



so long as these aristocrats are on their side. If they are really anxious to be popular—to see their names engraved in golden characters in the hearts of the people—then instead of bestowing empty titles upon a few zemindars, let them confer real benefits—~~instead~~ let them offer high judicial and executive appointments upon those natives, who really deserve them, and above all, let them emancipate the hundred millions of ryots from the grasping slavery of the zemindars, malguzars, and talukdars. We think it would not be out of place to quote here the following lines:—

“Of all the titles, in the eyes of the native public, this especial one (Rai Bahadurship) has become sickening, and the people have come to look upon it with contempt. Among the new Rai Bahadurs we find L——, mukim and jeweller to His Excellency the Viceroy, and Babu——, treasurer. These gentlemen are welcome to the honors bestowed on them. But we see no reason why those European gentlemen, who are jewellers or tailors by appointment to His Excellency the Viceroy, should have no titles conferred on them; or why Mr. P——, the Viceroy's confectioner, who was no insignificant character at the Delhi Assemblage, should be unhonored, why His Excellency's Head *Khidmutgar* should not be created a Khan Bahadur. The very members of the Bengal Council find themselves no more honored than the Viceroy's mukim or cash-keeper, and the Hon'ble Babus Kristo Das Pal and Ram Sunker Sen are placed in the same category with L—— and Babu G——.” *The Indian Mirror* quoted in the *Statesman*, January 18, 1877.

“A cess of four annas in the rupee was levied by Rajah—— of——, on the occasion of his getting his title. Most of the ryots paid the cess, but the Christians about—— resisted it. An enquiry was instituted, which shewed that no violence had been used; payment was optional.” *The Land Revenue Administration Report for the Year 1876-77*, p. 50.

The Indigo-Planters.

We think it is necessary that we should crave the permission of our readers to trouble them for a while with a short plea for



dwelling on the oppressions of the indigo-planters. We have proved before, perhaps, to the satisfaction of our readers, that the ryots have suffered much in person and property in consequence of the corruption, inefficiency, and the oppression of the Police, and that the zemindari system is the true cause of its failure. Here it will be our painful duty to prove, that the zemindari system is also one of the principal causes of the oppressions of the ryots by the indigo-planters. We firmly believe, that if it had not prevailed, they would never have suffered so much in their hands. (We lay stress upon the italicized words). Indeed much of the oppressions of the indigo-planters may safely be laid at the door of the zemindars. We draw the attention of our readers to the facts, that some zemindars both Native and European are indigo-planters, and that most of the latter are Europeans. Their oppressions are as proverbial as those of the zemindars. Hence it would appear, that many ryots, who cultivate indigo, suffer zemindari and indigo oppressions, and are under their despotic sway. If our readers think seriously and calmly, they cannot but come to the conclusion, that the oppressions, which they have practised and are still practising upon their ryots in their position of indigo-planters, would never have been practised to so great an extent, if they had not been in the position of their zemindars. The position of these unfortunate creatures, who hold lands and cultivate them ~~with them~~ with indigo under them is scarcely better than that of the slaves, and is somewhat different from that of their brethren, who hold lands under a zemindar and cultivate them with indigo under a planter. That the latter too suffer zemindari and indigo oppressions, is clearly manifest from the fact, that they are under both of them. The only difference between them is, that the former must patiently submit to their fate, and bear all the oppressions, which their masters are pleased to practise upon them, while the latter when oppressed by the one may fly to the protection of the other; but they are always put into great difficulty, and hardly know what to do—whom to side with—when there is a dispute between the planter and the zemindar. We can hardly conceive a position more worse than what they



are placed in thereby. Unfortunately for them, the disputes between them are almost of every-day occurrence. It is a self-evident fact, that one cannot serve two masters at a time. Hence it would appear that they always incur displeasure of one of them, and are threatened with vengeance, and that horrible oppressions and outrages are often perpetrated on them on slightest pretexts. We think we have already wounded the feelings of our readers by placing before them pictures of various sorts of oppressions practised upon the ryots by the zemindars. It was our earnest desire not to trouble them with any more. But calm and deliberate consideration leads us to the conclusion, that we will certainly ill-discharge our duty towards the vast millions in trying to represent them, if we omit the oppressions of the indigo-planters. Moreover the oppressions of the zemindars are so intermingled with those of the indigo-planters, that it is almost impossible to dwell fully upon the former without dwelling upon the latter. Some of our readers may think, that the oppressions of the indigo-planters have ceased to exist from the year 1859, and that therefore there is now no need of dwelling upon them. But that is really not the case. They are almost as prevalent in 1879 as they were in 1859, the only difference being that in 1859 the ryots rose to open rebellion, which drew the attention of the Government, and finally led to the appointment of a Commission to enquire into its causes, while in 1879 they patiently submit to their fate, and sometimes rise to little rebellions, which are quickly suppressed. If the oppressions of the indigo-planters had not existed, we would never have troubled our readers with them. That they are as prevalent in 1879 as they were in 1859, will appear from two well-known facts, that many ryots of Behar and Tirhut, notwithstanding their proverbial tenacity to their ancestral lands, have been forced by the oppressions of the indigo-planters to leave them and to prefer the protection of the Nepal Raj to that of the vaunted British Government, and that almost all the leading journals lately urged upon the Government to appoint a Commission to enquire into the causes of their grievances. The perusal of many papers both official and non-official, some



of which we have quoted below, leaves no doubt in our minds, that the oppressions which are now practised upon the ryots of Behar and Tirhut, are almost similar to those, which were practised upon those of Rajshahi, Nadya, and Jessore, and which have been very ably set forth by the Indigo Commissioners in their Report of 1860. It would be simple infatuation in us to try to add a single word, and to repeat them in our own words. We also think our readers would scarcely believe us, if we, instead of proving the oppressions of the zemindars and the indigo-planters by long quotations from official and non-official papers, attempted to prove them by using our own words. For this reason we have refrained from saying much of our own, and greatly availed ourselves throughout the book of the writings, speeches, and evidence of others. We believe our readers will be firmly convinced on perusal of the following pages, that the oppressions now practised upon the ryots by the indigo-planters would have been scarcely tolerated a single day by any civilized Government in the world except that of India, and that we would have been certainly wanting in our duty towards the vast millions, if we had omitted them. With these remarks we leave our readers to judge from the following extracts, how far our rulers have discharged, and are still discharging, their duty towards the people, who have been entrusted by kind Providence to their care and protection. To guard ourselves from being misunderstood, we distinctly state that there are a few indigo-planters, who do not oppress their ryots, and consequently do not deserve in any way the least censure from us.

"I beg to submit a pamphlet published in Bengalee and widely circulated, called 'The Oppressions of the Indigo-Planters.' It contains songs, which have been sung far and wide among the natives and set to music. The drift of some of those songs is the following: that the interest on the planter's advances accumulates for three generations; that the people sell their *pottaks* (leases), they do not cross the Ganges, that is, get free from the planter; that when the planter first applies to the ryot to sow indigo, he comes like a beggar, but at last he makes grass to grow



on the ryot's bones; the indigo-planters come in like a needle, but go out like a plough-share, and are desolating Bengal like flocks of locusts; the king looks on while the subjects are drowned; all is gone; to whom shall we apply but to Almighty God; should we shut our eyes at night, we see the white face before us, and, through fear, our lives fly away like a bird; our souls are burning in the strong flames of pain." (Translation and original handed in). *Rev. James Long. The Indigo Commission Report, 1860*, p. 155.

"I myself, at the beginning of the mutiny, read a pamphlet published by one of the courtiers of the King of Oude, in which he argues, that the indigo-planting oppression is as great in Bengal, as any system of oppression that has been alleged to be practised by the King of Oude; and that if the King of Oude is to be deprived of his kingdom on account of the oppression practised in his territories, the English Government ought also to be deprived of Bengal on account of the indigo and other oppressions they wink at." *Ibid. Ibid.*, p. 156.

"Do your ryots sow indigo, because it is profitable to them, or because they wish to please you as their zemindar?—It is not at all profitable to them, but rather a loss, as my memo will show. They sow it to please me, their landlord, and because they have sown it before, and also they wish to avoid the possibility of strangers coming in." *A Well-known Zemindar. Ibid.*, p. 38.

"You have stated that the ryots would be glad, if the cultivation of indigo were discontinued; will you state the reason the ryots have for this?—In the first place, ryots are subjected to a great deal of annoyance and exaction by the factory servants; even with my personal supervision, I am unable to prevent the oppression of my servants." *Ibid. Ibid.*

"There is no profit at all. If the ryot is to cultivate indigo, he must give his exclusive attention to it for the whole year to the neglect of other crops, which would give a large profit of 50 to 100 per cent." *Another Zemindar. Answer to Question 182. Ibid.*



"If the ryots have, for the last 20 years, been unwilling to sow indigo, how then have they gone on cultivating the plant up to the present time?—By numerous acts of oppression and violence, by locking them up in godowns, burning their houses, beating them, &c." *Ibid. Ibid. 186. Ibid.*

"First, I believe it (indigo-cultivation) to be unprofitable, and therefore I cannot believe that any ryot would consent to take up that cultivation, involving as it does serious pecuniary loss to himself; secondly it involves an amount of harassing interference, to which no free agent would subject himself; thirdly, from a consideration of the acts of violence to which the planters have throughout been compelled to resort to keep up this cultivation as proved by the Criminal Records of Bengal; fourthly, from the admissions of the planters themselves, that if the ryots were free agents, they would not cultivate indigo; fifthly, the necessity under which the planters state themselves to be of spending large sums in the purchase of zemindaries and other description of rights giving them territorial influence and powers of compulsion, without which they would be unable to procure the cultivation of indigo; sixthly, the statement of the ryots and the people generally in the district in which I have been; seventhly, the fact, that as soon as the ryots became aware of the fact, that they were by law and practically free agents, they at once refused to continue the cultivation." *Honble A. Eden. Ibid. 3574. Ibid.*

"My own impression was that the indigo-cultivation there (in Pubna) was extremely distasteful to the ryots. I derive my impression from conversing with the ryots, and generally from cases that came before me, but I must add that certainly the great majority of cases were from those estates in which the disputes between Mr K—— and Babu R—— were going on, so that it is difficult to say in what cases the ryot's antagonism to planters was the result of his own impulse, and in what he was acting under the influence of his zemindar." *Ibid. Ibid. 3769 Ibid.*

"Then is it your decided opinion, that indigo-cultivation cannot be carried on without zemindari influence, and, as a conse-



quence without oppression?—Yes." *Late Babu Prasanna Coomari Tagore. Ibid., 3758. Ibid.*

"Do the ryots of zemindars cultivate indigo as unwillingly for them, as you say they do for planters?—They are equally unwilling to cultivate indigo for zemindars, as they are for English planters." *A Zemindar. Ibid., 3527. Ibid.*

"I have seen ryots stand up and say (putting their hands up to their throats):—'Let the Government cut our throats and send soldiers to kill us with bullets, but we will not sow indigo.'" *Rev. F. Schurr. Ibid., p. 66.*

"I found for the first time in all my Indian experience the hand of the planter systematically lifted up against the life and property of the ryot; a system that appeared to me neither to recognize the existence of a Magistrate on earth, nor a God in heaven. I found a total absence of ordinary justice." *Edward DeLatour, Esq. Ibid.*

"An Indigo Factory had long been established in a certain Zillah, and had met with such signal success as to induce other settlers to go there also. One gentleman, however, took up his quarters so near the old established Factory as to be a source of annoyance to its owners; he was at first civilly desired to decamp, but as he had built his Factory on ground of which he had a lease in perpetuity from the zemindar, he naturally demurred.

Petty quarrels arose between them. Charges and counter-charges, some true, some false, were made, and with various success, before the Magistrate; but the new-comer maintained his ground.

This was not calmly to be borne by men, whose word in that part of the country had hitherto been law, and the annihilation of the Factory was determined in. The Police was summoned, and notice was given them of the intended outrage. Large bribes were given, and threats of vengeance held out, if any mention of the affair should reach the Magistrate's ear, and the night was fixed upon for the attack. Armed with clubs and spears, and provided with spades, pick-axes, and baskets, a body of three hundred men silently and slowly wended their way to



the doomed Factory in the dead of the night. Its occupants were fast asleep, and the English settler was seized in his bed. He and his servants were put in irons, and he was taken below to witness the demolition of his Factory.

The band was divided into three parties. The first collected everything combustible and set fire to it. By the light of the fire the second party broke up the Factory with their spades and pick-axes; and the third carried away the materials in their baskets, and threw them into a deep *nullah* (ditch), which ran about two hundred yards from the house. As the morning dawned, the attacking party reached their own Factory carrying with them their prisoners, whom they meant to detain till matters were finally adjusted. One servant, however, unperceived by the aggressors, had effected his escape, and given information of the outrage to the Magistrate. The Police Darogah was desired to investigate the affair, and after consultation with the principal aggressor, boldly reported, that there was not a word of truth in the statement, that he had moreover seen Mr.——— a guest at the house of the party charged, and that he also had affirmed to the falsehood of the statement. Dissatisfied with the report, the Magistrate summoned Mr.——— to make personal enquiries of him, and he was permitted to attend the Court, in company, however, with the party charged. Face to face each fought his battle before the Magistrate, the one affirming, that the outrage as above detailed had actually occurred, the other, that it had not, and that Mr.——— had never had a Factory on the spot stated by him. Witnesses were summoned on both sides, but their statements were so conflicting, that the Magistrate determined to proceed in person to the spot. The rains, however, set in, the country became flooded, and his departure was unavoidably postponed. Mr.——— went to Calcutta, and the other party returned to his Factory. Quietly and carefully was every vestige of the Factory destroyed. Factory removed even to the very foundations, the earth was smoothly levelled and neatly laid down with turf, and before the visit of the Magistrate, the spot was covered by a dense grass-jungle. After a personal inspection of the spot, the Magistrate



returned to his Cutcherry fully satisfied that the charge was false.

The other tale we mean to tell will shew the Police to have been the sufferers, and is one among many instances we could give of the difficulties with which they are surrounded.

There was an indigo-planter of very gentlemanly and winning manners, who chiefly resided at the Sudder Station, where he almost daily associated with the Judge and Magistrate—the concerns of his Factory being to all appearance left to the care of his Gomastah or Steward.

Complaints occasionally were made to the Magistrate of acts of oppression on the part of this gentleman, which, however, were disapproved; but as they increased in frequency, the Magistrate began to suspect that they might not have been so unfounded as he had imagined them to be, and he inwardly determined to visit the scene of the next alleged outrage. He had not long to wait. The gentleman was charged with having rooted up the crop of rice of a ryot, and to have forcibly sown the ground with indigo, and the Police Darogah reported that the charge was true. There was now a fine opportunity for the Magistrate to see the state of things with his own eyes, and to test the probity of his Darogah, and he accordingly proceeded to the spot and pitched his tent on the contested field. The case was most clearly proved against the indigo-planter, and he was duly summoned to answer the charge. He instantly obeyed the summons, and with gentle urbanity expressed his regret, that the Magistrate should have been misled in such a wild goose chase. The evidence was read over to him and his countenance fell, and he instantly admitted, that though innocent, appearances were much against him, and that it would be difficult for him to disprove the charge, since the parties acquainted with the case were, of course, tutored against him, as he and the Darogah (who was elsewhere on duty) had long been enemies.

Deeply did he feel the awkwardness of his situation, but he requested the Magistrate, with a view to establish his innocence, that he would examine any uninterested parties, who might accidentally pass the tent. To this the Magistrate agreed, and very



shortly afterwards a party of villagers were seen crossing the plain. The Magistrate's Chaprassées were despatched to bring them to the tent, but so great was their alarm that they were with difficulty seized. They gave their evidence very reluctantly, admitted that the indigo-planter was oppressive, but that the present charge was false—the field of contention having never to their knowledge been cultivated by the complainant. The complaint was of course dismissed, and the Darogah punished for a false report, while the indigo-planter was received by the Magistrate into as much favour as ever. At length in a fit of inebriation he confessed, that 'he had done the Beak' by causing a well-suborned party of witnesses to cross the plain so soon as he should, according to the pre-concerted plan, appear at the tent-door in company with the Magistrate." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. III., p. p. 152-54.

"Have you ever had reason to believe or to think, that a village has been plundered by *lattials*?—I had once an opportunity of witnessing the consequences of an affray, which took place about six years ago in a village only five or six miles from Krishnagur; the name of the village is N———. I happened to be going to Bahirgachi to pay a visit to my congregation there, and on my way I had to pass through this village, which had been attacked by *lattials* only the day previous; the village was plundered and partly destroyed. I passed through the village early in the morning in my palanquin, and did not then observe as I passed through, that any thing had happened; but when I arrived at Bahirgachi, I found all the people both Non-Christians and Christians in a state of great excitement and fright. When I enquired into the cause of it, they seemed surprised that I did not know what had happened the day before, and then they told me all about it but rather in a cautious way, being evidently afraid, lest they should have to suffer for revealing the facts to me. I was told that the planter of the———factory had been anxious to get a footing for indigo in the village of M———, which belonged to a zemindar; it may be that some of the ryots had received advances. The zemindar was determined, that no indigo



should be sown in his village, and when at the seed-time the planter sent his people to sow indigo, they were driven back. The planter then made another effort, and sent some *lattials* to force the ryots, but these also were driven back. The planter then collected a large number of *lattials*, and sent them to the village; the planter himself was not present, and these men commenced the work of destruction. I was told, that one man was killed, one was missing, and two or three severely wounded, and that the houses were plundered and pulled down, and the women stripped of their cloths. I remained that day with my people at Bahirgachi, and in the following morning on my return to Krishnagur, I stopped at the village of M——— to verify the statement I had heard. I found the village wholly deserted; not a man, woman, or child, was to be seen; I saw also several broken down houses, but did not notice any burnt ones." *Rev. C. H. Blumhardt. The Indigo Commission Report, 1860, p. 119.*

"Was any investigation made into this matter by the authorities, and if so, with what result?—The case was tried in the Court of Krishnagur, and came also to the Sessions Court. About ten of the factory servants were sentenced to various periods of imprisonment varying from four to twelve years. An appeal was afterwards made by the planter to the Sudder Nizamut, and there the case was dismissed and the prisoners released. The Court was of opinion that there was not sufficient evidence of an affray having taken place at all." *Ibid. Ibid.*

"With regard to outrages on women, the brother of a man, whose wife had been taken away from a ghaut, came and told me of the incident; the man's story ran thus: two young women were fetching water at a ghaut, and were taken away by the servants of a planter. After finding out which was the woman that they wanted (who is said by the people to be one of the greatest beauties in Krishnagur) they let the other one go on her way, and the one who was the beauty, was carried to the factory. The Darogah was at once brought by her relations, but he went away without doing anything. Afterwards, I believe, they petitioned



a Deputy Magistrate near the place, who somehow or other got rid of it." *Rev. C. Bomwetsch. Ibid.*

"What became of the woman?—After being taken about to one or two factories and two or three other places, they at last put her down in the house of a native, who, I believe, was a relative of hers; from thence she was sent home.

Can you say how long the woman was absent?—I believe three days.

Who is the husband, and in what village does he reside?—He is a Kaiburto, and is a man of some property.

From what source is your knowledge of this charge derived?—From the statement of the woman's husband's brother; he told me this in Calcutta four weeks ago." *Ibid. Ibid., p. p. 38-9.*

Hon'ble A. Elen in his evidence before the Indigo Commission said: "One was the case of kidnapping in——Factory, ——, in the Rajshahi district, in which one man was confined and died in the godown, and his body was thrown by the factory servants and sunk by means of bags of bricks in a jheel. *Answer to Question 3579.*

My own impression is, that not one tithe of the offences actually committed ever came before any Court at all. *Ibid., 3595.*

Then do you consider, that the Government Officials have sacrificed justice to favour the planters?—I consider that it has frequently been the case, and I have stated so in official reports. I will go further and say that as an young Assistant, I confess I have favoured my own countrymen in several instances. *Ibid., 3602.*

The Police Courts have, until the last four or five years, been out of their (ryots') reach. The planter having the rights of a zemindar, has reigned over them with the powers of a despot. They dared not leave their homes to go and complain at a distant station; if they did so, they ran the risk of returning to find their cattle carried off, or a relative illegally confined. Even in cases in which, on these complaints, the Police when deputed to hold an investigation, sometimes through fear of the planter, and



sometimes corrupted by his money, nearly always influenced by some means or other, reported the case against the ryot. The ryot would then be worse than before, and his only hope of peace lay in cultivating indigo without opposition, but not a free agent. ... This intimacy 'greatest intimacy' between planters and Government Officials has very often, it may be without the knowledge of the planter, been made use of by the factory servants as a means to accomplish their wishes. Again, facilities of complaint have been afforded to the planters by the higher authorities from which the ryots are altogether excluded, and I believe it to be the case, that this privilege has been made use of to influence such higher authorities against such of the local authorities, as may shew a disposition to do justice between man and man. And there are cases in which the removal of officials has been attributed by the ryots to the influence brought to bear by those in the interests of the planters against such officials. *Ibid.*, 3607.

Moulvie Abdool Latief was removed from Kalaroa for giving an order protecting the ryots against the forcible entry of the planter. ... In my own case, I was, on private representations made by planters, reprimanded and interfered with by the Commissioner. Representations were made to the Government for my removal on the ground, that I had told the ryots that the cultivation of indigo was optional. And three petitions were presented by parties of influence in Calcutta within a few months demanding my removal on this account, and I had considerable difficulty in defending my own position and upholding my independence as a Magistrate. *Ibid.*, 3608.

My own experience leads me to believe, that fear of the planter's influence and fear of the representations he may make to their official superiors, render the Police very apt to side with the planter's people when the opposite party were poor natives. *Ibid.*, 3614.

In one district with which I am acquainted, the power of one farm is so great, that the ryots used to come across in my district to complain to me because they dared not go through their own district to reach the station at which their own Magistrate resided."



Ibid., 3617.

"When the time (of lease) expired, they (indigo-planters) sowed indigo forcibly, and this brought on a case of Act IV. of 1840, but on my producing copy of the terms of the lease, the planters lost the case. On this they assembled a great number of *lattials* and spearmen, and took away more than a thousand head of cattle from the three villages, and plundered them also." *A Zemindar. Answer to Question 3897.*

"You have had occasionally to interfere in quarrels between planters, zemindars, and ryots?—Yes; very often" *F. L. Beaufort, Esq. Ibid.*, 191.

"Do the zemindars ever instigate the ryots to break their contracts? —I have no doubt, they often do so." *Ibid. Ibid.*, 258.

"Have you ever known instances in which indigo ryots have been worse off than other ryots?—I have known instances, where the ryots have been so much harassed by the quarrels regarding indigo between planters and zemindars, or planters and planters, and have suffered so much in house and property, that they have left the village. I have known other cases in which the oppression of the planter has nearly depopulated a large tract of country; but as I have also known cases in which the ryots have suffered similarly from the zemindars, I cannot say that the one set of ryots is worse off than the other." *Ibid. Ibid.*, 270.

"In carrying on your cultivation did you suffer from the exactions or interference of the zemindars, and in what way? —When I had charge of the———in Jessore, a large *ijara* held by the———concern had expired. The zemindar tried to stop my cultivation in the villages (I believe upwards of 50 in number) for the purpose of inducing me to take another *ijara*. The concern lost 5,000 rupees per annum in rents under the former *ijara*, and if I had renewed it according to the terms which the zemindar then offered, we should have lost 10,000 rupees per annum. The consequence was, that I did not take the *ijara*, upon which the zemindar put the ryots up not to



cultivate the indigo for the concern. After some hesitation, however, the ryots did cultivate the indigo, and the consequence was that the zemindar commenced oppressing them by plundering their houses, &c, and the ryots were fortunate enough in that case—which they were not in all such cases—to get the zemindar's Naib put into jail for six months. I have had in my own part of the country, that is, in Marshedabad, a Dur-putneedar, suing for rent of lands at a rupee a beegha, when I held pottahs from the zemindar at 10 and 12 annas a beegha. The Dur-putneedar has taken me into the Civil Courts, but he does not treat his other ryots quite so civilly. The Dur-putneedar has been trying to increase the rents of his ryots in the whole Pergunnah to double what they used to be; some of the villagers in my part of the country resisted it. The consequence was that he commenced sundry oppressions upon the ryots, and the ryots appealed to the Magistrate. Upon this, the Dur-putneedar brought a charge against the ryots of one village of having plundered his Sudder Cutcherry and murdered one of his servants. The Dur-putneedar in this case was supported by the Jemadar and Burkundaz of a Police Farrer or station in the neighbourhood, who had the assurance to give evidence in favour of the Dur-putneedar; the Magistrate, however, saw through the case and dismissed it. The same Dur-putneedar carried away all the cattle belonging to the ryots of another village, and brought a charge against the ryots of this village of having plundered the village Cutcherry the night of the day on which the cattle were carried away. The ryots went with their complaint to the Court of a native Deputy Magistrate, and the Dur-putneedar also went with his complaint there, the ryots were bound over to appear on bail, and danced attendance at the Deputy Magistrate's Court for three months. So far I speak positively and from my own knowledge, but the result of the two cases I can only give from hearsay. I have heard that ten of the head ryots of the village have been imprisoned for six months and fined 200 rupees each in the case of the Dur-putneedar against the ryots. In the case of the ryots against the Dur-putneedar, four of his men have been put in jail for three months, and fined 50 rupees each."



W. G. Rose, Esq. *Ibid.*, 424.

"The zemindars, I know, often instigated the ryots against the planter, and forced the latter to renew the lease of a village, by encouraging the ryots not to cultivate indigo till the lease was renewed." J. H. Reilly, Esq. *Ibid.*, 2548.

Extracts from Minute by the Indigo Commissioners.

First, as regards the disparagement of the indigo system. It is asserted that the contract for the growth and production of the plant, so far from being voluntary, is forced upon the ryot, who is compelled by more or less of pressure to accept advances; that these advances are rarely given, or are not given in full after the first year or two; that the ryot is compelled to plough, sow, weed his land, and to cut and cart the plant at times when he would prefer being engaged in the cultivation of other crops of superior profit; that the land selected and marked off by the servants of the factory is often the best kind of land most carefully cultivated by the ryots and most needed by him for his own convenience, or, that land actually ready for other crops, or even sown with such crops, is forcibly ploughed up and resown with indigo; that the mere cultivation is thus rendered to him irksome, repulsive, and harassing in the highest degree; that owing to the precariousness of the crop, and the inadequacy of the payment, the ryot invariably falls into balances, and persons once agreeing to sow, bequeath the obligation to their descendants, who are either never able, or if able, are not allowed to free themselves and families from the debt, which their fathers have contracted with the factory; that the system which is thus founded on compulsion and maintained by force, is still further rendered odious by the extortion and oppression of the factory servants, who divert from its lawful end a portion even of the small and inadequate payment made to the cultivators; and that the lower orders of servants practise many other ways of oppressing the ryots, or of extorting money from them, such as, cutting their bamboos, taking away their thatching grass and the produce of their gardens, seizing their ploughs, and carrying away their cattle under pretence of damage done to the growing plant: that in order to



prevent ryots from disputing the will of the planter, more serious outrages are often committed, and that instances can be shewn when planters or their servants have burnt and knocked down homesteads, plundered bazars, kidnapped and carried off respectable inhabitants, and confined them for weeks and months in dark places, transporting them from factory to factory to elude the pursuit of the Police; that even darker outrages on women have been openly perpetrated; and that, in consequence, the feeling of the ryot is one of bitter but sullen hatred to the European; that with regard to the native landholders, the attitude and encroachments of the planter towards these persons led to frequent disputes, to violent affrays, to agrarian outrages, and to the consequent demoralization of the people; that constant complaints and protracted litigation have followed on these occurrences; that the planter, commencing to contract with ryots resident on estates of which the proprietary right is not held by the factory, has exerted a pressure on those ryots, who then seek the protection of their zemindar, or he has sought an occasion of provoking a quarrel with the landholder, in order, it is repeatedly asserted, to extort from the latter the grant of an estate on lease or in putnee: that the real and avowed object of extorting these concessions, is, that the planter may acquire the rights, influence, and position of a zemindar, without which he never would be able to compell the production of so much indigo for a single day; that these rights are rarely alienated, either temporarily or permanently, by the zemindar of his own free will; but that the alienation would not take if the Police were not inefficient, the laws weak, and the executive authorities and the Covenanted Magistrates in particular, disposed to side with the European, as against the native interest: that it is owing to the above causes, and not to voluntary acts of the native landholders, that the planters have managed to absorb so much of the zemindar's rights and properties: that no improvement is perceptible in the condition of ryots of villages where indigo is cultivated, as compared with that of the ryots, who do not cultivate indigo, but rather that the former are depressed and impoverished by the compulsory and profitless culti-



vation: that the system has been borne with so long, because the ryot of Bengal is of a passive and enduring nature, and that the dislike evinced during the past season, is merely the expression of feelings pent up for the last twenty or thirty years; that the growing dislike has been noticed by local authorities, intelligent natives, and independent Europeans, and has been occasionally pointed in official and unofficial correspondence; that if the zemindars were free agents in the grant of leases, and ryots were free agents in the acceptance of engagements, a great and immediate reduction would take place in the area and extent of indigo cultivation from the first date when such rights could be openly enjoyed, and acted by either party; and finally, that the whole system, as above described, is vicious in theory, injurious in practice, and radically unsound.

On the other hand, the case for the planter, as before the public, to the best of our knowledge, has been set forth as follows. The rule of the planter, as proprietor of lands, is a milder and more temperate rule than that of the native. It was not so much the wish of the planter to secure landed rights in permanency or for time, as to secure the growth of a fair portion of indigo plant. Could he be certain that the free contracts entered into by the ryots resident on the estates of others, should be faithfully adhered to, there would be no need for him to seek the rights and influence of a zemindar. But his cultivation is so liable to interruption and interference at the ill-will, caprice, or dictation of the native zemindar, and the ryots so often led away by evil advice and instigation, that no resource is left to the planter, but to acquire rights, which may enable him successfully to prevent or resist the intrusion of others. The zemindar, aware of this necessity, artfully and culpably fomented disputes between the planter and the ryot, in order that the latter may fly to his landlord for advice and assistance, and that the former may be compelled by the necessities of his situation to pay exorbitant prices for putrees, or to take on lease at a high bonus and a rental liable to enhancement at the expiration of the term of years, land so assessed that no profits or skill in management will enable him



to collect an equivalent from the ryots: but the ryots are not

The ryots who appeared before us, on the other hand, are loud in denouncing the above supervision (of the planters) as harassing and vexatious. They say that they are required again and again to plough, to crush the clods, to remove stalks, to smooth the ground, to sow at the precise moment, which the planter may dictate, until neither their time nor their labour can be called their own; their rice grounds are left untilled or only half tilled, and they are subjected to such constant annoyances, indignities, and oppressions, while their bundles of plant are unfairly or hurriedly measured, that they have learned to hate the very name of indigo. For confirmation of the above remarks, we have only to solicit His Honor's attention to the evidence on both sides, which, on this head, is too copious to detail.

We believe that one explanation of these contradictory statements and the main points, which it is necessary to keep in view from this time forward, is, that the cultivation of indigo is not profitable to the ryot on the terms heretofore existing. Without anticipating our conclusions on the just and fitting relation between ryot and planter, we think it absolutely essential for a right understanding of the whole subject at this stage of our report to draw His Honor's special attention to this fact; and it is a fact not to be disputed or questioned, we shall now show, not from the evidence of exasperated ryots relating their grievances, or from that of the gentlemen who have testified in their behalf, but from the admissions of the planters themselves, or of those who have spoken somewhat on this side of the question.

We have deemed it our duty thus to draw attention to the unfortunate position of the ryot as a cultivator of indigo, because it is one of those points, that has hitherto been kept out of sight, mis-represented or mis-understood. The Commission, which has been mentioned at various times for the last twenty-five years as a desideratum, has now been looked for anxiously by the agricultural population; the more intelligent portion are fully aware of its objects; and we feel that it is incumbent on us first to place, in the strongest and clearest light, the ryot as he appears to us de-



prived of his free will, and bound to continue a cultivation, which does not give him a fair or adequate profit; which in its worst aspect, he absolutely dislikes, and in its most favourable aspect, he is only induced to tolerate. All the defects of the system, inherent and incidental, all the faults, which justly are to be laid at the door of either planter or ryot, by their respective opponents, may be traced originally to one bare fact, *the want of adequate remuneration*. It is this, that mainly renders the possession of landed influence indispensable to extensive cultivation, and it is owing to this that the planter has to urge the ryot to plough and to sow, to weed and to cut, by means little short of actual compulsion; it is this, that brings out into strong relief the well-known defects of the national character of the Bengali, that sharpens his cunning, aggravates his indolence, tempts him to procrastination, and fosters his proneness to concealment; it is this, in short, that renders the whole relation between the two parties one prolonged and unhappy struggle in which Anglo-Saxon energy, promptitude, and pertinacity, are often almost baffled by that subterfuge and evasion, which are the proverbial resources of the weak.

Of serious charges, (those of kidnapping men, carrying off cattle, and rooting up gardens, and other offences; these practices being said to be habitual whenever ryots disobey orders issued from the factory. Here we regret to say, the cases brought to our notice are so numerous and so well authenticated, as to make us apprehend that the practice of imprisoning individuals in the factory or its out-houses is of common occurrence.

Several witnesses, Mr. Morrell, Mr. S. Hill, Mr. Eden, Mr. A. Forbes, and a well-known zemindar, have mentioned facts or given evidence, which prove fair dealing on the part of ryots and other classes of natives in matters profitable to them." *The Indigo Commission Report, 1860.*

We humbly request our readers to see the dates of the following extracts:—

"The last number of the *Shome Prakash* contains a petition from a ryot to the Lieutenant-Governor, which discloses a sad



state of things. We give it below :—

Your memorialist in hope and fear ventures to place his tale of woe before your Honor's commiseration, a tale, which is almost daily enacted in the parts from which he comes, seldom reaches your Honor's ear. He makes this surmise on the ground, that had the facts of these oppressions been rightly placed before your Honor by any of the victims, attention could not but have been drawn to the same, and the healing balm poured on the sore hearts of the oppressed tenantry with that grace and promptitude, which has marked your Honor's rule.

Your memorialist is an inhabitant of Mouzab, ————— Pergunnah —————, Zillah Tirhut, lying within the wide domains of —————. The village is held by the Brahmins, his elder brother ————— and others for the most part, whose ancestors received a grant of jungle land from the piety of contemporary rulers, and by industry changed the same into a smiling garden. Gradually their *lakhraj* tenures have been resumed, and, at the present moment, they are reduced to the status of tenants having a right of occupancy only. During the management of ————— by the Court of Wards, the lands of the village were measured by a pole less by three *ungulies* than the usual standard of 6½ hands, and by this trick of measurement, excess lands having been discovered, large increase of rent was demanded, which the cultivators being unable to pay the village was given away in *ticca* to the ————— indigo concern of Mr. —————, whose head quarters are situate within four miles of the village of —————. The gentlemen of the indigo leaf immediately selected the finest lands in your memorialist's joint-holding, and insisted on their planted with indigo. The cultivators are forced to plant and rear indigo against their will, the cultivation of which is very expensive and laborious, while their nominal remuneration is fixed at 10 rupees per beegha, which the tenants, under the system of terrorism which pervades the land, darkening with its shade even the sanctuaries of the Court of Justice, have no choice in accepting. Even of this ten rupees for the first year even, what with deductions for *zillah khurcha*, *dera*



khurcha, and the like, about five or seven rupees only reach the cultivator, who thus in addition to making no profit by the cultivation of indigo in his finest lands, has no time or heart left to till the inferior lands in his possession for paddy or other food grains. Your Honor's Government is fully aware of the result, the chronic famines, which sweep over the land with much deadly effect, but may be ignorant of the true cause, or if the cause has been noticed by the able officers, who were deputed on special duty to enquire into the same, perhaps unconvinced of the truth of the same. It is the systematic rack-renting, which is carried out with the aid and support, and in the interests, of the indigo factories, that crushes the people, that keeps them always near the starvation point, so that the slightest scarcity kills them off wholesale.

The people, whose domesticity and deep-rooted repugnance for immigration are matters of history, cling to the land of their fathers with a death grip. Under exorbitant rents, under lashing oppression they hold on, living from hand to mouth, chronic paupers to whom the first signs of scarcity prove fatal. But so grievously have they been trodden down, that they have mustered courage to do violence to their strong instincts, and as your Honor's Government is, doubtless, by this time aware, that thousands of persons have left British territory and become Nepalese subjects. Is this then to be proclaimed as the index to the vaunted security and prosperity of the people under British rule? It is not an immigration of the criminal classes fleeing from the operations of the Courts of Criminal Justices, but a wholesale immigration of a tenantry, who find it impossible to live under the crossfires of the factory and the landlord. Indeed the insolence of these tyrants often bids them depart to Goorkha territory before the cup of their misery is full to the brim.

Had he consulted his own personal safety, your memorialist would have borne his fate with the silent resignation, which thousands have done and are doing. Indeed he does not know how far he has compromised the kind-hearted gentlemen, who took pity on his misfortunes. But before taking the final step of



forsaking with a heavy heart the holy land of Mithila, and immigrating into Nepalese territory, your memorialist thought it his bounden duty to call the attention of the highest authorities of the country to his case, which is typical of thousands, which are of daily occurrence, &c. &c." *The Hindoo Patriot*, April 24, 1876.

"The planter is often practically the sole representative of our English rule in the far-away mofussil; and that, according to his behavior, is the English character judged, and hatred or affection for the English engendered. Magistrates and Police Officers are scattered about the country, it is true; but it is at wide intervals, and they are more or less impalpable abstractions to the great bulk of the peasantry, whereas the planter lives amongst them, is a fact not to be gainsaid or withstood: and upon his will and pleasure it depends to a great extent, whether they live happily or miserably. As the writer in the *Pioneer* puts it—'Many different classes of the community are interested in indigo. The ryot is affected deeply. His land or holding is the spot, where indigo is sown. His prosperity or adversity varies in direct ratio with the consideration or want of consideration shown towards him by the planter. His dealings with the planter are not circumscribed by the boundaries of the field in which indigo crop is raised. His own labour and that of his family, the employment of his cattle and his ploughs, the disposition of his leisure hours—in fact, the entire current of his existence is governed by the treatment, which he receives from his indigo-employer.' The planter is very generally, and in the nature of things, that is to say, a despot in his own neighbourhood, and his action, whether beneficent or the reverse, must materially influence surrounding native opinion as to the English character. We are sorry to have to say that the behavior of English planters in the mofussil has sometimes been very un-English, and is too often still very far from what it ought to be. Highhandedness and tyranny of the sort disclosed in the Fenough cases prevail still in out-of-the-way country places, more frequently than the general public supposes; and it is high time the scandal was stamped out.

It has long been known that, in the indigo districts of Behar



the relations between planters and ryots were of a most unsatisfactory character. *Every now and then for the last ten years there have been revolts against the system of indigo-cultivation that obtains and more or less widespread demonstrations of an agrarian rising. They have been promptly suppressed after the manner in which all popular disturbances are suppressed under the Indian Government's peace-at-any-price administration of law; but none the less do they show that there must be something very radically wrong about the system of indigo-cultivation, which gives rise to them....* The writer in the *Pioneer* says:—‘There is no class of men, who are more keen to earn and save than the Bengal ryots, and we refuse to believe that were the cultivation of indigo made profitable to them, there would be any difficulty in inducing them to undertake. The correctness of our position is borne out by the fact, that in many concerns the ryot is forced to grow indigo, and is consequently unhappy; whilst in others where he is repaid at a fair and equitable rate, he grows indigo willingly, and force and compulsion are unknown’” *The Indian Daily News, March 9, 1877.*

The Friend of India and Statesman, March 22, 1878, in commenting upon Mr. (now Sir) Ashley Eden's Bengal Administration Report for the Year 1877, says:—

“In the chapter on the ‘Course of Legislation’, we can learn that ‘The Bill to provide for enquiry into disputes regarding rent and to prevent agrarian disturbances became Act IV. on the 10th July 1877’, and upon that topic we can learn no more.... We look next for some discussion on the question of landlord and tenant, a topic on which previous reports dwelt at length, and with great force. As during the past year there was an unusual amount of legislation of one sort or another relating to this matter, and as the greatest public interest was taken in certain disputes between the landlords and indigo-planters on the one side, and the ryots on the other, in the important province of Behar, we expected to see this subject at least exhaustively treated. It is well known that the reports of local officers on the point were full and able, and there could have been no want of materials. But the topic



is conspicuous only by its absence from the body of the report. It is, indeed, thought worthy of two paragraphs in the introduction, which are commenced by the guarded, colourless statement that '*in some parts of Northern Behar the relations between landlords and tenants are described as being by no means cordial.*' From what follows, we can gather that Mr. (now Sir) Ashley Eden is dissatisfied with the existing system, and we are even told that '*there can be no doubt whatever that the combined influence of zemindars and ticcadars has ground the ryots of some parts of Behar down to a state of extreme depression and misery.*'"

"There are in Behar many intelligent and wealthy landholders and it is for them to consider, whether it is not to their advantage to meet this movement half-way, and endeavour to establish permanent occupancy rights and security of tenure on their estates, and to check at once the system of treating the cultivators of the soil as mere squatters, liable to eviction and to be rack-rented at the whim of the proprietor or Amlah—a system which now exists in too many estates.... The system of irregular distraint has been carried to great extremes in some parts of Behar... With regard to the question of indigo-cultivation in Behar, the Lieutenant-Governor had occasion, soon after assuming charge of the administration, to declare, in considering a proposal which was made last year for a Commission of Enquiry into the system of indigo-planting, that before taking any steps to regulate it by law, he would wait the result of the measures of reform, which the planters on his invitation themselves resolved to initiate." *The Administration Report of Bengal, 1876-77, p. 8.*

We have read many other articles and Government Resolutions, which leave no doubt in our minds, that the oppressions practised upon the ryots by the indigo-planters and zemindars of Behar are almost similar to those proved and recorded in the Indigo Commission Report, 1860. (see the *Hindoo Patriot*, 1877, p. p. 126, 280, 342, and 533.)

*The Money-lenders.*

It is a notorious fact, that almost all the ryots are entirely in the hands of the money-lenders. We shall try to prove, that this must have been the result of the exorbitant rate of land-rent exacted by the zemindars from them. Suppose that a ryot cultivates twenty beeghas of land, and pays seventy rupees per annum at the average rate of three rupees and eight annas as rent per beegha. Those who think this average rate as an exaggerated one, should refer to the rates of rent. It must be acknowledged, that it is a very exorbitant one, and falls very heavily upon him. Let us again suppose that the moderate rent of those twenty beeghas is 10 rupees at the rate of eight annas per beegha. Our readers may think this rate a very low one, but that is not the case. In Burmah, Bombay, Punjab, and several other places, where the lands are held by the cultivators direct from the Government, the average rate of rent is a little more or less than that, and is even thought excessive by thoughtful men. Now the difference of sixty rupees between seventy and ten rupees falls very heavily upon the ryot, as we have already said before. It is impossible for him to meet this exorbitant demand out of the small profits from the cultivation of his land. So he is forced to go to the money-lender at least for fifty rupees in order to pay his rent. And such is the case with almost all the cultivators throughout the country. It would easily follow from this, that the demand for money is very great. So it is very difficult for a ryot to borrow it without paying an exorbitant rate of interest; for it is vain to hope, that the money-lenders should not take advantage of this state of things. On the other hand, if he is unable to pay his rent, he is sure to be oppressed and harassed in thousand ways by his zemindar or his underlings, or to be dragged to the Civil Court to pay the arrears of rent with the cost of the suit. Thus he is put into great difficulty. However he always thinks it for many reasons better for his interests to be in the hands of his Mohajaun than in those of his zemindar. For this reason he is forced to submit to the rate of interest charged by the former, however exorbitant it may be. Now suppose that he



borrows fifty rupees from him at fifty per cent. interest per annum. After a year he must have to pay fifty rupees and twenty-five more as interest or seventy-five in all; if not seventy-five at least seventy rupees, his Mohajaun remitting five rupees out of compassion. Thus seventy rupees of rent really amount to ninety. In this way the exorbitant rate of land-rent exacted by the zemindars from the cultivators, has indirectly handed over the latter to the tender mercies of the money-lenders. The Mohajaun always has his eye on the crops of the ryot. As soon as the harvest is gathered, he falls upon him, and exacts the utmost possible share leaving him a very small part for keeping his body and soul together. The part generally left him barely suffices to maintain him for a month or two. After that the poor fellow is again forced to borrow money or to take rice advances from him. Thus he is year by year involved in debt, which it is very difficult for him to liquidate. But alas! There are a few Mohajauns, who thus remit a part of the interest due to them. Many of them exact even a higher rate of interest and compound interest, and keep their accounts in such a misty way, that it is almost impossible for a poor and ignorant ryot to know how he stands with his Mohajaun. Now we think we have proved, perhaps, to the satisfaction of our readers, that the exorbitant rate of interest and the notorious indebtedness of the cultivators are owing almost entirely to the exaction of the high rent (to say nothing of the innumerable illegal cesses) by the zemindars. We need not make any further remarks; we have only to place before our readers the following extracts, which will throw much light upon the subject.

"Mr. A. Frazer Tytler, who had many opportunities of knowing the particulars of the mohajauni system gives the following account:—The Mohajauns are frequently a most oppressive class of men, and ruin the ryots by the exorbitant interest they charge by their cunning in keeping accounts, thus leaving them in complete ignorance of the state of affairs, and by many other iniquitous practices. These practices ought to be checked, and a thorough investigation of this system would develop numberless scenes of knavery and imposition, would save families of many



thousands from distress, and prevent the occurrence of many crimes. The Mohajaun lives by the ryot receiving almost cent. per cent. from them, and as surely the ryot lives by the Mohajaun, for you must change his nature before he will live in any other way.' In the answer from Burdwan, it is stated that 'the ryots are entirely or almost entirely into the hands of the Mohajauns, and are made the instruments as well as victims of every description of villainy practised by them.' From the day that a ryot falls into the hands of a Mohajaun, he becomes a degraded being." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. VI. Art. *The Zemindar and the Ryot*.

"In the *Dnyanadoya*, a native newspaper for the present month, there is an interesting letter translated into English, from a native Christian residing in a small village, upon a subject which we have before felt it our duty to notice:—the sad condition of the ryots. We have every reason to believe, that the writer by no means exaggerates facts, and would again urge the necessity of some relief being afforded to this unfortunate class. Our space will not allow us to transfer the letter at length, but we select the passages, which most fully illustrate the manner in which they are fleeced by the Marwarries or village money-lenders. The editor of the paper from which we make the extract, observes that he believes 'usury laws do exist, but they are seldom or ever enforced.' We are not aware of the existence of any such laws prevailing in the jurisdiction of the mofussil; and even if they did and were enforced, the unfortunate ryot would still be the willing dupe of the parties, for his necessities compell him to seek the aid of his oppressors regularly as seed-time and harvest and the collections of revenue come round. If Government could be induced to adopt some measure, by which this dire necessity would be obviated, it would deserve, and doubtless receive the gratitude of their poor labouring subjects. It is perfectly within the limits of practicability to establish local banks, and to enable their officers to make advances upon equitable terms upon the security of the crops to the cultivators. If a vigilant system were adopted to prevent the subordinate agents from the extortion of *dustoor* or *dallalee*, their condition would gradually im-



prove—particularly as vernacular education makes its way. The writer thus describes the mode, in which advances are made at present by the Marwarries, and the extortion practised.

‘If any one in straits comes to him, he lends him a small sum of money at first in sums not exceeding ten rupees. At the time of giving the money, he takes from the debtor three pice premium and two pice interest on each rupee for the first month; thus at the outset deducting five pice from each rupee. Then he goes to the *Chauadi*, and takes a note through the *Kulkarni* for the sum in full. If the note runs for Rs. 5, the debtor has received 25 pice or six annas one pice less than that sum, and still the interest at the rate of two pice a month for each rupee is reckoned upon the full sum.’

The following fully exemplifies what an inestimable blessing would be the general diffusion of knowledge to an extent at least adequate to enable the poor Koonbies to read a receipt, or cast their own accounts. It is truly deplorable, that a large body of industrious people should, through the ignorance in which they have hitherto been kept, be so constantly oppressed by people, whose better education enables them to fleece their dupes with impunity.

‘The Marwarri receives annual payments from the debtor, but as he never gives receipts for the same, he has an opportunity of making false entries, for among the Koonbies not more than one in 500 can read or cast accounts. When the note becomes due, the Marwarri makes out the account as he chooses, then putting the interest and principal together, he makes a new note. Thus if the debtor does not pay up the five rupees within ten or twelve years it increases to fifteen or twenty rupees. For this amount also, another note is taken, which is yearly renewed adding interest to the principal at the above rate, and thus he goes on, until the 5 rupees become hundreds. Then he takes a mortgage upon whatever houses or property the debtor may have. The Marwarries do not prosecute their debtors so long as they pay their interest regularly, and yearly renew their notes. But if the debtor fails doing this, a suit in the Court is instituted against him, and



his possessions are sold. Whatever payments also he may have made are denied, and he is entirely ruined. Such is the practice of the Marwarries in all the small villages and large places also, and thousands of Koonbies are caught in their snare. When the Government taxes are demanded, the ryots hire money of the Marwarries to pay them. Should the debtor sell his grain to pay his taxes, the Marwarri alone is the purchaser. At the time of making the contract, he fixes the price at 18 or 20 *pylis* per rupee. Although the rate is so low, if the ryot sells his grain, the Marwarri taking advantage of his circumstances, asks 2 or 3 *pylis* above the rate determined upon.

When the ryot has expended the grain, which he had laid up for family use, he gets grain from the Marwarri to be paid in kind, but in larger quantities. At that time the price is increased to two or three rupees per maund, which must be paid in money, in case the ryot fails to pay the grain.

There is nothing in this statement, that differs materially from what we have already repeatedly said as to the oppressed condition of Koonbies, but it has the advantage of being native testimony, and more detailed. It comes from one, who is intimately connected with the sufferers, or it may be, one of themselves. The subject is eminently worthy of the consideration of the authorities. Let the oppressions be removed, and the social condition of the peasantry improved, and the present gloomy apathy that pervades the humbler classes would be gradually dispelled. An impetus would be given to industry. Improve the condition of the cultivators, and they would learn to estimate their true position. The fancied inherent superiority of others would be understood to be idle vanity. Superstitions would crumble under the progress of improvement, and a mighty change might thus be worked in native society:—a change not only to be desired for the governed, but one that would reflect the highest honor upon the governing." *The Poona Chronicle* quoted in the *Friend of India*, October 23, 1848.

Birbhun. "The system of rice advances is worked thus:—Those who borrow before the end of *Bhadra* (August-September)



have to pay fifty per cent. interest in kind in *Falgun* (February-March), or if they can not pay then, additional interest in kind runs on at the rate of fifty per cent. per annum." *Dr. Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal*, vol. IV., p. 360.

Bankura. "The Mohajaun, besides carrying on a trade in rice, makes loans of seed, grain, and money, to the cultivators. In the case of grain advances, the usual rate of interest charged is one-half the quantity borrowed. On money loans, where security is given, the rate varies from twenty to twenty-four per cent., and without security from sixty to a hundred per cent." *Ibid.*, p. 214.

Dacca. "The rates of interest charged for loans vary greatly, but the following may only be taken as a carefully ascertained average. In small transactions, when the borrower pawns some article, such as, ornaments or household vessels, equal to the sum lent, the nominal rate of interest is one shilling and three pence in the pound per mensem or 75 per cent. per annum. This is an enormous rate, but it is still current. The Collector states that he has not met with any case of higher interest than this, lower rates are sometimes obtained, but that mentioned above is the most common rate of interest charged." *Ibid.*, vol. V., p. 115.

Backergunge. "In small loan transactions, where the borrower pawns some article equal in value to the amount of the money lent, the rate of interest varies from $37\frac{1}{2}$ to 75 per cent. per annum... If a husbandman is compelled to borrow money in order to cultivate his land, the usual arrangement is for the borrower to repay the loan at harvest time by the delivery of paddy to the value of half as much again as the amount of the loan, the calculation being made according to the rate at which grain was selling at the time of borrowing." *Ibid.*, p. 216.

"The entire agricultural population of India with a few exceptions are in a state of chronic indebtedness. The lowest interest which the village money-lender charges on small loans is 75 per cent. per annum. We know many cases, in which double this rate is charged. The evil has now attained to such proportions, that it can no longer be left to itself, without serious political danger." *The Indian Mirror*, September 28, 1875.

*The Ryot's Loss of Time.*

We have proved, perhaps, to the satisfaction of our readers, that the zemindars and the ryots have been involved since the Permanent Settlement in ruinous litigation, and that the rents been screwed up to the highest pitch. The consequences of all these must have been a great bar to agricultural improvement. At present we shall draw the attention of our readers exclusively to the ryot's loss of time. Suppose that a ryot is dragged by his zemindar to a Civil Court either for recovering the arrears of rent, or for enhancing his rent. The delay of decision by a Court of Justice is notorious. Weeks, months, and sometimes years, pass away before a case is decided. The distance of the Court from the house of the ryot generally varies from fifteen to sixty miles. It is impossible for him to get a case decided without attending it and consulting his pleader at least eight or ten times. This must cost him no less than twenty-five days. Those who know anything of agriculture may easily perceive, that these twenty-five days could not be spent without doing much injury to his crops. However it must be admitted, that a few ryots, say one out of eighty or ninety, are dragged to Courts of Justice in a year, either for recovering the arrears of rent, or for anything else, the overwhelming power of the zemindar rendering them unnecessary. It very commonly happens, that almost all the ryots are forced to go to their Mohajauns for borrowing money, in order to meet the demands of the zemindars. Although these Mohajauns charge a very high rate of interest on loans, yet they do not scruple in the least degree to subject the ryots to a very harassing process before they would lend them money. One, two, three, and sometimes four months, pass away before they could be induced to look upon them with favourable eye. A ryot, though he is very well known to his Mohajaun, at first dares not go to him without being accompanied by a headman or some other respectable person. He could not take him there once without coming to him four or five times. Thus accompanied (but not each time) by him, he must see him at intervals of a few days for two or three months, before he could induce him to lend him money, the headman being the nominal



security of the transaction, for which, we believe, he gets something as due to his honor. Those who have any knowledge of the ins and outs of the money-lending business, cannot but regret the vexations, to which a ryot is always subjected while he is in his Mohajaun's house. Each time he goes there, he must have to wait for several hours together before he could get any answer. The poor fellow is often ordered to put fire on tobacco and to do something else as occasion gives rise to them. He not unoften also does works, which no one would do without remuneration. We may call it forced labour. Such are the vexations to which a ryot is forced to subject himself before he could induce his Mohajaun to lend him money. Cucurbitaceous fruits are sometimes not safe from the hands of the Mohajauns.

On the other hand, those who cannot borrow money, and consequently are unable to pay the rent, are subjected to a far more harassing process. A defaulting ryot going to, with his plough on his shoulder, or actually engaged in, his field-work, is caught by the peons of the Gomastah, and dragged to the Cutcherry. The village lordling at once falls upon him, uses abusive language, that caste, creed, or colour, suggests, and peremptorily orders him to pay his rent first, and then to go away. If he dares give any answer unpleasant to the man of dignity, he is sure to get a sound beating. Several hours pass away, till at last the poor fellow is forced to promise payment, or to put a cross mark on an *aikarnama* (agreement) requiring him to pay up the arrears within a few days, and on failure thereof, to get a sound beating. In this way defaulting ryots are very often dragged to the Cutcherries of the zemindars and their underlings, and detained there for many hours together without food and drink. We know many ryots, who were actually dragged to their Naib's Cutcherry and detained there from morning to two or three p. m. without food and drink. When one M———was about on his way home, he was told to take a handful of *muri* (parched rice). However he did not accept his hospitality, and went home. We will give minute details of these facts in proper place. Only one and half miles from where we are writing, a zemindar gave



a sound beating to a poor ryot, who became half-dead. A criminal suit was instituted. But the zemindar bribed the Police, and induced his victim and those who backed him to give false evidence; and he was acquitted.

It is impossible to convey to our readers a faint idea of the troubles, anxieties, and the miseries of those ryots, who are thus forced to promise payment or to sign agreements of which we have said before. We can positively say, that they cannot take their food to their full satisfaction at day and sleep soundly at night. Their whole attention is drawn to the payment of the zemindar's rents. They pawn their wives and daughters' ornaments, if there be any, for they have already been locked up long before in the Mohajaun's chest. They are obliged to sell their fruitful trees at half or three-fourth of their price, to borrow money at an interest of from $37\frac{1}{2}$ to 75 per cent. per annum, and to hypothecate their crops to the Mohajauns. Such is the way in which too many ryots pay up the arrears of their rents. Our readers may easily perceive, that all these cannot but cost them several days and weeks, during which it is impossible for them to cultivate their lands with full energy and success.

Again let us suppose, that a ryot has in his pocket, say ten rupees, for defraying the expenses of cultivation of his land. Meanwhile the Gomastah comes to the village, and begins to oppress him for rent. The poor fellow is at a loss what to do. If he meets the demands of his master, he is sure to cripple his means, dispense with the services of hired labourers, depend solely upon his own manual labour, cultivate his land badly and at a late hour, and thereby ruin his prospect of a good harvest for the year. And if he delays the payment of his rent, he is sure to get a sound beating, or to be dragged to the Civil Court to pay the arrears with the cost of the suit. Thus he is put into great difficulty. However for many reasons he prefers satisfying the demands of the Gomastah to the detriment of his future prospect. For present want knows no futurity. This is no exaggeration. We have most carefully observed the effects of the exorbitant rent exacted by the zemindars from the ryots. We



personally know many ryots, who, in order to meet the expenses of cultivating the land and reaping the harvest, are forced to wander here and there, and even to go to Calcutta and other places, in the hope of borrowing money from their Mohajans. We can positively say, that at least twenty per cent. of the ryots, owing to their limited means, cultivate their lands at a time, which little favours a good harvest. A few ryots are obliged to employ their wives and widowed sisters in their field-work. Thus the exorbitant land-rent exacted by the zemindars from the ryots has a very evil effect on agriculture.

Another obstacle to the agricultural improvement in this country, is the frequent disputes and affrays between the zemindars. These disputes and affrays so much unsettle the minds of the ryots, who cultivate the lands which occasion them, that they not unoften relinquish them from fear of seeing their crops destroyed, cut, or plundered by the *lattials* of rival zemindars. We are afraid, we may be discredited when we state, that there are many zemindars, who in order to ruin their opponents, whether zemindars or ryots, cut their embankments, inundate their fields, and thereby destroy their crops. We can positively say that there are many rice fields in Bengal, which, owing to the disputes between the zemindars, or to their burying the conditions of the Permanent Settlement in oblivion, are now lying waste or yielding very little produce. We might give a few instances, but a truce to them.

Another most important point connected with this subject should not be lost sight of. When a zemindar quarrels with his ryots by trying to enhance their rents, the latter often combine to resist the former. Many of them sometimes visit their zemindar's house almost always situated at a great distance, frequently go to their Naib's Cutcherry, and thereby lose much of their valuable time to the detriment of agriculture. It sometimes also happens, that the zemindar in order to punish them for disobeying his orders, collects scores and hundreds of *lattials*, and orders them to destroy or plunder their crops. The ryots also not unoften relinquish their lands for a time in order to throw



their masters into difficulties. Some of them, in order to keep their body and soul together, are wasting their energies by serving the zemindars and others in the menial capacity of *khansamas*, *syces*, &c., which might be far better employed in the improved cultivation of land. In short, the zemindari system does not allow the cultivators to cultivate their lands in peace and with success.

Capital at the Disposal of the Ryots Essential to Improved Agriculture.

Having placed before our readers a few obstacles, that stand in the way of agricultural improvements, we now proceed to place before them one more, which we may call the greatest of them all—we mean the want of capital at the disposal of the cultivators. At present it is impossible for a ryot to accumulate capital out of the small profits from the cultivation of his land, after paying the exorbitant rent and supporting himself, his wife, and three children. Nay, far from accumulating capital, he very often involves himself in debt in order to keep his body and soul together. Every one must admit, that cultivation of land cannot be carried on with success without capital. It requires stout and well-fed cattle, good implements, manure, and labourers, none of which could be got without money. Suppose a ryot cultivates twenty beeghas of land, which he cannot plough deep with his lean and ill-fed cattle and bad implements. Without deep plough it is vain to expect a good harvest. Thus at the very outset there are obstacles in the way of improved agriculture. Every body knows, that weeds grow luxuriantly with crops, and much injure them if not weeded out in proper time. Weeding requires labourers, and labourers capital. But this capital the ryot has not. It is impossible for him with the little assistance of his eldest son to do all, that is essential to make the land produce good crops. We do not say, that labourers are not employed at all, but that only one is employed where five or six are required. The next thing essential to it is manure. But he is too poor to pay for it. Our readers may easily perceive,



that the cultivation of land carried on in this way cannot yield abundant harvest, and is consequently detrimental to national prosperity. Thus it will be easily seen, that the want of capital stands foremost in the way of agricultural improvements in this country. We think it would appear from the above lines, that the very miserable condition of the ryot renders him unfit for making any improvement of his holdings. If we add to that the insecurity of property and his position as a mere tenant-at-will of his zemindar, we shall not be at all surprised at the miserable state of agriculture in this country. By insecurity of property, we do not mean so much the cutting and illegal attachment of crops, plundering houses, and other atrocities of a like nature, which are, by no means, uncommon, as the frequent enhancement of rent. We think that it is the same thing to a poor ryot whether he is plundered of his property to the value of ten rupees by forcibly breaking his doors, or the rent of his holdings is increased by ten rupees. However there is still very great difference between them. The former is looked upon by both the public and the Government as a gross outrage and punishable by law and only for the time being, while the latter is sanctioned by law and payable each year. Thus when we closely look upon the increase of rent, we cannot view it in any other light than that of annual and legal plundering. Alas what a vast number of ryots are thus plundered each year! (see *The Act X. of 1859 and the Enhancement of Rent*). What inducements, we ask, the ryots of Bengal, we may say, of India, have for laying out their capital (if there be any), and for making improvements of their holdings. The only inducement they have in this world, is to clear the way of filling the coffers of their landlords, or rather to cover the expenses of vice and luxury of a few idle and worthless drones of society. If they make a bold stand for resisting their increased demands, they are sure to be ejected from their lands only to die of starvation, and their place filled up by new-comers, who consent to pay them increased rents. Thus we see that the cultivators of India have neither the means nor the inducements to make improvements of their



holdings, and thereby to improve their condition. The following extracts will throw much light upon the subject.

"What capital does for production, is to afford the shelter, protection, tools, and materials, which the work requires, and to feed and otherwise maintain the labourers during the process. These are the services, which present labour requires from past, and from the produce of past, labour. Whatever things are destined for this use—destined to supply productive labour with these various pre-requisites—are capital." *Mill's Political Economy*, vol. I., p. 67.

"The increase and diminution of capital is the grand point, on which national prosperity hinges—that is, if you increase capital, you instantly increase the means of supporting and employing additional labourers—and that if you diminish capital, you instantly take away a portion of the comforts and enjoyments, and perhaps also of the necessities of the productive classes, and spread poverty and misery throughout the land; and it has been shewn, that the increase or diminution of the rate of profit is the great cause of the increase or diminution of capital." *M' Culloch's Principles of Political Economy*, p. 143.

"The capacity of a country to support and employ labourers, is, in no degree, dependent on advantageousness of situation, richness of soil, or extent of territory. These, undoubtedly, are circumstances of very great importance, and must have a powerful influence in determining the rate at which a people advances in the career of wealth and civilization. But it is obviously not on these circumstances, but on the actual amount of accumulated produce of previous labour or capital devoted to the payment of wages, in the possession of a country at any given period, that its power of supporting and employing labourers must wholly depend. A fertile soil affords the means of rapidly increasing capital; but that is all. Before this soil can be cultivated, capital must be provided for the support of those engaged in manufactures, or in any other department of industry.

It is a necessary consequence of this principle, that the amount of subsistence falling to each labourer, or the rate of

wages, must depend on the proportion, which the whole capital bears to the whole amount of the labouring population. If the amount of capital were increased without a corresponding increase taking place in the population, a larger share of such capital would fall to each individual, or the rate of wages would be augmented. And if, on the other hand, population were increased faster than capital, a less share would be apportioned to each individual, or the rate of wages would be reduced. The well-being and comfort of the labouring classes are, therefore, especially dependent on the relation, which their increase bears to the increase of the capital, that is, to feed and employ them. If they increase faster than capital, their wages will be reduced; and if they increase slower, they will be augmented. In fact, there are no means whatever by which the command of the labouring classes over the necessities and conveniences of life can be enlarged other than by accelerating the increase of capital as compared with population, or by retarding the increase of population as compared with capital; and any scheme for improving the condition of the labourer, which is not bottomed on this principle, or which has not an increase of the ratio of capital to population for its object, must be completely nugatory and ineffectual." *Ibid.*, p. p. 327-29.

"No equal quantity of productive labour or capital employed in manufactures," says Dr. Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*, vol. II., p. 53, "can ever occasion so great a re-production, as if it were employed in agriculture. In manufactures nature does *nothing*, man does *all*; and the re-production must always be proportioned to the strength of the agents that occasion it. The capital employed in agriculture, therefore, not only puts into motion a greater quantity of productive labour than any equal capital employed in manufactures, but in proportion, too, to the quantity of productive labour which it employs, it adds a much greater value to the annual produce of the land and labour of the country, to the real wealth and revenue of its inhabitants. Of all the ways in which capital can be employed, it is by far the most ad-



vantageous to the society." Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 142.

"It is by agriculture only, that is, by the united application of immediate labour and of capital to the cultivation of the ground, that large supplies of those species of raw produce, which form the principal part of the food of man, can be obtained." *Ibid.*, p. 143.

"In a country like this, the first step towards improvement must be made by the landed proprietors; and the primary inquiry must, therefore, be to ascertain what are the prospects and inducements held out to those connected with the land, to embark any capital upon it. The simple and natural inducements here, as in every other part of the world, must, of course, be first, security of property; secondly, a certainty of reaping the benefits of any trouble or expense incurred." *F. J. Shore's Indian Affairs*, vol. I., p. 182.

Hume says:—"The greatest misfortune of a country is an indigent tenantry. Whatever be the native advantages of the soil, or even the skill and industry of the occupier, want of a sufficient capital confines every plan as well as cripples and weakens every operation of husbandry. The evil is felt where agriculture is accounted a servile or mean employment; where farms are extremely sub-divided, and badly furnished with habitations; where leases are unknown or of short and precarious duration. With respect to the encouragement of husbandry, in this, as in every other employment, the true reward of industry is in the price and sale of the produce. The exclusive right to the produce is the only incitement, which acts constantly and universally, the only spring which keeps human labour in motion: all, therefore, that the laws can do, is to secure this right to the occupier of the ground: that is, to constitute such a system of tenure, that the full and entire advantage of every improvement go to the benefit of the improver: that every man work for himself, and not for another; and that no one share in the profit, who does not assist in the production. By the occupier, I here mean, not so much the person who performs the work, as him who procures the labour and directs the management; and I consider the whole profit as received by the occupier when the occupier is



benefited by the whole value of what is produced, which is the case with the tenant, who pays a fixed rent for the use of his land, no less than with the proprietor, who holds it as his own." Quoted in *Briggs' Land Tax in India*, p. 365.

"Without capital labour would never have been divided, and men would never have emerged from barbarism. It is almost always necessary to provide ourselves with the results of previous industry, or in other words, with capital, and to strengthen our feeble hands by arming them, if we may so speak, with the force of all the elements. It is an admitted, and, indeed, almost a self-evident principle, that the produce of the labour of a nation cannot be increased otherwise than by an increase in the number of its labourers, or by an increase in the skill or productive powers of those already existing. But, without an increase of capital, it is, in most cases, impossible to employ an increased number of workmen. If the food and cloths destined for the support of the labourers, and the tools and machinations with which they are to operate, be all required for the efficient maintenance and efficient employment of those now in existence, there can be no additional demand for others. In such circumstances, the rate of wages cannot rise; and if the number of inhabitants increase, they must be worse provided for. Neither is it possible to augment the productive powers of the labourer without a previous increase of capital, for these powers can never be materially improved except by the education and training of workmen, by the greater subdivision of their employments, or by an improvement in the machinery they are employed to manage. And in all these cases, an increase of capital is almost invariably required. It is only by an outlay of additional capital, that the workman can be better trained, or that the undertaker of any work can either provide his workmen with better machinery, or make a more proper distribution of labour among them'. *The Edinburgh Review*, No. LXXIX, p. 3.

'Before a man,' say with great truth the same writers, 'can accumulate, he must live; and if the sum, that remains to him after his necessary expenses are deducted, be but small and trifling,

ing, the probability is, that he will rather choose to consume it immediately than to hoard it up in the expectation that, by the addition of further savings, it may, at some future and very distant period, become the means of making a small addition to his income. The truth is, that the pressure of want is seldom or never productive of economy. In a state of indigence there is neither the power nor the wish to save. Want is the parent of idleness and dissipation, and not of frugality. The lower we descend in the scale of society the less forethought, the less regard to future and distant consequences, do we find to prevail. The labourer is less prudent than the little tradesman or shop-keeper, the beggar than the labourer.' This description is so truly applicable to the greatest portion of the inhabitants of India, as they are at this day, that a person, who has any knowledge of them, might suppose, that the Reviewers had India in their contemplation when they penned it." *The Principles and Policy of British India*, p. p. 61 and 65.

Another writer (J. S. Mill,) assures us, that great improvements in the productive powers of labour "arise from the use of those instruments, which form one of the portions of capital. Great improvements also arise from the division including the distribution of labour."

"No one will deny that the land requires improvement, and that improvement requires capital; but the ryot who lives from hand to mouth, and who is ever in debt to his Mohajaun, and in arrears to his landlord, has no capital at his command, and if we could succeed in keeping down the rent, and absolutely preventing the zemindars raising it, they would very naturally refuse to spend their income on the land, and we must give up all prospect of its improvement." *The Friend of India*, January 28, 1847.

The Evil Effect of Heavy Assessment.

The following is one of the principles of the land settlement of the North Western Provinces, by which the Government desired its officers to be guided:—

"It is a more fatal error to over-assess than to under-assess.



The Government will not test the settlement by the mere amount of direct revenue, which it brings into the treasury. They will judge of it by the soundness of the reasons assigned for fixing it at the amount assumed. If the jumma is less than it was before, they will be satisfied, if the reasons for the reductions are sound and sufficient; if it is the same as before or more they will expect that the grounds be explained on which the increase has been renounced or taken. No officer, who performs his work properly will have any difficulty in assigning reasons for what he has done, or in convincing the Government that it is right. If he is in doubt which of two jummas to fix, a high one or a low one, he should always incline to the latter. Over-assessment discourages the people, and demoralizes them by driving them to unworthy shifts and expedients, and it also prevents the accumulation of capital, and dries up the resources of the country. Viewing the question simply in a financial light, an assessment which presses hard upon the resources of the people is most injurious. It checks the population, affects the Police, and is felt in the excise, in the stamps and in the customs. It is evident that the prosperity of the people and the best interests of the Government are inseparably bound up together." Quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, vol. XVII., p. 318.

"Had land been subject to a reasonable tax as a 'chargeable property,' the prosperity of the agricultural and hence of the commercial classes would have added to the taxable resources of the Government; but having seized the very vitals of a society essentially agricultural, and having availed ourselves of all the existing appliances for extracting the best part of our public wants from them, we have not only impoverished the land, but unfairly confined the operations of indirect taxation." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. XXXVIII., p. 116.

"It has been most justly and truly observed by Dr. Smith, that a heavy taxation has exactly the same effects as an increased barrenness of the soil, and an increased inclemency of the heavens. It was the excessive weight of taxation, that was the real cause of the lowness of profits in Holland, and consequently of the decline of

her manufacturing and commercial prosperity. Notwithstanding the rigid and laudable economy of her rulers, the vast expense which the Republic incurred in her revolutionary struggles with Spain, and in her subsequent contests with France and England, having led to the contraction of an immense public debt, she was obliged in order to provide funds for the payment of the interest and other necessary charges, to lay heavy taxes on the most indispensable necessities. Among others high duties were laid on foreign corn when imported, on flour and meal when ground at the mill, and on bread when it came from the oven. Taxation affected all the resources of national wealth; and so oppressive did it ultimately become, that it was a common saying at Amsterdam, that a dish of fish brought to table was paid once to the fisherman, and *six times* to the State! "J. R. McCulloch's *Principles of Political Economy*, p. 386.

"Previously to the French Revolution about seven-eighths of France were occupied by metayers paying generally half, and hardly ever less than a third part of the produce to the landlord. In England it is not supposed, that the rent of the land amounts to more than from a fifth to a fourth part of the produce. What then must be the effect of subjecting the occupiers of France, where rent is naturally lower than in England, to so excessive a demand as a half or even a third of the produce. Nor is this system less injurious to the proprietor than to the cultivator. The landlord gets, indeed, a large proportion of the produce raised upon his estate; but owing to the degraded condition of agriculture and the wretchedness of the occupiers caused by the exorbitancy of the demand upon them, the produce is comparatively trifling; so that half which belongs to the landlord under this system is not nearly so large as the share falling to him would be, were the rents moderate and fixed, and the tenants allowed to reap all the advantages of whatever skill and talent they might exert." *Ibid.*, p. 177.

"The mania which so unfortunately prevailed under recent administrations for screwing up the land-tax at all hazards, while directly telling on our own tenantry in throwing them into the



money-lenders' hands, selling them out of their ancestral lands and rendering them unable to withstand famine, has a most indirect evil influence on the Native Chiefs." *The Friend of India* 1874, p. 838.

"No misapprehension can be greater than to suppose that the settlement of the public demand on the land is only lightly, or some say, not at all connected with the occurrence of famines. It lies in reality far nearer to the root of the matter, because of its intimate and vital relation to the every-day life of the people and to their growth towards prosperity or towards degradation. It is, no doubt, quite true that, not the best settlement system which the human intellect could devise would cover the skies with clouds, or moisten the earth with rain when the course of nature had established a drought. But given the drought and its consequences, the capacity of the people to resist their destructive influences is in direct proportion, I would almost say geometrical proportion to the perfection of the settlement system under which they are living and growing." *Colonel Baird Smith*.

"Among the different antecedents, variable and invariable, which led to the famine, the chief antecedent, which could have been varied, has never, I think, been sufficiently adverted to, and that antecedent was the weight of the Government taxation. That the food reserve of one year, the proceeds or crops of one year being sold off to pay the taxes, insufficient was left for the following years, in which rains might fall short. There seem to be a very great difference between a condition of society in which the produce of the land is consumed upon the land, and a condition of society in which a portion of the produce has to be deported to a place on the other side of the globe, and still more so, where the industry of the tax-payer is only agricultural. Assuming that the land revenue remained fixed at say one-seventh or one-fifth of the gross produce of the year, and that the yield of produce is seven times the seed, you must consider the necessity of parting with so large a proportion of the crop in order to meet the land revenue and other demands as part of the very problem



of famine. The burden of explaining how there should be famine at all rests upon a foreign Government, whose subject tax-payers die of starvation by the million. It may be asked, why was the suffering so intense in Lower Bengal during the famine of 1874. No satisfactory inquiry has been instituted into the class of people, who suffered most in that calamity. They were either artisans or agricultural labourers. The cursed *ticca-dari* system, which prevails in Behar, has crushed the springs of industry: the rent of the ryot varies from one-half to two-thirds of the gross produce of the land, and under such a rack-renting system, no population can resist the pressure of such widespread calamity as the famine." *Mr. Geddes.*

"We have received a letter giving the opinion of the people on famine. The letter is a very long one, therefore we will give the substance of it. The Government is trying head and heart to avert the present famine (of 1874), but what it is doing to prevent it in the time to come? The drought is not the only cause of the want of rice. There are several other causes of it.

Since the Permanent Settlement the zemindars have been declared permanent proprietors of the land. They have never paid a single pice in excess of the fixed assessment. But those who like beasts cultivate the land and produce the crops being exposed to the heat of the sun and to the rains, have no right whatever in it. The zemindars enhance the rent year by year, but the ryots have no power to make any objection. If any one does, he is ejected, and the land is leased out to some other person who agrees to pay enhanced rent. For this reason the ryots have no attachment to the land, because it is not their own. In seasons of drought, the zemindars never try to irrigate the land, and the ryots do not make any improvement either by bodily labour or by laying out capital, because it is not theirs; consequently the crops are destroyed for want of water. So long as the ryots do not consider it their own property, such calamities must befall the country at intervals. Therefore we humbly request Lord Northbrook to confer proprietary rights of land upon the people. So long as those rights are not conferred upon them, slight obstacles



will destroy the crops. Therefore if the Government wishes to prevent the recurrence of famines in future, let it confer proprietary rights upon the people. The request is not unjust. They have full rights to them.

The extensive cultivation of indigo in parts of Nabadippra, Rajshahi, Tipperah, Tirhut, and Behar, and that of poppy in Behar, have reduced the rice cultivation to a minimum. This is one of the principal causes of the high price of rice.

The mouths of many rivers are closed up; it is necessary to clear them, or to cut new khals. Otherwise there is every probability of recurrence of famines at intervals for want of water." *The Shulava Shamachara, Jaisto 13, 1281 Hegira.*

"We had something to say the other day about famines and their prevention, and we deprecated the popular tendency to accept irrigation as an impregnable defence against famines, and suitable to all parts of the empire....In Bengal and Behar, parts of the country with which we are naturally most concerned, it would seem to us that if defences against famine are seriously desired, the first step necessary to that end is a searching enquiry into the rights and the present condition of the peasantry, and a determination that they shall be freed from the exactions and oppressions of the landlords. Laws, Rules, and Regulations, alone will not effect this. Act X of 1859 and the various modifications that have followed it, while devised with the kindly intention of securing to the ryot his fair dues, have succeeded, in all but a few exceptional cases, only in making him more of a bond slave than he was before. In the hands of unscrupulous zemindars indeed, the refinements of our Rent Law have become fresh and powerful engines of oppressions, and by dint of oppressions and exactions, have driven ryots in Eastern Bengal to such a pitch of desperation, that agrarian disturbances seem to have become chronic there, while from North Behar we hear of thousands of ground-down tenantry flying from the cruel mercies of Court of Wards' management into Nepaul....Probably, however, there are very few people, who have any practical acquaintance with the Mofussil, and any power of seeing, who do not know that



for years the squalid misery of the agricultural population has been a scandal to our administration..... Sir Richard Temple's great object since he has had rest from his famine exertions seems to have been to bind their chains more closely about the unfortunates." *The Indian Daily News, February 7, 1877.*

The Improved Agriculture in Bengal Impossible.

We extract the following lines from a speech delivered at one of the anti-slavery meetings held in Glasgow:—

Dr. Burnes said:—It was well known that with regard to their agriculture, our general policy had been anything but kind, wise, or patriotic (cheers). He believed that had Britain done her duty to that country, the colonies of India would have been at this moment the most powerful auxiliaries for our manufactures—they would have been adding largely to our commercial interests, and to the advancement of the solid interests of the country. He believed that we would have had among them multitudes raised higher and higher in the scale of civilization, exchanging the productions of British India for the manufactures of Europe, and carrying on a profitable trade under the mild sway of British legislation; but instead of this, our sway in India had been characterized by two features equally revolting; one was the perpetual draining away of immense sums from the Native Princes on the most frivolous pretences, and the second was the total neglect, or rather discouragement of the agriculture of that country. They had all heard of the zemindari system in India, which was essentially the same in principle with that of middlemen in Ireland, with this difference, that in place of only three stages in the arrangement, as in Ireland, there were in India not fewer than five. The zemindar was at the top of the list, and the ryot at the lower extremity, while between these were four, all deriving a profit and a living from the same tract of land (hear hear). Now while it was possible, the zemindar might be living in comfort, the ryot might be dragging a life of misery." Quoted in the *Bengal Spectator, November 9, 1843.*

"The ryots of this country have been repeatedly characterized



as idle, ignorant, and so very stupid, as not to understand their own interests. Permit me to point out, that the unfavourable conditions which have been imposed upon them could lead to no other result than the miserable state, in which we find agriculture and agriculturists of this country. The first inducement to good farming is, that the farmer should enjoy the full benefit of his own labour. You may well afford to talk of the security of property of which the English Government is the instrument. But the ryot's position is that of legalized insecurity. Should he make any improvement in land, or raise by his industry an increased crop, his rents will be increased, and he will be compelled to pay abwabs. He finds that he reaps no fruit by raising a large crop. This power of the zemindar is the root of all evils." *A Correspondent of the Englishman, September 1, 1876.*

"One of the greatest obstacles to the improved agriculture is the duty of Government on several very important manures. 'The Indian Government,' says the *Indian Agriculturist* very truly 'by placing three most valuable and powerful mineral manures (namely common salt, nitrate of potash, and nitrate of soda) so largely extant in this great empire, under the lock and key of the excise, has virtually rendered improvements in agriculture and the production of the large crops of grain of the best quality practically an impossibility.' We pointed out last time how the salt duty of three rupees and three annas per maund falls heavily upon the poorer classes. Its economical effects on agriculture are not less disastrous.

Another great obstacle to improved agriculture is our Rent Law, which can never encourage any agriculturist to invest any money, or to take any trouble for the improvement of land. We need not describe now the position of the tenants-at-will, which is an unmixcd curse brought upon this country by the English Government. The position of the ryots having occupancy rights is hardly better. The power of the zemindar to increase the ryot's rent is practically unlimited, and it is impossible that agriculture should thrive in a country, where the agriculturist does hardly for any length of time reap the fruits of his own labour."



The Shomeprokash, March 13, 1876.

The Rice Cultivation and the Income of the Ryot.

"The early or *ouse* rice is sown generally on high, light, sandy, soils from March to May, as showers may be favourable. It is cut variously from the end of July to the middle or end of September, and in six weeks' time, it is succeeded by what is known as cold weather crop, which may be mustard, vetches, pulse, millet, gram, barley, oats, and the like. The *aumon* rice is sown in rich, deep, and loamy soils from April to June, and is reaped any time between the beginning of December and the end of January. It is a richer, stronger, and every way a better crop than the *ouse*, but it is more exposed to inundation, and is not followed by any second crop within the year. Occasionally the early and the late crops are sown on the same ground, and cut without injury to each other at different periods. A large part of the late rice is planted with the hand in rows on land carefully ploughed, cleaned, and smoothed for the purpose. It is everywhere known as the *roa*, and yields an abundant harvest. A third kind of rice, unknown in high and dry tracts of country, but very common in extensive marshy districts, is called the *boro*, and, from its proximity to water, is sown and grown from the month of January to the end of May. It is cultivated in places where there is too great depth of water during the heavy rains, and consequently abundant to keep the plant moist during the fierce heat of summer. The early rice, in the most favourable season, both from grain and straw, cannot give more than five rupees per beegha. In bad seasons it may not yield more than one rupee. As much as ten or even fifteen rupees may be got from the *aumon* crop in good seasons; but when heavy rains, or unexpected inundations from large rivers, drown the young plants, as was the case during 1855 and 1856, and may be the case again at any time, the return is positively nothing. The *boro* rice may be expected to yield seven or eight rupees per beegha. And on these crops, over some hundreds of miles, the hopes and anxieties of some millions hang for a large part of the year. About



the crops, there can be little doubt. The condition of those who live by such crops, we have found to be as follows:—Take a large plain, a crowded bazar on market day, or a high road between two towns or villages of any importance, and it will generally be found that the men at work on the one, or buying and selling in the other, or sturdily strutting along the third, have some right, or interest, or occupancy in the soil. Nearly every man has his *jumma*, which, in plain language, is his tenant-right of occupancy, or of proprietorship. The extent of this *jumma* is, in conversation, and for all practical purposes, indicated not by the acreage, for few can tell the area of their possession, but by the rent demanded, for every man well knows how much he is expected to pay. A *jumma* or *jote* may then vary from five to one hundred rupees. It will usually be found to be from about twelve to thirty. Obviously the possibility of a man's paying such rent, and yet finding enough to support him, will depend, apart from all fluctuations of climate, on the rent compared to the productiveness and extent of the tenure, on the number of mouths which he has to support in his own homestead, and on the number of sharers, who have a joint hold on the land. The shareholders in a large *jumma* of eighty or one hundred rupees we have known to reach to ten, and there are often as many as four or five on a small holding of twenty rupees. This is an inevitable consequence of the law of sub-division; but is remarkable how constantly this terminates, after two or three generations, in a separation of cousins and a division of the inheritance into two or more shares no longer to be held in common; and it is still more remarkable how this universal custom is rudely set to right by the progress of disease, by fever, cholera, small-pox, and other scourges, which clear off whole families, and cause the inheritance to revert to the hands of a single member. If on the one hand, numerous instances may be found of families branching out till they seem to weigh down the minute holding,—on the other, cases as frequent will occur, where father and uncles, with their offspring, have all been swept away, and the patrimonial inheritance has reverted to a single individual, with, it may



be, the surviving female relations all dependent upon his exertions for bread." *The Calcutta Review*, vol. XXIX., p.p. 126-28.

"The purchasers of lands have, throughout the country, left the ryots without profits, and often forced them from the lands." *Henry Newnham, Esq. Answer to Question 2733. Minutes of Evidence, Revenue, Commons, 1832.*

We here quote the following returns from the District Magistrates from the *Journal of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India, 1870*, which will throw much light upon the subject. We only request our readers to add the rent and the innumerable illegal cesses to the expenses of cultivation on the one hand, and to calculate the price of produce on the other.

Twenty-four Pergunnahs. Produce per beegha. "From five to nine maunds according to quality of soil. Fine paddy sells at from Rs. 1-2 to Rs. 2 per maund. Coarse paddy sells at from 12 annas to one rupee per maund. In some parts of the district coarse paddy is said to sell at about three maunds per rupee, but one or one and a half maund may be taken as the usual rate. Average expense of cultivation varies from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per beegha.

Jessore. The average out-turn of *dumon* rice for the whole district is about 6 to 7 maunds per beegha. The commoner kinds selling at a rupee and less for a maund. Expense. Rs. 4-8.

Nuddea. The ordinary out-turn of paddy from a beegha of ordinary rice land in this district may be set down at six and half maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 2-14.

Hughli. The ordinary out-turn of paddy from a beegha of ordinary rice land is eight to ten maunds. Price. One rupee per maund. The average expenses are Rs. 3 to Rs. 5.

Birbhum. The average out-turn of the best rice lands is for the best, $10\frac{1}{2}$ to $11\frac{1}{2}$ maunds of paddy; for the next, 7 to 8 maunds; and for the third, 4 to 5 maunds of paddy. Price is not given. Expense. Rs. 2-10.

Burdwan. From 5 to 8 maunds a beegha. Price. 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 3-9.

Bankura. The ordinary out-turn is 11 maunds. Price. 1



maund 18 seers per rupee. Expense. Rs. 2-12.

Howrah. Five maunds per beegha. Price. Rs. 1-8 to Rs. 1-10 per maund. Expense. Rs. 3.

Midnapur. 7 to 12 maunds. Price. From 35 to 100 seers per rupee owing to various causes. Expense. Rs. 1-3 to Rs. 3-8 per beegha.

Bograh. From 6 to 7 maunds. The Bograh maund is of 60 tolahs. Price. Six to eight annas per maund of 60 tolahs.

Maldah. An ordinary out-turn of paddy from a beegha is 12 or 13 maunds. They are sold at from 45 to 65 seers per rupee. The average expenses vary from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5.

Dinagepur. An ordinary out-turn of paddy from a beegha of ordinary rice land may be stated to be from 5 to 6 maunds. Price varies. Expense varies.

Pubna. The ordinary out-turn from a beegha of first-rate land is 15 to 16; from that of second rate, 8 or 9; and from that of third rate, 5 or 6 maunds. Price. 1 maund 30 seers to 2 maunds per rupee. Expense. $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 rupees per beegha.

Rungpur. Ordinary out-turn about 6 or 7 maunds. Price. About one maund per rupee. It costs about Rs. 4-8 per beegha.

Rajshahi. From 6 to 10 maunds. Price. 1 maund to 1 maund 35 seers per rupee. Expense. 5 rupees.

Purneah. An out-turn is considered at from 5 to 20 maunds per beegha. Price. From 45 to 80 seers per rupee. Expense. 4 to 8 rupees.

Monghyr. 14 maunds. These sell from 45 to 50 seers per rupee. Expense. 6 rupees.

Pakour. From 6 to 9 maunds. Price. From 14 to 2 maunds per rupee. Expense. From Rs. 1-12 to Rs. 2-8.

Rajmahal. The ordinary out-turn of paddy varies from 5 to 6 maunds per beegha. Price. From 50 to 55 seers per rupee. Expense. $2\frac{1}{2}$ rupees.

Doomka. About 10 maunds. Price. 1 maund 10 seers per rupee. Expense. Rs. 4.

Godda. Six maunds of paddy are generally produced from a beegha of ordinary rice land. Price. From 25 to 30 seers per



rupee. Expense. Rs. 1-8.

Bhaugulpur. From 8 to 12 maunds. Price. From 1 to 2 maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 3. By hired labour more.

Deoghur. 20 maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 maunds per rupee. The average expense. Rs. $4\frac{1}{2}$.

Maubhum. 16 maunds with careful cultivation. The ordinary out-turn may be set at 12 maunds. Price. 1 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$.

Singbhum. From 8 to 16 maunds. Price. From 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 2-1.

Hazareebaugh. 8 maunds. Price. From 30 to 40 seers per rupee. Expense. From Rs. 4 to Rs. $5\frac{1}{2}$.

Palamow. 15 maunds. Price. From 36 to 48 seers per rupee. Expense. Rs. $4\frac{1}{2}$.

Backergunge. 10 maunds. Price. From 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 3 to Rs. 4.

Cachar. 8 maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 3 maunds per rupee. Expense is not given.

Dacca. 6 maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 3.

Furreedpur. 15 to 20 maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 7.

Mymensingh. 5 to 6 maunds. Price. 12 annas to one rupee and four annas per maund. Expense. Rs. 2 to Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$.

Sylhet. 7 maunds; they sell at 8 to 10 annas per maund. Expense. Rs. 2.

Darjeeling. In the hills 2 to 4 maunds. In the plain 5 to 8 maunds. Price. 1 to 5 maunds for the rupee. Expense. Rs. 2.

Western Dooars. 4 to 5 maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. One rupee six annas.

Cooch Behar. 4 to 10 maunds. Price. 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ Rs. per maund. Expense. Rs. $3\frac{1}{2}$ to Rs. $4\frac{1}{2}$.

Goalpara. 5 to 8 maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. $3\frac{1}{2}$.

Assam. $6\frac{1}{4}$ to $8\frac{3}{4}$ maunds. Price. 8 to 10 annas per maund.



Expense. Rs. 2½.

Kamroop. 8 maunds. Price. 12 annas per maund. Expense. Rs. 3.

Durrung. 13 maunds. Price. 1½ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 3.

Nowgong. About 7 maunds. Price. One rupee per maund. Expense. Rs. 3.

Seeksagore. 7½ to 9 maunds. Price. 1½ maunds for the rupee. Expense. Rs. 6.

Luckimpur. 8 maunds. Price. 1½ to 2 rupees per maund. Expense. Rs. 5.

Chittagong. 6 to 7 maunds. Price. 13 annas to 1½ Rs. per maund. Expense. Rs. 4.

Noakally. 5 maunds. Price. 2 maunds for the rupee. Expense. Rs. 2 to Rs. 2-6.

Tipperah. 3¾ to 8 maunds. Price. 1½ to 3 maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 2¼ to Rs. 3¼.

Patna. 5 to 8 maunds. Price. 40 to 50 seers per rupee. Expense. Rs. 2½ to Rs. 4.

Gya. 7 to 12 maunds. Price. 40 to 50 seers per rupee. Expense. Rs. 1½ to Rs. 3.

Shahabad. 10 to 15 maunds. Price. 35 to 50 seers per rupee. Expense. Rs. 4 to Rs. 5.

Tirhut. 10 to 20 maunds. Price. 40 to 50 seers per rupee. Expense. Rs. 4 to Rs. 5.

Sarun. 12 maunds. Price. 40 to 50 seers per rupee. Expense. Rs. 3 to Rs. 4.

Chumparun. 20 maunds. Price is not given. Expense. Rs. 8.

Cuttuck. 12 maunds. Price. 52 to 65 seers per rupee. Expense. Rs. 3½.

Puri. 10 to 13 maunds. Price. 2½ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 3-3.

Balassore. 12 to 18 maunds. Price. 8 gauns of 16 seers each for the rupee. Expense. Rs. 5 to Rs. 7.



The Returns from the Zemindars.

24 Pergunnahs. 6 to 10 maunds. Price. 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 3 to Rs. 5.

Hughli. 5 maunds. Price. About a maund per rupee. Expense. Rs. 5.

Krishnagur. 6 maunds. Price is not given. Expense. Rs. $5\frac{1}{2}$.

Nuddea. 6 maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ to Rs. $4\frac{1}{2}$.

Burdwan near Chukdighee. 10 maunds. Price. 12 annas to one rupee per maund. Expense. Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$.

Backergunge. 6 maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ to Rs. $3\frac{1}{2}$.

Mymensingh. 10 to 30 maunds. Price. $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 8-10.

Balassore. 11 maunds. Price. 5 to 8 annas per maund. Expense. Rs. $3\frac{1}{2}$.

Morellgunge. 6 maunds. Price. Rs. 1-4 to Rs. 1-10 per maund. Expense. Rs. $3\frac{1}{4}$.

Murshedabad. 6 maunds. Price. A maund per rupee. Expense. Rs. 4.

Birbham. 6 or 7 maunds. Price. 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ maunds per rupee. Expense. Rs. 4.

Cuch Behar. 6 or 7 maunds. Price. 8 annas to Rs. $1\frac{1}{4}$ per maund. Expense. Rs. 5.

Behar. 2 to 15 maunds. Price 1 to 2 maunds (of 64 sicca rupees). Expense. Rs. 4 to Rs. 8.

The returns of other districts are not given.

Question. Can more than one crop of paddy be grown annually in the same land?

Answer. Jessore. Yes, in cases where the land is fertile and well supplied, though not swamped, with water, so that the *aus* crop ripens quickly. The *amon* is planted subsequently, and a second yield obtained in the same year.

Nuddea. It is not usual to grow more than one crop of paddy on the same land in the same year.



Burkhum. Not more than one crop of paddy is got in the year; want of irrigation in the dry season precludes a second.

Burdwan. Seldom, if ever.

Midnapur. Very rarely, indeed, done hitherto.

Bogra. Yes, in *Dokhund* land estimated roughly as quarter of the area of the district.

Dinagepur. The land having been cleared of the *aous* rice crop, is sometimes sown in second or winter crop.

Maldah, Monghyr, Rajmahal, Bhaugulpur, Deoghur, Manbhumi Singbhum, Hazareebaugh, Loharduggah, Palamow, Nowgong, Seeksagore, Shahabad, Tirhut, Sarun, Chumparun, Krishnaagar, Bankura, Howrah, and 24 Pergunnahs. No.

Pubna. Yes, *aumon* and *aous* are both sown together; *aous* is reaped in *Bhadra*, and the *aumon* in *Kartik* or *Augrahan*.

Rungpur. In some lands, both crops of paddy (*aous* and *aumon*) are grown annually.

Rajshahi. *Aous* and *aumon* are grown in their seasons frequently on the same lands.

Purneah. Only one crop of paddy is grown.

Pakour. Only in some places where the *aous* crop grows, and that, if a very early one, the *hymunto dhan* (winter crop) can be sown afterwards.

Doomk. No; there are no such lands in this district.

Godda. Only one crop of paddy is grown in the same land annually.

Backergunge. In the low lands, *aous* and *aumon* crops can be grown annually in the same land.

Cachar. In parts of the district.

Dacca. Yes, some lands yield two crops a year.

Furreedpur. More than one crop is grown annually in the same land.

Mymensingh. Sometimes in a fair season of the year, both *aous* and *aumon* paddy are grown annually in the same land; but the lands are not fit for such cultivation or growing.

Darjeeling. Two crops of *dhan* (rice in husk) on the same



land in the same year are never sown.

Western Dooars. Yes, but such is not often done.

Cuch Behar. Two crops of paddy, *viz.*, one *beetree* and one *lymrunto* are commonly grown on the same land in a year.

Goalpara. One crop of paddy is generally grown in the land, and in some lands two crops.

Assam. Two crops of paddy can be grown on the same land in the same year; but this is done very rarely.

Kamroop. Two crops can be grown annually, but the yield of such crop is not the same in quantity.

Durrung. Two crops on the same land are very rare indeed.

Luckimpur. Yes.

Chittagong. In high lands generally two crops (*shyle* and *aumon*) can be produced annually.

Noakally. Yes, *aous* and *aumon* can be grown in the same and in the same year.

Tipperah. At head quarters only one crop of paddy is grown annually in the low land and in medium lands; and at sub-divisions two crops are grown.

Patna. No more than one crop of paddy can be grown in the same land.

Gya. No more than one paddy crop is raised annually from the same field.

Cuttuck. No more than one crop can be raised on the same ground.

Puri. The general practice is only to grow one rice crop in the year.

Balassore. Very rarely.

Goburdangah. Some *aous* and *aumon* are sown together on the same plot of ground.

Hughli. There is scarcely any land in this district growing annually more than one crop of paddy.

Nuddea. The *aumon* and *aous* paddy can be raised in the same land; but that sort of land is very rare in our neighbourhood."

Next we quote the following table from *Dr. Hunter's Statis-*



tical Account of Bengal, vol. IV., p. 353.

"Birbhum. The following table shows the Deputy Collector's estimates of the cost of cultivation, value of out-turn, and net profit for each crop excepting sugarcane.

Name of the crop.	Cost of cultivation.			Value of produce per beegha.			Net profit per beegha.		
	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
Rice	7	15	0	9	8	0	1	9	0
Bút	2	13	0	5	0	0	2	3	0
Teel	2	10	0	6	0	0	3	6	0
Musuri	2	8	0	5	4	0	2	12	0
Peas	3	3	0	5	8	0	2	5	0
Teesee	3	2	0	4	8	0	1	5	0
Mustard	2	11	0	4	4	0	1	9	0
Khesari	2	1	3	2	8	0	0	6	9
Wheat	3	3	0	6	0	0	2	13	0

N. B. The whole of the rent Rs. 4. 8. 0 per beegha is charged against the rice crop."

The Inundation.

By the Regulations of 1793, the Government of Lord Cornwallis not only declared the zemindars permanent proprietors of the soil, but also entrusted them with the construction of roads, khals, embankments, and other works of public utility. Thus shifting all responsibilities for the happiness and welfare of the people upon them, it has hitherto followed a policy of masterly inactivity, and even never enquired how far they have fulfilled their obligations. And there are many reasons for this indifference. It has conceded a part of the revenue to the zemindars in order to enable them to make improvements of their estates, and, with the permanency of the tenure, given up all hope of sharing in the increased value of the land. But what is above all, the zemindars, however unmindful in fulfilling the other conditions of the Permanent Settlement, are very punctual in their payment of revenue. The Government, thus freed from all cares and an-



anxieties, cares very little to force them to do their duty towards the ryots. All improvements have thus been at an end. There are many rice fields in Bengal, which are almost annually inundated for want of drainage works or other means of discharging water, while some others do not yield good crops for want of good embankments for resisting the force of it. The field which we cultivate is inundated say in two out of three years. So in place of *aumon*, we cultivate *boro* rice, the produce of which is comparatively small, and sometimes falls short of meeting the very demands of the zemindars. A khal costing two or three thousand rupees would be sufficient to make it very productive, but no zemindar ever dreams of it. The following letter shews not only the mischief, which is caused by inundation, but also the condition of the ryots, the conduct of the zemindars towards them, and the feelings particularly of the higher classes towards the Government.

"It appears to me a matter of surprise, that no public notice has been taken of a series of calamities by which this unfortunate district (Burdwan) has been visited of late in consequence of the incessant and heavy rains. I allude to the repeated inundations caused by the Damuda, the embankments of which were broken and swept away very extensively above and below the town of Burdwan. How loud and deep would be the cries of the people, had such calamitous events, by which the well-being of hundreds of thousands of subjects was affected, happened in England, without the Government taking immediate notice of them, or devising effectual means for their relief, and to prevent the recurrence of the calamity. But the cries of the houseless villagers, who till the Indian soil, and from whom a rich revenue is wrung, seem to have been lost in the roaring of the floods, which periodically rush over their fields, and which have converted thousands of beeghas into wastes of sand. Ever since the dreadful flood in 1834, when the whole station and town were under water, those seasons formed only an exception, when we were spared from witnessing the recurrence of the distressing scenes; and consequently we, who are exposed to it, live in a constant state of