to another part of the house intended as a place of confinement. It was now nearly evening, the Gomastah, accompanied by his two Peadahs, went out to execute his threat of attachment upon the goods and chattels of the poor wretches, whom he had under his clutches, having directed the other two Peadahs erst reclining against the trees, to let go their *assamee* for the day, and bring up next morning with their respective rents, or prepare them, on failure of payment, to undergo his pleasure.

On the way the Gomastah was attended by the Mundul and Outghurria of the village. My town readers will hardly understand what these offices are, and what position their holder has in the social and political economy of the rural community.

The two offices exist from ancient usage. What functions appertained to them of old I cannot say, but it is well-known, that whenever a public underling in office happens to cross the village, the Mundul or Outghurria must supply him with a lodge, cater for his provisions, and procure coolies to carry his baggages, and get for reward, 'more kicks and half pence.' This, however, is the worst part of his business. He is generally the favourite ryot of the landholder, and plays into his hand as the instrument of his oppression. Though not always possessed of records and generally illiterate, he is the depository of all information in regard to the boundaries of the village, of the *Mal* and *Lakhraj* lands, and of all particulars of the kind. When a new proprietor comes into possession, he is the man to give all the information, and play the spy upon his neighbours, for which he has his reward in the shape of light assessment upon his plots of land. At feasts



on account of marriage or worship, he is a sort of distinguished guest, and is honoured with the largest plantain leaf to eat upon. He is the general intelligencer of the Darogah in case of theft or other criminal offence being committed within his ward. He is also the general giver of receipts of the execution of various kinds of Court processes, sticking up *istahars* (advertisements), giving possession, catching defaulters of revenue, culprits, &c. If such a character may have sought his protection, and managed to conceal himself for a while, he will give his certificate to the Peadah, who may have come in search of the party, that he is gone away, unheard of, or dead, as the case may be. If a suitor in Court wish to have an *ex parte* decree, he will certify by the day and hour, that whereas the defendant was not forthcoming, the process (summons or *ittanamah*) was hung up on his outer door in the presence of &c.; and on occasions of attachment of the goods of revenue defaulters, he must be in attendance to certify process and receive charge of the goods, &c. Sharp practice this! such as an attorney would never be ashamed to avow to himself. He is also the general witness in all important transactions, that pass on paper, or are concluded hand to hand in the neighbourhood, either between the landholder and ryot or other persons. He has no *Chakran* land, but perhaps his perquisites are not enough for him. To the fair lineaments of this picture, shall I add, that he sometimes levies contributions on thieves, and sometimes on easy-minded females (rather scarce in villages) for whom he finds protection. In almost all his dealings, his coadjutor is the Chowkeedar, like whom his appointment is the joint result of the landholder and the Darogah's choice.

The Gomastah had now reached a cluster of huts. Besides the persons who accompanied him, there now joined him four persons habited as Pykes, and one whose square badge, with a large P in the centre, marked him as the Thanah Burkundaz. By the law of the land, this class of persons are bound to be present on occasions of attachment, whenever the landholder or his agent may depose before the Darogah, that he apprehends a



serious resistance. The law, however, is not always stuck to, and a Burkundaz may be had on paying a price for its violation.

The five victims whose goods were to be attached, lived in the same neighbourhood at the back of the Gomastah's: the four Pykes entered four of their houses, and closing the door-way, stationed themselves so as to prevent both egress and regress and the removal of the goods. At the sight of these men, whose errand they well knew, the females and children set up a piercing cry, the neighbours startled, rushed out to see what was the matter, and congregated, burning, yet feaving, to strike their oppressors. The fifth house was entered into by the Gomastah himself followed by the Mundul and Burkundaz. Thither the people bundled together, and viewed with sympathizing eyes the cattle one by one led out, the hay and corn in the stacks proclaimed to be attached, unremovable, unsalable; the females all in tears turned out into the road, and the house completely gutted of torn mat, brass pot, greasy bed pillows, cloth, *daw bonte*, and the *dhenkee*. Nor were the spade, the ploughs, the seed-corn, and the male cattle, that draw the plough and harrow, said to be unattachable by law, spared by the unscrupulous Gomastah. The doors were about to be torn from their hinges, and even the cooking pots flung from their places in the mockery of unresisting tyranny, but the old head of the family begged, and the females implored crying louder and louder, and the deprecated acts remained undone.

It would be tiresome to detail the rest of the proceedings. When the five ryots' houses had been fully searched and sacked, and the contents attached, and the easily removable goods removed, and the heavy ones left in charge of the Mundul, the Gomastah repaired to the fields cultivated by them, and attached the standing corn unripe.

Thus a whirlwind as it were passed over the village doing more damage and creating more consternation than an army in the ancient halcyon days of India, when cultivators and their fields of corn, females and all men unbred to the use of arms, were special objects of safety, sacred, and never touched by hos-



tile foe. What a contrast between that age and the present, when a more oppressed class of people is not to be found than they who bear the ryots' name." *Ibid.*, August 16, 1843.

"Those who are acquainted with the state of things in the mofussil know, that the misery and destitution to which the ryot is wedded, is the work not only of our enlightened Government, but of that class of natives, whom the revenue system of that Government has created, *viz.* the zemindars. That it is impossible to calculate on the evils inseparable from the operations of the summary powers with which they are vested, is indisputable. That these evils are often computed by an unwarrantable exercise of those powers, is equally beyond doubt. The following simple and short story connected with the zemindari of Babu———may help to convey to those of your readers, who have the honor to be cockneys, idea of the evils in question.

In the village of———, let me call it L———, there stood, some three years ago, a cottage, not like one of your English neat, comfortable, decent looking cottages, having its walls mantled with the leaves of honey-suckle or sweet briar, and fronting an orchard cultivated with gay parterres of flowers. Oh! no. It was a dingy hut constructed of clay, and rudely roofed with thatch. It was situated immediately beneath an old *Osut* tree, which waved its branches over it day and night. Indeed the incessant rustling occasioned by the fall of its withered leaves, added to the solitude of the place. For it was not one of those parts of the village, which are studded with clusters of cottages, but resembled a common or heath, which bore no marks of vegetation except a few *baggoon* (brinjal), *maull* (radish), and other plants, which grow behind the cottage, and ministered, no doubt, to the supply of the culinary wants of its inmates. It was owned by Lochun Dhara, a Pycasht ryot of Babu———. His bread depended on 51 beegahs of *salee* land, which he cultivated with rice. His family consisted of his wife and three children. The eldest, a daughter of 12 years, assisted her mother in the discharge of the household duties. The other two were sons, the



elder being five, and the younger three years old. Shymma Shundoree had been lately married to Rutton, the youngest son of the Mundal of the village. Lochun had been most punctual in the payment of his rents. He was not heard to grumble when a new abwab was imposed. Poor man! what would his grumbling have availed him. It was said that on the last occasion of the marriage of his daughter, he pleaded his utter incapacity to comply with the enormous demands, that were made upon him, as a matter of course, by the myrmidons of the zemindar. But when hard pressed by them, who would not, he knew, hear of any excuse, he borrowed money from a mahajaun (money-lender) at the interest of 30 per cent, and paid the *marcha*.

The scene of his daily labour was a field, a mile and half distant from his house, and a tank in which he fished. As a *Taor* (fisherman) his resources were derived more from the resources of the latter than that of the former. Those resources, though scanty and wrung from hard and unmitigated toil, were adequate to the supply of the necessities of a ryot's life. His children did not starve. He himself did not want a rag to cover him. He used to rise with the dawn, and go to work. It was generally passed noontide when he returned home, his face and body all bathed in perspiration, and as greeted by his little innocents, who clung to his neck and asked him a thousand unmeaning questions. When he was thus caressed by his children and cheered by the hearty welcome of his good lady busily occupied with the manifold duties of her household, and saw the thin blue smoke rising from his thatched roof, and curling upward along the branches of the *Osul* tree, he forgot his toil and felt himself happy.

Thus had Lochun Dhara lived for several years in the zemindari of Babu——— in the quiet enjoyment of domestic happiness. The unvaried and monotonous round of toil to which he was doomed, did not render his life miserable. Habituated to drudge 'from morn to noon, and from noon to dewy eve,' he did not feel his spirit crushed down by the drudgery. The idea of supporting his wife and children nerved his arm and sweetened his labours.



It was a raw cold December morning, and the rich red tints, which herald the advent of the sun, struggled into his room through the apertures of its dilapidated roof, when Lochun Dhara was startled from his slumbers by loud cries of 'Break open the door, break open the door.'

To rise from his bed, to clothe him in his foul and tattered linen, to awake though not without some difficulty his helpmate, was the work of a moment. He then stole into one of the corners of his room, and saw, through a chink in the wall, a crowd collected round his house evidently with no friendly intention. What could be the cause of this violence? What could have brought the Gomastah, and at so unusual an hour, to his house? Why was a Chaprassee talking with the Gomastah in whispers? These were the questions which Lochun asked himself. At last a thought flashed upon him. Two months' rent was due from him! The heavy rate of interest at which he borrowed the money in order to gratify the demand made upon him by the zemindar in consequence of his daughter's marriage, having eaten up his income, he has been obliged to fall into arrears of rent.

Lochun hit upon the truth.

Ere Lochun could fully comprehend the magnitude of his danger, the door was burst open, and he was dragged by the Chaprassee from the corner of his room in which he had ensconced himself. 'Will you pay us the arrears,' questioned the Gomastah. 'I wish I could,' replied the ryot, trembling through fear. 'You know the evils, which the strong arm of law inflicts on the defaulter?' 'I do, but O Gomastah Mohashya' cried the poor old man falling prostrate before the Gomastah, 'my case is entitled to your kind consideration, I have been most punctual in the payment of my *kist* (instalment), and I would not have defaulted even on this occasion, had I not been obliged to pay a heavy rate of interest to Neemchund, the mahajaun, for the money I borrowed from him in order to meet your demands on my daughter's marriage.

'It cannot be helped,' was the laconic answer of the functionary, on whose mercy he had thrown himself. His house then



underwent the process of looting. Every thing that it contained was seized, not exempting a plough, a pair of *kodals* (spades), a *hathan*, &c., which the Regulation XVII, 1793, sec. 9, and Regulation V, 1842, sec. 14, distinctly and emphatically exempt from being distrained for arrears. Deprived of all his little all, Lochun caught the courage of desperation and began to remonstrate to the Gomastah against his forcible entering into his zenana. 'Your zenana,' sneered the Gomastah with sovereign contempt. 'Here Peadah, drag the fellow into the Cutcherry, while I go to attach his crops and fish.' Need I tell you what followed? It would be only to repeat twice told tale. Lochun was bound in hands and carried to the Cutcherry by the Chaprassee, who in the way administered to him a few dozens of blows and slaps. He was there soundly thrashed by one of the zemindar's peons for having dared to insinuate, that the Gomastah had broken into his zenana. He was imprisoned for several days. A kabuleut was manufactured in his name. He was taken to the Collector's Court. A summary decree was obtained against him. His property was sold. He was thrown into jail. And his family but I would not to describe their suffering." *Ibid.*, November, 18, 1843.

"The reader is aware of the infamous conduct of A (a wealthy zemindar), who, in open day, assaulted the editor of a public journal in the streets of Calcutta, and carried him off by violence to his own residence at B, a few miles to the south-west of the metropolis, where he had been subjected not only to imprisonment, but, as it is affirmed, to torture. An application was made to the Supreme Court for a Writ of *Habeas Corpus* ordering the offender to produce the person of the victim. He had the audacity to return, that he was not subject to the jurisdiction of the Court. The Court immediately decided, that it was a bad return, and directed an attachment to be issued; but to this day, the unfortunate editor had not been released. It speaks volumes against the inefficiency of our Police, that a native like A is able so completely to set it at defiance, and to retain an individual whom he had illegally seized, for a period of more than



ten days, within two hours' journey of the Metropolis. What opinion must the native community form of our laws, when no redress can be obtained in so heinous a case of wrong during so protracted a period? When A is caught, we trust, he will be treated as he deserves, and that the Governor-General will mark his sense of the enormity of such conduct by forbidding him again to enter the Government House." *The Friend of India*, January 23, 1840.

Judgment. Sir E. Ryan, Chief Justice. "A, it now remains for the Court to express the opinion, which it has formed of the contempt of which you are confessedly guilty. In doing so, it will be necessary also to observe shortly on some parts of what has been said by counsel in your behalf, that you have committed a contempt has never been denied—it admitted of no doubt, but it was necessary to make certain enquiries, which the law prescribes before we come to judgment upon the offence. That enquiry has taken place, and the result of the enquiry—the interrogatories put and the answers you have given—are all before the Court—and they confirm the opinion, which from the first we entertained. The fact stands unaltered as it did when brought originally to our notice. You seized, by the aid of your servants, the body of D, and after the process of this Court was served upon you, you persisted in detaining him. You did not obey our Writ...With regard to the contempt committed, we shall certainly lean to the side of mercy, because that contempt proceeds no higher than to a contempt of the process of this Court; yet there are attendant matters, which cannot be passed over without consideration. Your answers do not deny the unjustifiable seizure of D; you do not deny the detention of your captive after the receipt of the attachment we issued; you do not deny his mal-treatment; and the jurisdiction of this Court remains uncontroverted. The offence then remains unaltered, and it now only remains for the Court to apportion the punishment. You have already been a long time imprisoned—but though your confinement has been unusually protracted, it has been in consequence primarily of your own errors. We have taken, however, this length of imprison-



ment into consideration, and shall not add to it, but think the process of this Court will be sufficiently vindicated by imposing upon you a fine of 1,000 rupees to the Queen, until which is paid, you must continue in prison." Quoted in the *Friend of India*, March 26, 1840.

Some Passages in the Life of a Bengalee Ryot told by Himself.

"Meanwhile our old zemindar died, and his son, a young man, who knew English and drank spirits, began to rule over us. He was not content with the moderate rate of rent like his father, and the very first thing he did to have all our lands measured, and the result was, that our rents were increased by about one-half, while the old *khurcha* and *abwabs* were kept on as well. There were great disturbances in the next village to ours, all the ryots turned out, and beat the Ameens, but the next day about 40 Burkundazes, with an elephant, on which was the zemindar's Naib, came down, and punished the whole village by plundering their houses, and levying a contribution from them, and some of the chief men were taken to the zemindar's Cutcherry, where they were all beaten and imprisoned for a week. Some of them complained to the Magistrate, but the zemindar gave the Police 1,000 rupees to hush up the matter, and nothing came of it. We did not rise in our village, but about this time, the Magistrate came; he had with him tents and horses and elephants and hundreds of servants, and we thought that such a great man would be able to protect us from the zemindar, so we all went to him, and told him about it. He spoke to us kindly and said, that the land belonged to the zemindar, and that he could raise the rent if he liked. We could not understand this, for we and our fathers had held the land long before the zemindar's people came there, and we then told him about the *khurcha* and *abwabs*, and he told us, that the zemindar had no right to take them, and we need not pay unless we liked; and if the zemindar took them by force, we were to complain to him. After hearing this, we did not pay for a long time, and the zemindar's people refused to give us receipts, unless we paid *khurcha* as well as rent. However he



did not dare to attack us openly because of the Magistrate, so he did a worse piece of villainy; he sent one of his Amlahs down to our village, who slept there, and in the morning complained at the Thanah, that a dacoity had been committed by us on the cart in which he was travelling, and that he had been robbed of a great deal of money. The Darogah came down, and the Amlah pointed us out as Dacoits, our houses were searched, and our wives insulted, and 19 of us were tied together and taken to the Magistrate. We were nearly two months in prison, and then the Magistrate let us go, and said the case was false. After this, as you may suppose, we paid whatever was asked for; it was better to pay a little more than to be shut up in prison for two months. Some time after the zemindar wished to curry favour with the Magistrate, so he determined to make a dispensary at his house so we all had to work at it by turns, and bring the bamboos and straw for it. The zemindar was very much disappointed, because, he did not get the title of Rai Bahadur for building it, &c." *A Correspondent of the Indian Observer, May 31, 1873.*

"A village had been sold in execution of a decree, and a stranger had purchased it. This new zemindar very soon took measures for enhancing the rents of his ryots. He was successful in obtaining *kabuleuts* at increased rates from several ryots, but the headman of the village (Mundul), whose example was most influential, sturdily held out, and led the opposition. It was resolved, that he should be coerced; so at day-break one morning, a party of zemindar's peons and adherents armed with *latties* and guns started from the Cutcherry for the Mundul's homestead, with the view of capturing and carrying him off. This homestead fortunately was a substantial one, and the different huts were connected by pretty strong bamboo fencing. Thus the *bari* (house) admitted of being defended by a relatively small force. In the Mundul's family were four or five grown up men, besides the women and children, and in addition to these, as it happened, two friends, come from a distance, had passed the previous night there. No one had left the *bari*, when the zemindar



dar's party arrived. The latter very largely out-numbering the men of the homestead, with threats of an abominable kind, called upon the Mundul to surrender; but these threats only nerved the Mundul and his friends to resistance in defence of the female apartment. For a time the attacking party seemed unable to do anything, until taunted by their leader, they at last made a rush, broke down the fence at one corner of the homestead, and fired a gun at the men inside, of whom two fell. The immediate effect, however, was not that, which might have been anticipated, for one of the remaining defenders promptly seized the gun, which had just been fired, knocked down its owner, two of his companions laid hold each of an opponent, and the zemindar's party forthwith decamped, leaving three of their number prisoners in the hands of the Mundul and his kinsmen. The cost of the victory was severe, for it was found, that one of the two men, who had been shot, was dead." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. LIX., p. 357.

"Notwithstanding all the efforts of Government to improve the relation between zemindars and ryots, no satisfactory result has been obtained as yet. The following case will illustrate what we mean:—A and B, the ryots of C, zemindar of D were called upon on the 2nd instant by E, the Barahill of the zemindar, to settle rent. The ryots punctually went to his place, but refused to pay the full amount demanded from them. An altercation having ensued, they prepared to leave the spot, on which F, G, and H, surrounded them, and began to attack them from all sides with *latties* and *garasas*. The poor men fell down, and one of them—A—died shortly after from the effects of wounds inflicted by the myrmidons of the landlord." *The Behar Herald*, quoted in the *Englishman*, May 10, 1878.

"We have to record another case of riot resulting in the death of a man A. In the village of B, $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile west of the C station, D, E, and A, had a joint crop-field. E was the proprietor of the village, and there had been frequent disputes



between the zemindar and the ryots. On the present occasion the ryots went to reap the crop, but were opposed by the zemindar's party. A scuffle ensued in which one of the ryots, A was killed." *Ibid. Ibid. June, 28, 1878.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FRIEND OF INDIA.

SIR.—The attention of our Committee has been directed to the outrages recently inflicted on the Native Christians in the district of Burrishal. The Rev. Mr. Page has put us in possession of the facts, and more recently my esteemed colleague, C. B. Underhill, Esq. has informed us of the present position of the affair. After deliberating on the statements laid before them, the Committee passed the following resolution:—"That the account, which Mr. Underhill has given in his letter of November 22nd of the persecution of the Native Christians in Burrishal, has been heard by this Committee with deep sympathy and regret; that Mr. Underhill and his brethren in India be encouraged to prosecute the suit in defence of the oppressed Native Christians, by the most prudent and inexpensive, but by the most decided measures possible; and that from time to time, all such well-ascertained facts, as may facilitate a vigorous co-operation at home, be forwarded to the secretary for the guidance of the Committee."

It seemed to me desirable, that this resolution should be made known in India, partly to encourage Native Christians by communicating to them, that their friends in England are not indifferent to their wrongs, and partly to strengthen the hands of the Missionaries by assuring them, that here as far as possible, we would assist them in resisting these aggressions on the person and property of members of their Churches. As this object will be best secured by the insertion of this letter in the *Friend of India*, I respectfully solicit that favour.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sd.) Fred. Trestrial, *Secretary.*

Baptist Mission House, London.

February 25, 1856.



Remarks by the *Friend of India*. "Zemindars may remember, that Parliament once convinced will not be checked by the fears, which hamper the Legislative Council. The Perpetual Settlement, which is the zemindars' sheet anchor, protects them against any increase of assessment. But it does not prohibit Parliament from passing a law to make forfeiture of State, the penalty of oppression amounting to felony. They will find that there is not much mercy at home for idolatrous landholders, perverting the ill-gotten powers left them by a lax legislation to oppress converts to the true faith." *The Friend of India*, April 10, 1856.

"It is sufficient that *Shulava* runs not mad at the conduct of certain incarnations! It cannot cry only because of its stone-heart. We published in our issue of the 25th ultimo an instance of the most horrible oppression by A, son of B, perpetrated in D. We also published several other instances of oppression by them in our former issues. We have already informed our readers of the most horrible oppression (by B) of a widow named C. It remained only to draw a knife across the throat of one G. Six suits for enhancement of rent, thirty-two for arrears of rent, two for *chappi* and *khas khaman*, altogether forty, have been hung round his neck; and the poor fellow is now gasping. The Munsiff of D is now deciding them. Twenty suits have been decided; out of these, only one for arrears of rent has been decided in favour of A, and that also on appeal. The suits having been decided against him by the Munsiff, A appealed in some of them to E. J. Birch, Judge of 24-Pergunnahs. We place before our readers the literal translation of his judgment in suit No. 278 of 1872. We do not know whether the blood of our readers, on reading it, will become hot like ours. A is an educated man; therefore Mr. Birch remarked, that he had no confidence in the light of education and civilization of this country."

Judgment. "The case is evidently a false one. If the Munsiff had committed A to the Magistrate, it is most pro-



bable, he would have been punished for his guilt. It is not proper to acquit those, who waste the time of the Judges by instituting evidently false suits, &c." *The Shulava Shamachar, Mugh 9, 1279 Hegira.*

"Babu A, zemindar of S, within the jurisdiction of B Thanah, dragged a widowed daughter of C to his house on a charge of abortion. The Sub-deputy Babu H and the Jemadar of the Police station were present there at the time; they also ordered the woman to be arrested. The zemindar was at first unable to make the woman confess her guilt. Then they three took her into a room, and there examined her, whether milk flowed from her breast. Thus they extorted confession from her of her guilt. The Babus then confined her there for the night, and ordered a Chowkeedar, whose name was M, to guard her. On the following day, she was *challaned* or sent under guard to the Police, and thence to N, the Deputy Magistrate of R. He ordered her to be examined by a Doctor; the result of the examination was, that her pregnancy and abortion were entirely false; only there was no menstrual discharge for two months; that also happened after a few days. Consequently, there was an end of her oppression by the zemindar and the Jemadar.

The woman brought a suit before N for damages for insulting and unlawfully confining her. The case was tried on Wednesday, the 27th August. All the sons of the rich have been acquitted by the decision of N. The witness, who was thoroughly acquainted with all the facts from beginning to end, was not present; the widow insisted to issue warrants in his name, but the Deputy Magistrate turned a deaf ear. The evidence of only one witness was taken, and that also not in a good way. There were other witnesses present in the Court; they were not even called in. 'Keeping her in confinement and so forth' were proved 'by the words of the witness, whose evidence had been taken. From the report of the Jemadar, it was evident, that the woman was confined, and the milk of her breast examined.



We have briefly stated the facts, as we have got them. When N caused the woman to be examined by the Doctor, then it could not be denied, that the charge which had been brought against her was false. It cannot be said, that she sung the spot of her own character to be insulted by five hands; it must have been, that she was forced to bring the words of great sin into her tongue by threat of extortion. A and the Jemadar extorted the words from her mouth; consequently we are unable to understand on what ground N acquitted them. If the Deputy Babu acquitted them thinking they were gentlemen, then we should say, that if they committed such outrage, they were not worthy of the name of 'gentle,' and then again what was the difference between the gentle and the poor in the eye of law. We bring this to the notice of the Lieutenant-Governor, hoping there would be a special investigation into the case. We pray His Honor to maintain the honor of the poor widow." *Ibid.*, *Bhadra 25, 1280 Hegira*.

"The Deputy Magistrate at first dismissed the case, in which the zemindar of S was implicated. The Lieutenant-Governor ordered him to try it again; and he has sent the Head Constable and the Chowkeedar to jail. We asked, N himself dismissed the case, and, on the orders from the superior authority, found some of the defenders guilty. What is the meaning of this? We are glad to hear, that the Commissioner of the Nuddca Division has sent for explanation from N. However we doubt very much concerning this case. We cannot understand at all, why the zemindar has been acquitted. We hear if he is regularly and fairly tried, a certain Officer of Government will fall in great danger. We also hear, that several great men implicated in this case are trying to bribe the editors of some newspapers. However we cannot remain satisfied until the case is tried again by an able Judge." *Ibid.*, *Pous 9, 1280 Hegira*.

Oppression by A.

"Is there any natural relation like that of the catable and the eater between the zemindars and us, that we should love so



much to kill them? We have distinctly told the words of our mind, that to do good to the poor, especially to the ignorant ryots, is our chief aim. As the zemindars are now enjoying the unexampled prosperity by exacting the wealth of the ryots, so let them distribute a little among them, and look upon them like children, then they will find, that there is no friend of theirs like *Shulava*. Now as he is speaking on behalf of the ryots, so he will do on theirs. In short *Shulava* can say, that he loves the king and the subject, the rich and the poor. It is his earnest desire, that the wealth and respect of all be maintained. However the oppressions of the ryots by the zemindars have now become intolerable. No one can know when they secretly lay their hands on the lives of the poor. They being submerged have long since been drinking water. We hope that the gentlemen of the country would all unite in giving full publicity to their oppressions. It has now become necessary, that they should be insulted for their own conduct at least in the society of gentlemen. We have several times spoken of the oppressions of the ryots by B, son of———. This time we publish for the information of our readers the judgment delivered by the Joint Magistrate of Serampur on A.

R. Plaintiff.

A and others Defendants.

Judgment.

A charge was brought against A and his two servants, that they had illegally confined and beaten R. For it has been said, that R rented a piece of land from A. There being no good terms between D and his son R, R sold it to D, father of A.

A's questions and answers, whether true or false, are shameful to every human being, especially to a man of his position. He did not at all feel shame confess in a Court of Justice, that his father D had suborned the witnesses in a false suit.

The mal-treatment of R up to the time of his entering the house of A appears true to me. The last part of it—that he was thrown in a senseless state under a tamarind tree—has not been



fully proved, yet I have no doubt of the evidence first given in the case.

(Sd.) John Boxwell,
Joint Magistrate.

January 21, 1873.

The Court sees that A, I, and N, are guilty of the offence complained of in the application, that is, they illegally confined one R, and, for this reason, committed an offence under Section 342 of the Indian Penal Code. Therefore the Court fines A fifty rupees, and sentences N and I to fifteen days' rigorous imprisonment.

(Sd.) John Boxwell,
Joint Magistrate.

January 21, 1873. *Ibid.*, Falgun 8, 1279 Hegira.

This Time the Turn of Karta Mahashaya.

Reader hear. Babu———of———, sometime ago, instituted suits against P of the above village for recovering the total sum of one rupee, one anna, and six earas, being the arrears of rent, and, getting four exparte decrees, executed them illegally and privately—sold by auction fourteen cottahs of *lakhrāj* land, the value of which is about 500 rupees, and which is situated in the backdoor of P. He himself bought it at a very low price. Afterwards P came to the knowledge of it, and brought a suit in the Serampur Munsiff's Court for recovering his lost property. On 31st August 1871, the case was decided in favour of the plaintiff, and against the defendant Babu———. The latter made an appeal against the decision of the Munsiff's Court in the Court of Subordinate Judge of Hughli. On March 21, 1872, the appeal was dismissed, and the decision of the Munsiff's Court upheld. We give below the substance of the judgment. Our readers, on reading the following lines, will be able to understand at least the semblance of the means he had adopted for oppressing the people, and of the respect he has for justice, truth, kindness, and virtue.