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A

SKETCH

OF THE

STATE OF BRITISH INDIA,

WITH A VIEW OF POINTING OUT THE BEST MEANS
OF CIVILIZING ITS INHABITANTS,
AND DIFFUSING THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRISTIANITY
THROUGHOUT
THE EASTERN WORLD:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ESSAY ON THESE SUBJECTS,
TO WHICH THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN ADJUDGED
DR BUCHANAN'S PRIZE.

BY

THE REV. JAMES BRYCE,

STRACHAN.

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MINISTRY OF CULTURE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
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TO

MRS RUSSELL,

OF

BLACKHALL,

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Work, was first invited to the subjects which it embraces, by one of those Premiums that are now and then held forth, for the encouragemen of literary exertions. Upon this occasion, he was fortunate enough to prove the successful candidate. But although his Dissertation was delivered to the University of Aberdeen, in terms of their public advertisements, it appeared, that it was not given in within the period prescribed by the institutor of the Prize, who, on that account, withheld from it the promised reward. This circumstance, while it contributed not a little in prompting the Author to give his Essay to the world, released him from the obligation of publishing it, as approved of

by the University; and left him at liberty to take a more enlarged view of his subject, than he had before been able to accomplish. He is aware, that had he given his Dissertation to the public, as it came from the University of Aberdeen, he could have interposed the broad shield of their approtion betwixt him and criticism. But he is sensible that, in this case, he could not have done that justice to his subject, which posterior information had placed within his power; and rather than withhold this information, he ventures to take the responsibility of his opinions upon himself. Many of them cannot be said to have received the sanction of the University, as they have been introduced into the Work since the period at which they adjudged Dr Buchanan's prize to it; and as some of them differ from those which he formerly held, it is doubtful, at least, whether they would have obtained their approbation.

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SKETCH

OF THE

STATE OF BRITISH INDIA, &c.

CHAP. I.

India—General Description—Early civilized—Invaded by the Egyptians—By the Persians—Invasion of Alexander the Great—Extinction of the Syrian Power in India—Commercial intercourse of the Egyptians with India—Of the Syrians—Of the Romans—Conquest by the Mahometans—Mogul Dynasty—Settlement of Europeans—Of the Portuguese—Of the Dutch—Of the French—Of the English—Rise of the English East India Company—History—Object of this Work.

UNDER the name of India is comprehended an extensive portion of the globe, no less remarkable for its riches and fertility, than for having, in all ages, attracted the atten-

tion of other nations. The character of its inhabitants, the peculiarity of their manners, and the singular institutions by which the stability of their customs has been preserved for so long a period, have engaged the researches of the philosopher, by presenting an ample and curious field for his speculations. The wealth of many of its provinces has rendered it an object, no less suited to encourage the enterprize of the soldier; and, unhappily, entailed upon it all those miseries, which never fail to mark his progress: whilst the variety and excellence of its natural and artificial productions, have bestowed upon it an importance, in the eyes of the mercantile adventurer, which has led him to surmount every obstacle that nature or art has thrown in the way of their acquisition.

From the most authentic accounts which we possess, regarding the progress of civilized manners, we learn, that India was one of the first countries in which the human

race made any considerable advances in the career of improvement *. Its inhabitants are said, by some writers, to have borrowed their knowledge of the arts and sciences from the natives of Egypt; but there now appears little wanting, in the evidence adduced by others, to prove that the reverse of this was the case. But although it may not be allowed, that the Egyptians preceded the Hindus in civilization, there is reason to believe, that they were the first people with whom any communication betwixt the eastern and western quarters of the ancient world existed †. Under their celebrated king Sesostris, whose history is so replete with wonderful achievements, as to have led many to deny its authenticity, they invaded India, and compelled some of its princes to become tributary to their power. But their conquests, which seem to have extended even beyond the Ganges, were

* Robertson's Disquisition. † Ibid.

relinquished upon the death of the prince under whom they had been achieved; and the future kings of Egypt, actuated, perhaps, by a less aspiring ambition than Sesostris, or compelled to give way to the prejudices of their subjects, allowed the Hindoos to remain unmolested. At this period, the natives of India enjoyed a mild and equitable form of government. They lived under laws framed with the greatest wisdom, and had even then attained to an eminence in various branches of literature, of which there are still extant proofs, sufficient to excite the admiration of more enlightened ages. Arts and sciences continued to be cultivated with a success, which, if it led them not to make greater improvement, at least prevented them from losing the knowledge of what they had acquired; and the trade to their country, although conducted by a route at once dangerous and circuitous, became so lucrative and important, as to raise the inconsiderable states

of Tyre and Sidon, by whom it had been engrossed, to that power and splendour which they possessed in the days of Solomon *; and to enable the former to offer a more formidable resistance to the progress of Alexander, than he had found from Darius, at the head of the armies of Persia †.

The Persians, destined to obtain a firmer, though less extensive empire in India, than the Egyptians, entered that country in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, and appear to have been the first foreign nation that made any permanent settlement amongst its inhabitants ‡. But their conquests are supposed to have extended only a short way, if at all, beyond the Indus; and they appear to have gained little knowledge of the Hindoos. It would seem, however, that they compelled some of their princes to ac-

* Ezekiel, chap. xxvi, xxvii. & xxviii.

† Arrian's Hist. Alexander's Expedition, Lib. ii. cap. xviii—xxiv.

‡ Vid. Robertson's Disquisition.

of Hindostan. While some of them have governed, all of them have found it necessary to subdue those countries in which Alexander occupied so much of his time; and have uniformly experienced, among their inhabitants, the chief obstacles to their progress *. Yet the small number of troops that accompanied the Macedonian hero on his expedition, prove that he had not properly estimated the resources of the Hindoo empire; and the powerful and unexpected resistance which he experienced from Porus, renders it probable, that, had not the discontent of his army compelled him to return to Persia, he would have fallen a sacrifice to his ambition on the banks of the Ganges, where another Porus, at the head of an immense force, was prepared to dispute his progress, instead of dying a victim to debauchery in his palace at Babylon.

* Vid. Fraser's Hist. of Nadir Shah; Gibbon's Decline, &c. Vol. V. & VI.; Orme's Dissertation.

knowledge their dominion, by the payment of an annual tribute. For we learn from a Hindoo writer, that the ostensible cause of the celebrated invasion of India by Alexander the Great, was to levy this tribute, which some of its princes had refused to pay, and to compel them to acknowledge their dependence upon the crown of Persia, The discoveries of Alexander, while engaged in pursuit of Bessus *, along the western bank of the Indus, were more extensive and important than any which his predecessors had made; and the accounts which he then received of the wealth and fertility of the Hindoo provinces, likewise concurred in determining him to lead his troops across that river. The route by which he penetrated into India has been traced by some modern historians †, with a wonderful degree of accuracy; and, with little deviation, followed by almost every conqueror

* Arrian's Hist. Lib. iii. cap. xxv.

† Major Rennell, Dr Robertson, &c.

The empire, which the genius of Alexander founded in India, subsisted for some time after his decease. His general, Seleucus, who succeeded to the government of Upper Asia *, and who appears to have imbibed the spirit of his great master, contrived and executed another expedition into that country, in which he penetrated farther, and obtained a more accurate knowledge of its inhabitants, than Alexander had done †. Anxious to cultivate a friendly intercourse with Sandracottus, the king of the Prasii, whose territories stretched along the banks of the Ganges, Seleucus sent Megasthenes to Palibothra, in quality of his ambassador ‡. By this means, some of the most cultivated and opulent provinces of India, lying betwixt the limits of Alexander's progress and the capital of Sandra-

* Arrian, as abridged by Photius, in his Bibliothec. Lib. xcii.

† Robertson's Disquisition.

‡ Strabo, Lib. ii.

cottus, were explored. And although Megasthenes, in the account of India which he published, and from which that of Arrian is avowedly taken *, mingles many a wonderful fiction with the circumstances he has related, his description of the dimensions and geography of the country, is pronounced by Dr Robertson to be accurate and curious †. We wonder, indeed, at his credulity, in believing, that there existed men with ears so large, that they could wrap themselves up in them; but so closely does his narrative resemble, in many particulars, the accounts which Alexander had received, that neither his credulity, in this instance, nor the fabulous stories which he gravely relates of men only three spans in height, and of ants as large as foxes, that dug up gold, can render it altogether unworthy of attention ‡. His account of the capital and

* Arrian's Indian Hist. Lib. i. chap. xvii.

† Robertson's Disquisition.

‡ Strabo, Lib. xx.

resources of Sandracottus inspires us with a very high idea of the wealth and power of that prince, whose formidable preparations cooled the courage, and stopt the progress of the Macedonians*. At this period, the Hindu empire had perhaps attained the summit of its glory; and the information which we derive from Megasthenes, that even then a body of common law, framed from the accumulated wisdom of ages, regulated the manners of its inhabitants, may enable us to form some conception of its remote antiquity †.

The dominions which the Syrian monarchs had obtained in India, are supposed, by Robertson, to have been wrested from them, soon after the death of Seleucus †. But the want of historical documents prevents us from fixing, with any degree of accuracy, the æra of their expulsion; and had it not been for the historians of China, the

* Quintus Curtius, Lib. ix. chap. ii.—2.

† Robertson's Disquisition.

last, perhaps, to whom we should have looked for information on this subject, we might have remained to this day ignorant of those events which hastened the fall of the small kingdom of Bactria, the last remnant of Alexander's power in India. From them, however, we learn * that this kingdom, after it had existed about 130 years, was overthrown by one of those hordes of Tartars, who at that early period menaced, and afterwards subdued the empire of China. It is certainly much to be regretted, that we can collect so little information from ancient authors, regarding the Bactrian power; because the few and imperfect hints which they afford, are sufficient to show us, that if the history of this state, which became an independent kingdom soon after the death of Seleucus, were more fully known, a very considerable degree of light would be reflected upon that of an-

* M. de Guignes, Mem. de Literat. Tom. xxv. p. 17. &c.

cient India. We can scarcely, however, believe, that the Bactrians ever subjected to their power, more populous and extensive districts, than had at any time acknowledged Alexander's dominion *. That they may have carried on a commercial intercourse with provinces unknown to, or unsubdued by that prince, appears sufficiently probable; but that their connection with these provinces extended beyond that which a mutual trade naturally produces, many circumstances appear to disprove.

Although, from the period at which the Bactrian power was overthrown, till the invasion of India by the Moslems, various revolutions appear to have taken place amongst its inhabitants, nothing more seems to have been aimed at by any foreign nation, than to secure an intercourse of trade with this opulent country †. India, as we have already observed, early became inte-

* Strabo, Lib. xi. † Robertson's Disquisition.

resting, as a scene of commerce; and the attention of mercantile nations has, in all ages, been directed to this envied region. If we trace the superiority of Indian commerce to its source, we must seek for it as much in the higher improvement of the Hindus, as in any peculiarity of their natural productions *. Other countries might have supplied the same productions, in nearly equal perfection; but none were ever so anxiously explored, or so industriously frequented. Its trade was successively engrossed by almost every powerful nation of antiquity, and the means which they employed to secure and facilitate their Indian commerce, prove at once the magnitude of their resources, and the high estimation in which they held the productions of Hindustan.

The Egyptians, as they had been the first to open a communication with India, so

* Robertson's Disquisition.

they were likewise the first, after the partition of Alexander's empire, to enjoy the benefits of its trade. The splendid exertion of their princes to afford every advantage to this commerce—the powerful fleet which they succeeded in establishing; and the erection of a sea-port, from which its commodities could, with greater ease, be conveyed to Alexandria; established a channel, by which the intercourse between the East and the West continued to be carried on during two hundred and fifty years—rendered Egypt the emporium of the Indian trade; and conferred upon it that extraordinary degree of power and opulence, for which it became so conspicuous*. The Syrians, whose situation at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, might have rendered them formidable rivals to the Egyptians, contented themselves with procuring the commodities of India, by the

* Robertson's India.

circuitous route of the Oxus and Caspian. Rendered averse, by national prejudices, from engaging in maritime affairs, and unable to contend with the powerful fleets of the Ptolemies, they beheld the ships of Egypt conveying along their coasts the wealth of India, which, but for these prejudices, might have enriched themselves; and it was not until some centuries after this period, that they were able to overcome this aversion, or make any vigorous efforts to acquire a share of the lucrative commerce of Hindustan.

But the Romans beheld not the wealth and splendour of the Egyptians with the same indifference as their Persian neighbours; and the acquisition of Egypt, which, in the purer days of the republic, would have been treated with contempt, was, in the age of Augustus, regarded as the most valuable of their conquests: an importance, which this country derived, not more from its being the granary of the empire, than

the centre of Indian commerce. But the taste which the Romans had acquired for the luxuries of India, soon extinguished that martial spirit which had conducted to its gratification; and the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens, at once deprived them of this emporium of its trade, and raised up a rival who soon succeeded in driving them from its market.

About the middle of the seventh ceetury, the followers of Mahomet, issuing from the deserts of Arabia, succeeded in establishing an empire, which would, perhaps, have been as circumscribed in its limits and duration as those of Sesostris or Alexander, had it owed its origin to ambition unassisted by fanaticism. But the Moslems entered other countries, not only to subject them to their power, but also to convert them to their creed; and the stability of the empire which they founded, forms, at this day, a convincing proof, that their prophet was deeply versed in the knowledge of human

nature, when he commanded his disciples, in all their expeditions, to carry the sword in the one hand, and the Koran in the other. By none of his followers was this injunction more religiously observed, than by Mahomed Gazni, who invaded India in the year 1000, and, by his enormous cruelties, soon gained himself the odious appellation, of its *Scourge*. The exertions of this fanatic were directed, as much to destroy the temples, as to acquire the territories of the Hindus; but the opposition which he experienced from the native powers, who, perceiving that their religion was attacked, had formed a league against him, from the banks of the Ganges to the Nerbudda, rendered the conquest of the country extremely difficult; while it furnished Mahomed with a pretext for massacring its inhabitants, when at last it fell into his hands. The sanguinary visit of Tamerlane completed the ruin of the Hindu government. To plunder, more than to possess, was the ob-

ject of Timur's invasion; and before his return to Samarcand, the heads of a hundred thousand Hindus, heaped together, in the form of a pyramid, served at once to gratify his savage disposition, and confirm his title of *the Destroying Prince.*

Although Tamerlane is generally regarded, as the founder of the present Mogul Dynasty, it was not until the year 1525 that Sultan Baber, the first of Timur's line, that occupied the throne of Delhi, was crowned emperor of Hindustan. Enough has already been advanced to show, that the Hindus are little indebted to the generosity of their Moslem conquerors, by whom they have in general been cruelly harassed. Yet it must be acknowledged, that both Sultan Baber and some of his successors, adopted a milder and more equitable system of administration, in regard to their native subjects, than the narrow spirit of Islamism permits. Of these princes, the most illustrious was Acbar,—a monarch whose virtues reflected honour upon human

nature, and whose talents would have qualified him for reigning in a more liberal age, and over a more enlightened people. This magnanimous prince soon discovered, that the spirit of the Mahometan religion was directly opposite to that line of policy best calculated to promote the happiness of his subjects, and secure the peace and welfare of his kingdom. Professing himself to be attached to no faith in particular, none suffered persecution under his reign. On the contrary, he protected his Hindu subjects in the practice of their religious ceremonies; and was even accused, by *the Faithful*, of being more attached to the doctrines of Brahma than to the tenets of Mahomet. This indifference to any one religion, rendered him anxious to become acquainted with Christianity; and there is still extant, in the collection of Abu Fazel, a letter which he wrote to the king of Portugal, requesting that he would send him a translation of the Scriptures into Persian or Arabic, as well

as a learned person to explain their doctrines,—adding, that "it was his custom to converse with the learned of all religions, and to profit by the discourse of each." This love of literature led Acbar to respect the learning of the Brahmins, or Hindu priests, which had been persecuted by the Musselmen as profane; and so high an opinion did he entertain of the wisdom displayed in the Hindu laws, that he caused them to be translated into the Persian language, and adopted them in his judicial proceedings.

During the reign of this illustrious prince, the Mogul dominions in India were divided into soubahdaries, over which Soubahdars, or viceroys, were appointed to preside; and these again were subdivided into lesser provinces, governed by Nawaubs. The parts of this political body have, since that period, continued to exist; but experience has shewn, that energy and power can only be expected from it, when the head possesses

the abilities of an Acbar, or an Aurengzebe. This latter prince, who makes so conspicuous a figure in the history of Hindustan, arrived at the possession of supreme power by a train of the most wanton cruelties and deepest dissimulation, but exercised it in a manner that displayed the greatest abilities. He raised the Mahometan empire in India to its highest splendour; and, notwithstanding that a great part of his reign was spent in crushing rebellions, which broke out in one part of his extensive dominions as soon as subdued in another, he undertook, and accomplished, the conquest of the Deccan, which Acbar had in part only achieved. At the period of his death, his kingdom extended nearly two thousand miles in length, and as many in breadth; "and his revenue," says Major Rennell, "exceeded thirty-five millions of pounds Sterling, in a country where the products of the earth are about four times as cheap as in England *."

* Vid. Rennell's Memoir.

The successors of Aurengzebe inherited his vast empire, without his energy to govern it. Many of the Soubahdars rendered themselves independent of the emperor, while the Nawaubs threw off their allegiance to the Soubahdars; and their offices, originally at the disposal, and held during the pleasure of the Mogul, became either hereditary in particular families, or a prey to ambitious usurpers. The irruption of Thamas Khouli Khan, who was invited to the invasion of India by one of the southern Soubahdars, exposed the total imbecility of the Mogul government. This formidable invader entered Hindustan in the year 1738, whilst its sceptre was swayed by the feeble hand of Mahomed Shah. The court of Delhi, sunk in luxury and indolence, was altogether unable to encounter a warrior, who, at the head of two thousand followers, had, a few years before, defied the power, and at last seized upon the crown of Persia. Accordingly, the forces

of Mahomed were soon compelled to give way before the ferocious Kuzzlebash of Nadir; and the entrance of the conqueror of the Affghans into Delhi was signalized by one of the most bloody massacres recorded in history. His generous treatment of the Mogul himself, formed a remarkable contrast to the cruelties which he practised upon his subjects; and his reinstating that prince in his dominions, appeared altogether irreconcilable with that ambition which prompted him, while yet a robber on the highways of Persia, to aspire at universal power. After having destroyed two hundred thousand of the Mogul's subjects, amassed treasure to the enormous amount of one hundred and twenty-five millions sterling, and procured the cession of all the territories lying to the west of the river Attoch, Nadir returned to Candahar *. Upon his departure from Hindustan, province

* Vid. Fraser's Hist. of Nadir Shah.

after province threw off their subjection to the emperor, who had now ceased to command respect; till at last the immense empire, which the virtues of Acbar, and the genius of Aurengzebe had reared, was reduced within the narrow limits of the city of Delhi, and a small district of surrounding country.

At the period during which the Mahometans were establishing their empire in India, Europe was supplied with its valuable commodities by the Venetians and Genoese. When we contemplate the share which the Indian trade enabled these inconsiderable states to take in the affairs of the 14th century, we cease to wonder that it should have been seized with such eagerness, and retained with such vigilant jealousy, by the different nations who successively obtained it. But the dangerous and circuitous route, by which the rival cities of Venice and Genoa conveyed to the western world the riches of the east, tended greatly

to enhance their value. Accordingly, when the discovery of a passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, rendered its productions of easier acquisition to the nations of Europe, these cities were deprived of this lucrative commerce, and Lisbon became its principal emporium. The industrious inhabitants of Holland were the first rivals to the Portuguese in this trade. They considered themselves as equally entitled, with the natives of Portugal, to a share in the commerce of India. The road to riches, which had indeed been discovered by the latter, was open to both; and the right of establishing settlements on the shores of Hindustan certainly belonged as much to the one as to the other. The French also succeeded in obtaining a very considerable share of the Indian trade; but the acquisitions of all these states were insignificant, when compared with those of the English, "last, though not least," in this commercial rivalship. All of them, however, obtained

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permission, from the short-sighted policy of the Mogul government, to establish factories upon the coasts of Hindustan; and, as might have been expected, soon found themselves unable, perhaps unwilling, to remain idle spectators of the revolutions which then distracted that unhappy country. They came, clad in the peaceful mantle of commerce, but a sword was concealed under the garb. They petitioned for settlements and privileges, but they scrupled not, in too many instances, to turn the power which they derived from them against their benefactors. The despotism, under which the inhabitants of Hindustan have existed for so many ages, and which has annihilated at once their virtue, their courage, and their love of independence; the influence of their climate, inspiring a sloth that nothing can overcome; and the manner in which their warlike operations were conducted, preventing them from acting alike with vigour and circumspection, paved the

way for their subjection; and, if properly appreciated, will explain how a few forts and factories were sufficient to crush the powers of India, and five or six hundred Europeans able to defeat their innumerable forces. At this eventful period, the proud and effeminate court of Delhi contented itself with issuing edicts, which boasted of "binding the world to obedience;" while the Europeans, who humbly implored its protection, were advancing to a degree of power, which soon enabled them to despise its resentment. And, such is the vicissitude of human grandeur, more especially in despotic states, that the course of a few years beheld the emperor of Hindustan, the descendant of Tamerlane, flying for refuge to the factory of an English company of merchants, and indebted for his crown to those very foreigners whom he had affected to despise, but who had already robbed it of its richest jewels.

Although the Portuguese, the Dutch, and

the French, once carried on a considerable trade to India, and were possessed of valuable settlements upon its coasts, their influence in that country is now altogether lost, or so much diminished, as scarcely to deserve attention. It may not, however, be improper, in this place, to trace the circumstances to which this change is to be attributed. The first of these nations, and that which had the fortune to discover the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, and for some time exclusively to supply Europe with its commodities, found these advantages more than counterbalanced in the want of resources, in the mother country, to support and protect the vast settlements which a spirit of conquest threw into their hands *. It was also their fate to discover an easy road to India, at a period when the principles of commerce were little

* Vid. Abbé Raynal's Philosophical History of the East and West Indies.

understood, and when the persecuting and intolerant spirit of popery prevented them from deriving those advantages to trade, which would have resulted from cultivating a friendly intercourse with its natives. The governments which they established abroad, for the regulation of their Asiatic possessions, acted in defiance of the instructions which they received from home; and, so far from aiding each other in promoting the general good, were continually clashing and interfering *. The climate of the country, by a sort of retributive justice, gradually subdued that intrepidity which had enabled the Portuguese to conquer its inhabitants. Their manners became depraved and vicious beyond belief. Their cruelties towards the natives increased, in proportion as their power to retain them in subjection diminished; and, that nothing might be

* Vid. Abbé Raynal's Philosophical History of the East and West Indies.

wanting in the ruinous and impolitic system which they pursued, they attacked, and endeavoured to overthrow, the religion of the Hindus. Here, however, this tame and submissive people could make a vigorous, and, as the Portuguese experienced, an effectual stand for their independence. After this impious attempt, not even the genius of the celebrated Ataiba could preserve their falling empire; but the crown of Portugal, after having wasted a great part of its native population, and rendered its name detested in the East, was obliged to resign its colonies into the hands of nations, in every respect better qualified for their management.

The Dutch embarked in the trade to India with a much fairer chance of success than the Portuguese. The same obstacles did not prevent them from securing their commerce on a firmer footing, by cultivating habits of friendship and peace with the natives of those countries to which they

traded; whilst its political principles, and the manner of forming and preserving colonies, had become better understood by the nations of Europe. Guided both by a spirit of economy, and by that true commercial policy which never exchanges schemes of trade for projects of conquest, the Dutch always proved more eager to procure commercial privileges than the dominion of extensive provinces. They accordingly shewed themselves more suspicious of being supplanted in trade by their European rivals, than deprived of their settlements by the native princes; many of whom, however, they brought under their subjection, without having recourse to those cruelties which disgraced the Portuguese. The French, in their intercourse with India, adopted a policy different from that of the Dutch. They aimed at procuring extensive settlements, and risked every thing, in order to obtain this object. They were less intent upon extending and securing their trade,

than their territories; and accordingly, when they entered into war with Britain, their attacks were chiefly directed against the English settlements, while their enemies, by ruining their commerce, soon deprived them of the means of defending the territories which they had acquired. India presented a prize worthy of the ambition of these rival nations; and fortune openly held it out to whichever should prove victorious. The French attempted to seize it, by the same bold and daring exploits by which they have distinguished themselves in the western world; and a defeat to them was next to an annihilation of their hopes. The English advanced with more prudence and caution; and while they prepared resources in case of disaster, were always ready to observe, and take advantage of fortunate circumstances. Their superiority at sea also rendered them an over-match for the French, by enabling them to bring the necessary succours from Europe to themselves,

and to cut off the only resources upon which their enemy could depend. Accordingly, the issue of all these contests, with the concurrence of a variety of other favourable circumstances, has put the English East India Company in possession of the most fertile and populous provinces of Hindustan. An extensive portion of that country is now either subject to their dominion, or tributary to their power; and many millions of the human race depend upon them, for the blessings of good government.

To trace the various steps by which the English East India Company have attained their present power, would be a task far beyond our abilities to perform, or the limits of this work to admit. The history of their progress forms a page in the annals of mercantile transactions, equally singular and splendid. Intent, in the commencement of their career, upon the accomplishment of commercial objects alone, they

cautioned their servants abroad against intermeddling in the political concerns of Hindustan; and beheld, not without apprehension, the first advances of that ambition, which in a few years converted them into its sovereigns. It may certainly admit of dispute, whether this change has been beneficial to the Company, considered in their original capacity, as an association of merchants; but it cannot be denied, that before it was effected, many of those scenes of cruelty and oppression, which might have been the natural attendants of a Tartar prince, were exhibited by a people who laid claim to the appellation of *enlightened and humane*. The sufferings which the natives endured from the tyranny of the Company's servants, at length attracted the attention of the British legislature. The immense fortunes so rapidly acquired, afforded evidences of these sufferings, too strong to be resisted; and clearly proved the inability of the Company to provide for the administration of

justice in their newly acquired territories. The powers of their governors abroad were, at the same time, so inaccurately defined, and the instances in which these officers took it upon them to act in opposition to the orders which they received from home, so numerous, that the entire ruin of their interests appeared to many to be unavoidable. But the wisdom of the British Parliament saved the Company from destruction, and the credit of Great Britain from receiving a shock, from which it could have with difficulty recovered. A variety of salutary regulations, for the government of our Indian possessions, were adopted; the most effectual steps were taken to put a stop to the system of peculation which had hitherto prevailed; and the superintendence of the political and commercial concerns of the Company, vested in Parliament, through the medium of a Board of Controul. Of the merits of this system for governing India, we shall have occasion to treat, in another

part of this work. It is sufficient, at present, to observe, that although the experience of more than twenty years has proved it unable to produce all those beneficial effects which were then expected from it, or prevent those schemes of conquest, and extension of dominion, which the legislature declared to be measures repugnant to the wishes, the honour, and the policy of this nation *, it is a fact, that since its establishment, the native subjects of British India have enjoyed a degree of prosperity to which they had for ages before been strangers. The benefit of their ancient laws, administered in the spirit of the British constitution, has been secured to them; they have been treated with greater justice and compassion; and private property, innocent freedom, and public happiness, have been more fully consulted, than under any

* See Sect. 34, 24th Geo. III. c. 25. Also Sect. 42, 33d Geo. III. c. 52.

form of government which has been established since the period at which they lost their independence *.

To point out how these enviable blessings may be still farther extended, and the light of the Christian Religion diffused over the Eastern world, are the objects of this Dissertation. Had their choice been left entirely to ourselves, we might perhaps have paused, to inquire how far it was judicious; and should at least have been able to plead a close investigation of the subject, for a period of years, as an apology for attempting to solve problems so important and difficult, as the discovery of the means, by which the civilization of British India may be best promoted, and the glorious light of the gospel diffused amongst the heathen inhabitants. But when we adverted to the class of candidates invited to the discussion of these points; as well as to the judges, to

* Dangers of British India, 2d edit. p. 52.

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whom the merits of their several performances were appointed to be referred, we regarded them rather as subjects of academical disquisition; and apprehending that, in this case, less would be expected from us than we should have considered ourselves pledged to afford, had we taken them up as subjects of more minute and philosophical investigation, we ventured upon their discussion. We are aware that, to execute aright the task which we have undertaken, we must have marked the progress of the human race towards refinement, with some attention; and traced the steps by which they have advanced from a savage to a civilized condition; otherwise we must remain unable to explain the phenomena which the history of their civilization presents, or to point out by what means it can be still further promoted. We must have discovered what are those arts which have most powerfully contributed to ameliorate the condition of mankind, as well as by

what means they may be most successfully cultivated. We must have perceived the obstacles that have impeded their operation, and learnt in what manner these obstacles may be either surmounted or removed. Nor does this general knowledge constitute the whole of what that writer ought to possess, who undertakes to promote the progress of refinement among any particular people. It is likewise necessary that he be acquainted with the history, manners, and usages of those whom he professes to civilize. This knowledge becomes the more necessary, if the people whom it is his province to refine, have already made any progress towards a state of civilization. It may not, indeed, be equally requisite that it should be displayed, in a work written for the purpose of pointing out how their social condition may be still further ameliorated; but we hope we shall not be accused of misapplying our labour, in giving a short view of the manners and customs of

Hindustan, previous to entering upon the detail of those measures, by which its inhabitants may be raised still higher in the scale of civilized nations. The subject, we confess, is enveloped in a darkness which our feeble light is but ill calculated to dispel; but we carry not our pretensions so far as to offer any thing new towards its elucidation. We address not ourselves, "Τοις συνετοισι," in Hindu literature, but to those who may not have bestowed the same attention on the subject as ourselves, and who cannot, therefore, without the assistance of such an investigation as we are previously to attempt, be expected to understand many of those means of civilizing the subjects of British India, and diffusing the knowledge of Christianity throughout the Eastern world, which we shall have occasion to point out. The Hindus are a people whose history differs widely from that of any other with which we are acquainted; whose customs and usages are peculiar to

themselves; and whose further civilization, so far from being promoted, would, in many instances, be retarded, by those means which the universal experience of other nations sanction and recommend.

CHAP. II.

Hindustan—Boundaries and climate—Ancient state—Stability of Hindu institutions—Singularity of customs and manners—Character of the Hindus—Casts—Their origin—Privileges of the Brahmins—Causes of their permanence—Consequences of this institution—Ancient state of arts and sciences—Present state—Religion of the Hindus—Vulgar superstition—Rites and ceremonies—Influence on public morals—Laws and political institutions of the Hindus—Mahometan in India.

THE extensive empire of Hindustan stretches from the Indus, on the west, to the Burrampootu on the east; and from Cape Comorin on the south, to the country of Thibet on the north. It presents an highly diver-

sified surface; rising at one time into mountains of a most stupendous height; at another, extending into plains, bounded only by the horizon. A vast variety of rivers intersect it; of which the Ganges, the Sampoo, the Indus, and the Nerbuddah, are the most considerable. These noble and majestic streams serve at once to open a communication betwixt the remotest parts of Hindustan, and to fertilize its plains, by the periodical inundations to which they are subject. In Hindu mythology they are all accounted sacred; although to some a superior degree of sanctity is assigned than to others, and a greater share of happiness reserved for the man who dies by the side of the Ganges, than for him who expires on the banks of the Nerbuddah. The climate is such as we should expect to find in a country, the greater part of which lies within the torrid zone; but the bad effects of whose geographical situation are, in a great measure, counteracted by the lofty

ridges of mountains with which it abounds, and by the cooling breezes which it enjoys from the sea. Accordingly, the enormous population which Hindustan has sustained, from the remotest antiquity, proves, that although intensely warm, its climate is not unfavourable to human life, notwithstanding that it is often fatally destructive to European constitutions.

To obtain any thing like an accurate knowledge of the Hindus, in their present state, it is necessary to have a regard to their history and condition in former ages. A learned and elegant historian * has shewn, in a most satisfactory manner, that they once held a very high rank in the scale of refinement, and cultivated arts and sciences with an assiduity and success now unknown amongst them. The accuracy of those facts, from which, by a long and elaborate deduction, this writer has established the

* Dr Robertson.

superior improvement of the ancient Indians, has been called in question by those who, adverting to the degenerate condition of their posterity, cannot believe they could have ever ranked high among civilized nations. Others have declared the accounts of their remote antiquity, and high degree of refinement, to be irreconcilable with the history of the world, as delivered by Moses; and have pronounced all who believe in them to be enemies to revealed religion. The argument drawn from the present condition of the Hindus must appear inconclusive to all who reflect, that their country has been exposed to the most desolating ravages, during a series of the most disastrous revolutions; and who consider, that the natural effect of those very institutions, to which they owed their early and rapid progress in civilization, was to place an insuperable obstacle to their further improvement. We could excuse the weakness of the argument urged against the antiquity of

Indian civilization, from its being incompatible with the Mosaic account of the world; and believe, that some who maintain it, have not scrupled to sacrifice their conviction to their orthodoxy; but we cannot avoid censuring the want of Christian charity, as well as common justice, which the above conclusion deduced from it displays. This conclusion supposes those who argue for the early civilization of the Indians, to give credit to the fabulous stories with which their mythological history abounds; and forgets, that without having recourse to these, or to any legends at variance with the sacred scriptures, there exist the most authentic proofs, that the natives of India "were not only more early civilized, but had made greater progress in civilization than any other people." It is true, they are now sunk in a state of comparative degradation; but it is remarkable that the present race of Hindus still retain the customs and religion, if not the virtues and

knowledge of their ancestors; and that modern Hindustan is, at this day, the same, in many respects, as ancient India. The history of the Hindus presents, indeed, one of the most wonderful phenomena in the annals of our race; and affords a convincing proof, that nations are sometimes found less attached to their independence than to their customs. Force or policy has wrested the government of their country out of their hands; and upwards of a thousand years have elapsed since strangers, differing in manners, laws, and religion, have subjected the Hindus to their power. But neither the sanguinary spirit of the Mahometan faith, nor the mild precepts and rational tenets of Christianity, have as yet induced the votary of Brahma to exchange his Vedas for the Koran, or the Gospel;—to cease reverencing the cow as a sacred animal, or omit paying divine honours to the waters of the Ganges. Some instances have indeed occurred, in which the Hindus have conform-

ed to the customs of their masters; but the experiment of *how far* the usages of this singular people may be changed, has more than once shaken the firm foundation of the Mahometan power in India; and shewn, that however much a milder treatment may operate in overcoming their attachment to ancient customs, and their prejudices against every innovation, it is in vain to think that this desirable revolution can ever be accomplished by the mere force of authority.

The singularity of the customs and manners of Hindustan, as has already been remarked, long ago attracted the attention of other nations. Many of these are closely connected with the established system of superstition, and will afterwards fall to be considered. In regard to those more immediately connected with their civil and domestic policy, we have received accounts extremely various, and frequently contradictory. By some writers on this subject,

we are told, for instance, that polygamy is allowed by the Hindu laws, but seldom practised; whilst others assert, with equal confidence, and we apprehend with greater truth, that the custom is very universally established, especially amongst the Brahmins. Marriage is considered as a duty incumbent upon all ranks of men; but the ceremonies attending it are tedious and expensive, and accompanied with a variety of superstitious rites. Parents are obliged to dispose of their children by marriage, at an early period of life, and mothers are enjoined by law to suckle their own offspring. The establishment of schools in the principal towns and villages is provided for, where the boys are taught to read and write, under the tuition of Brahmins; whilst every one learns at home the profession of his father*. The Hindus cautiously abstain from the use of animal food, and evince an anxious

* Sketch of Hindu Manners.

solicitude to preserve the life of the most insignificant insect. They are sometimes seen to bewail bitterly at having occasioned, even inadvertently, the death of a fly; shuddering at the thought, that the violence done to the little animal may extend to the soul of some departed friend. Suicide is a custom very prevalent amongst them; but, notwithstanding that the Brahmins represent it as a duty required in certain cases by their laws, it is said that these institutions are far from enjoining a practice so repugnant to human nature. It is openly committed, as a ceremony of religion, under pretence of appeasing the wrath, or conciliating the favour of their gods; and is manifestly a mean employed by a crafty priesthood, to strengthen the influence of superstition. The custom of sacrificing the widow upon the funeral pile of her deceased husband, is not less barbarous; nor, according to some writers, less repugnant to the spirit of the Hindu institutions. At the

same time, it must be allowed, that these institutions rather recommend than forbid this inhuman practice. We are told, that it has been altogether prohibited by the British government; yet it appears, that in the neighbourhood of Calcutta alone, upwards of two hundred women are yearly immolated to this barbarous custom*. Other practices, still more shocking and cruel, might be easily enumerated, could their detail afford either amusement or instruction. Those which we have already noticed may serve to shew us, how inhuman a people, otherwise mild and inoffensive, may become, under the influence of a preposterous and cruel superstition. The veneration which the same people are taught to entertain for the cow, and the waters of the Ganges, has been productive of different effects, and may be traced to a political, rather than a religious source. It is evidently a mean re-

* Memoir of a Church Establishment.

sorted to by their legislators to preserve, in the one case, the life of an animal highly useful in eastern countries; and, in the other, to prevent the Hindu from migrating to foreign climates.

It has frequently been observed, that an intimate connection subsists between the customs and character of a people. Accordingly, we find, that an abhorrence of shedding blood, and abstinence from the use of animal food, and spirituous liquors, joined to the influence of the climate, have rendered the Hindus the most enervated inhabitants of the globe. In India, the wants of life are few, and easily supplied; and every thing conduces to encourage indolence, and the love of ease. Hence arises a saying, common amongst its inhabitants, that "it is better to sit than to walk; to lie than to sit; to sleep than to lie; and death is the best of all states." Yet even among the Hindus, when acting under the influence of superstition, we sometimes meet

with the most astonishing instances of firmness and active courage. Urbanity of manners, and reverence for the religion, laws, and customs of their ancestors, distinguished this people so early as the period of Alexander the Great; and, according to some writers, form, at this day, the most prominent features in their character. In their intercourse with each other, they are said to be great observers of decorum, and naturally polite in their address. They are represented as extremely cautious of saying or doing any thing which they imagine may give offence; are remarkable for the sedateness of their behaviour; and, in their general character, mild and inoffensive. They teach their children to act and speak with a propriety almost incompatible with their years; and instances of filial disobedience are said seldom to occur. Their women are distinguished by a decency of behaviour, a solicitude in their families, and a fidelity to their vows, which would do

honour to the sex in the most civilized nations. The custom of secluding them from society, is supposed to have been borrowed from their Mahometan conquerors; but, from some circumstances related by Arrian, in his Indian History, it would appear that this practice was established among the Hindus at a much earlier period than their subjection to the Moslems. Their laws forbid many of those accomplishments which are bestowed upon women in Europe, as giving them a disrelish to the employments for which they are designed; but no pains are spared in rendering accomplished those females, who, as the fascinating instruments of superstition, are employed in the service of their temples.

Of all the causes which have contributed to render permanent the manners and customs of Hindustan, and to bestow upon its inhabitants that peculiarity of character for which they are distinguished from other nations, none have been more powerful than

their division into Casts. Although it must have required a long period before such an arrangement, by which a separation of professions, as well as a distinction of rank, has been established, could have taken place, we find that it existed at least two thousand years before the commencement of the Christian æra. From the superior rank and eminent privileges which it bestows upon the Brahmins, it is easy to perceive, that this division must have been instituted in the days of the darkest superstition; and that the principal end it must have had in view, has been to perpetuate the power and influence which a crafty priesthood had obtained. It is equally obvious, that they who had the wisdom to contrive this expedient to support their dominion, possessed also the sagacity to foresee, that the ascendancy which they had procured over the minds of their fellow men, would decline in proportion as science and literature advanced. Accordingly, they have been careful to

guard against this event, by not only declaring the unnatural distinction into casts to be of divine origin and authority, but by interweaving it with almost every one of their laws and customs; and by confining the pursuit of literary researches to the only order in the state interested in the support of this division, the legislators of India have secured to it a permanence, of which the most celebrated institutions of antiquity cannot boast.

Of the Hindu Casts, which are four in number, that of the Brahmins, or priests, as has already been observed, holds the most dignified rank, and enjoys the most distinguished privileges. To the members of this order the literature of India has, in all ages, been confined. They are the priests, who officiate in the temples, and read and expound the Vedas, or sacred books, to the other classes of the community. But as their number greatly exceeds what is merely necessary for these purposes, the laws

have extended to them a degree of indulgence which they deny to the other orders, and allowed them to engage in government, trade, or agriculture. They have, however, strictly prohibited them from discharging the menial duties of the lower cast, and always confine a certain proportion of their number, who are properly denominated priests, to the service of the pagods, to the education of youth, and to study. The more learned among them are denominated Pundits, and are regarded by their countrymen with a greater degree of veneration than the ordinary Brahmins.

In the language of eastern allegory, the Brahmin Cast is said to have proceeded from the mouth of Burhma, the great father of the universe. Accordingly, the members of this order are superior in rank and sanctity, even to the kings themselves, to whom a more ignoble origin has been assigned; and no opportunity has been neglected by the Indian legislators, to secure

and perpetuate this respect. The sovereign may esteem himself honoured, if allowed to partake of what has been touched by a Brahmin; but the haughty priest must submit to a tedious course of purification, if by chance he has polluted himself with eating what has been touched by his prince. In treating of the respect and deference due to this order, the Hindu laws descend from their accustomed dignity and wisdom; at one time dwelling upon circumstances altogether unworthy of attention, at another, overlooking the fundamental principles of justice. They are at great pains to enumerate the ceremonies with which a Brahmin is to be received by the other classes of the state, when he engages in the common occupations of life; and they have sanctioned their observance by a variety of punishments, proportioned to the nature of the offence. They have commanded the magistrate to put to death any member of the lowest cast, who presumes even to mo-

lest a Brahmin, at the same time that they have prohibited him from inflicting capital punishment upon a priest, however enormous the crime of which he may be guilty.

The Cast next in rank and dignity to the Brahmin is the Chehteree. Although this order is denominated the military, its members are not confined to the profession of arms alone, but are at liberty to follow any other line of life, which does not derogate from the honour of their cast, or encroach upon the privileges of the first order of the state. This class is said to have proceeded from the arms of Burhma; and accordingly the civil and military power have been assigned to its members, from among whom the sovereigns of the country are chosen. The thighs of Burhma gave birth to the third of the Hindu Casts, denominated the Bice, and composed of husbandmen, merchants, bankers, &c. The last is termed the Sooder Cast, and derives its origin from the feet of Burhma; pointing out its destination to the

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performance of menial offices. It is by far the most numerous of the Hindu classes, and comprehends within it labourers and artisans of every description.

Had the Indian legislators, when they instituted the division into Casts, trusted its permanence to the sanctions of civil authority, unassisted by the rewards and terrors of superstition, their wisdom and sagacity had long ago ceased to command the panegyric which they have received. The difficulty lay not in forming, but in rendering durable this distinction. Of the means which have been employed for this purpose, none have, perhaps, proved more effectual, than the dread with which the Hindu is taught to regard whatever tends to infringe those laws by which the purity of cast is defended. To forfeit the privileges of his order, is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befal him; and he is not only taught to fear the dreadful punishments which await it in another world, but he feels the

more substantial miseries that accompany it in this. We may form some idea of the dreadful nature of excommunication among the Hindus, when we are told, that they will suffer the torture, nay death itself, rather than deviate from one article of their faith, or violate the most trifling law regarding the privileges of their Cast. But it is almost impossible to conceive in what detestation the Chandalahs, or outcasts, are held among them. These unfortunate wretches are subjected to the vilest treatment, which they receive with the most pious resignation, and employed in the meanest offices, which they execute without repining. Even the law itself denies them its protection; and they are liable to be put to death with impunity. Upon the coast of Malabar, where they are denominated Parias, many of them live in the forests, and are supported by the more charitable Hindus, upon the express condition, that they descend not from the trees which they

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inhabit, to carry off the food, that may have been left for their sustenance, until their benefactors are beyond the reach of being seen by them.

The consequences of this unnatural distinction into Casts, and the influence it has had upon the progress of arts and sciences, will come to be considered, when we treat of its abolition as a mean of civilization; while a review of the Hindu religion will discover to us many cruel and superstitious rites, to which it has given birth. It is sufficient, in this place, to observe, that the Brahmins, who flourished when the Hindu empire was in its glory, cultivated arts and sciences with the happiest assiduity and success; and have left behind them monuments of their progress, at which their degenerate posterity continue to wonder, but have long since ceased to emulate, or even to understand. They directed their studies to metaphysics, morals, poetry, natural philosophy, and other branches of literature;

and such of their works as have been discovered, and translated from the Sanscrit language, in which they are written, bear ample testimony to the wonderful advances which they had made in all these branches. In the writings of one of their metaphysicians, are discovered all those subtle distinctions which afterwards appeared in the Grecian philosophy; whilst the Mahabharat, the most ancient and celebrated of their epic poems, and of which an episode, termed the Baghvat Geeta, has been lately translated into English, is said to glow with all the luxuriance of eastern fancy; to abound with the most elevated similes; and to vie with the Iliad itself in the beauty of its descriptions, the grandeur of its sentiments, and the sublimity of its language. They also appear to have made an astonishing proficiency in the sciences of astronomy and arithmetic; and from them the Arabians are supposed to have borrowed the knowledge of those figures which are now in general

use over Europe *. We even find, in the writings of Yaber Yachyra, a system of the universe, founded on the principle of attraction; and explaining the phenomena of the planetary world, by the central position of the sun. The ancient Indians were no less remarkable for their progress in the study of ethics. Their Nitre Sastra, or system of morals, although disfigured in many places, by the grossest superstition, contains rules for the regulation of human conduct, founded on the broad basis of virtue and universal benevolence. "Good men," says the Indian moralist, "love even their enemies: the tree withholdeth not its shade from the wood-cutter: the moon withdraweth not her beams even from the cottage of the outcast."

But it must be acknowledged, that the present race of Hidus are far behind their forefathers, in the knowledge of those arts

* Robertson's Disquisition.

and sciences which embellish and refine the human race. Their learning is circumscribed within narrow limits. The astronomy of the ancient Brahmins has degenerated, in the hands of their posterity, into the most contemptible system of astrology, and extends little farther than the calculation of an eclipse. The nobler parts of their moral system, have long ago ceased to engage their attention, and those only are known to the present depositaries of Hindu literature, which tend to foster superstition, and degrade the human mind; whilst some of the sciences, formerly cultivated by the natives of India, are now almost forgotten. In the culture of the useful arts, their degeneracy is no less conspicuous, although, perhaps, more easily explained. We are informed by Arrian *, that at the period when Megasthenes visited India, the labours of the husbandman were so sacredly re-

* Arrian's Indian Hist. chap. xxii.

spected, that while contending armies were deciding the fate of empires in one field, he might be seen peaceably reaping the fruits of his industry in the next. When Europeans first became acquainted with that country, he was found going forth armed to the field, and committing the seed to the ground, uncertain how much he might be allowed to collect of its produce. The consequence has been, that agriculture, and the numerous arts of life which depend upon it, have sunk into a state the most rude and imperfect; and hence, too, the miserable huts of the present Hindus, form so melancholy a contrast with the magnificent monuments of ancient architecture, amidst which they are scattered. It is true, the Hindus have arrived at a high degree of perfection in those arts, which more particularly furnish the articles of luxury; and acquired in them an expertness and delicacy of hand, which Europeans, with all the advantages of superior science, and the aid

of more complete instruments, have never been able to attain *. But it must be acknowledged, that even in these arts, the present race are considerably behind their ancestors, and, it would appear, are continuing still farther to degenerate †. Although few countries in the world possess greater facilities, and none more abundant and valuable materials for commerce, than Hindustan; no people have availed themselves less of such enviable advantages—a singularity of which their established system of superstition will afford a satisfactory explanation. Foreign trade has, in all ages, been carried on by strangers; and there is little of internal beyond what their mutual wants require; and even this little is transacted in a way the most tedious and awkward.

The Religion of a people, who could make so great a progress in the cultivation

* Robertson's Disquisition.

† Lauderdale on the Government of India.

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of science, as we have seen the Hindus attain; and, at the same time, continue to practise the frivolous and inhuman customs to which they are still attached, must naturally present an aspect far from homogeneous. Accordingly, in examining the singular faith which has so intimately interwoven itself with their laws and usages, we soon discover that the picture exhibits a darker and a brighter side. Amidst the most incongruous and degrading superstitions that ever debased the human mind, we find intermixed a knowledge of the most sublime truths, which, unassisted by revelation, it can ever attain. Amidst the most melancholy proofs of the weakness of human intellect, we sometimes discover Reason, seated on her loftiest throne, and dictating rules for the regulation of human manners, deduced from the purest principles, and leading to the happiest consequences. Amidst millions, who ignorantly worship the workmanship of their own hands,

and offer their sacrifices at the altars of hideous and misshapen idols, we behold some that

"Look from nature, up to nature's God,"——

And acknowledge that there is but one self-existent Being, Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent.

In every system of superstition, with which we are acquainted, some vestiges of the primary and important truths, which natural religion inculcates, are to be discovered; and we can trace, with ease, the universal prevalence of a belief, that there exists a Being, infinitely superior to every other; the source and fountain of existence. In different countries this Being has been known under different appellations; and among those people, who have had the preposterous presumption to deliver his history, we meet with various accounts of his birth, parentage, and actions. Among the

Hindus he is known under the name of Brihma; and in all ages has received a purer and more dignified adoration than, under that of Jupiter, he ever obtained from the Greeks or Romans. Too highly exalted to concern himself in human affairs, he has delegated the government of the world to an endless variety of inferior deities; some of whom are supposed to become incarnate, at certain periods, and to dwell among mankind, in order to instruct them in the great truths of religion. But there is every reason to believe, that there existed a period in the Hindu history, when the dread Brihma was the sole object of religious adoration. Even at this day, some of the more intelligent and enlightened Brahmins declare their belief in his existence alone, and worship him as the father and preserver of the universe. They ascribe to him those natural and moral attributes which true religion declares the Deity to possess; and, from a consideration of these

attributes, and of the relation in which mankind stand towards him, as his rational offspring, they have deduced the most acceptable mode of worshipping him. "As God," say they, "is immaterial, he is above all conception; as he is invisible, he can have no form; but, from what we behold of his works, we may conclude that he is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; and that it is only by sanctity of heart, and purity of manners, that men can expect to gain the approbation, or secure the favour of a Being, perfect in holiness."

Such are the elevated sentiments inculcated in the Vedas, or sacred books of the Hindus, and, as we have observed, entertained, even at this day, by some of the Brahmins. Were we to form, from them, our opinion of the Hindu religion, we should dignify it with the appellation of Deism, and the name of Brihma would stand alone in the catalogue of their gods. But it must be acknowledged, that few are the number,

even of the Pundits themselves, by whom these writings are understood, or these sentiments entertained. The priests, as well as the people, are buried in the grossest superstition, and both believe and inculcate, that the essence of religion consists in a variety of rites, frivolous in their nature, or immoral in their tendency; and varying according to the different departments over which their numerous deities are supposed to preside. For, as a striking similarity subsists betwixt all the systems of superstition which have prevailed in the world, in regard to the occupations of the inferior gods, we find, among the Hindus, deities of a rank and office corresponding to the Neptune, the Æolus, the Pluto, &c., of the Greeks and Romans. If, therefore, we are desirous to become acquainted with that system of religious faith, whose influence pervades even the political institutions of Hindustan, and whose rites and ceremonies not only mingle in the transactions of common

life, but even constitute an essential part of them, we must be prepared to contemplate a picture far from pleasing. We shall behold the votary of Brahma, pouring out his prayers at the feet of the most hideous and disgusting images; and conciliating the favour, appeasing the wrath, or imploring the protection of the imaginary beings whom these idols represent, by practices at which every feeling of humanity revolts. We shall find him not only deifying the operations of nature, but even ranking the cow and the monkey among the number of his gods, and devoutly worshipping the waters of the Ganges. Indeed, no system of superstitious belief, with which we are acquainted, embraces, at once, gods so exalted and so mean, or so numerous in their catalogue, as are contained in Hindu mythology. The Jupiter of Greece and Rome is frequently a noble and awe-inspiring being; but, at other times, he degenerates into a mean and lustful monster.

The Brihma of the Hindus always commands respect; and his name, like Jehovah among the Jews, must not be mentioned but with sentiments of profound veneration and regard. Yet, at the same time, that *he* is thus highly exalted, and described as too elevated to be represented by any visible likeness, the imagination appears to have been racked to discover shapes for other deities, sufficiently unseemly and uncouth. The hideous representations of these gods, which, in the morning, are worshipped with the greatest veneration, and in the evening, perhaps, consigned to the nearest tank, are to be found in every house in India; and there seem to be no limits to their number, as every artisan, who can make an image, can create a god.

The ceremonies of superstition, as distinguished from those of true religion, are numerous and complicated in their nature; splendid and magnificent in their performance. The rites, which the former fre-

quently prescribes, as necessary to obtain the favour of heaven, exhibit the most melancholy proofs of its baneful influence over the human mind. Amongst the Hindus, these rites are peculiarly disgusting and horrible, and by no means easily reconciled with the mild and gentle disposition of the people among whom they are prevalent. Human victims have, indeed, long ago ceased to bleed on the altars of Hindustan; but the sacrifice of the widow, on the funeral pile of her deceased husband; the exposure of the sick and aged, to perish on the bank of a river; and the cruel severities which the devotees voluntarily inflict upon themselves, at the celebration of their religious festivals, still mark the reign of a sanguinary superstition. The worship of the gods is performed in Pagodas, or temples, dedicated to their service, and the Brahmins are the priests who preside over the religious ceremonies of the Hindus. The number of these ministers of superstí-

tion is so immense as almost to stagger belief. In the pagod of Seringham alone, before it fell into the hands of the English, there are said to have been no fewer than forty thousand, whom its ample revenues supported in the most supine indolence, and enabled to riot in the grossest voluptuousness *. In these temples not only are the most shameful indecencies countenanced, and the most barefaced immoralities practised, but these even constitute an essential part of the worship. In many of them, select bands of young and beautiful women are trained up, in every elegant and fascinating accomplishment; who, by the prostitution of their persons, promote both the service of the gods and the revenues of the priests. Such of the rites and ceremonies of Indian superstition, as cannot be charged with these glaring impurities, are yet frivolous and unmeaning in their nature. The

* Orme's Hist. Vol. i. p. 178.

Hindus sprinkle themselves with the dung of the cow, as a preservative against the evils incident to human life; and they are taught that if they die, holding the tail of this animal betwixt their hands, they will, in this manner, be transported to the land of everlasting happiness. During the celebration of their Poojas, or religious festivals, practices of a more inhuman nature are exhibited. They are then seen devoting themselves to death, by falling under the wheels of the machines which carry the gods; swinging with hooks passed through the integuments of the back; falling from a height upon sharp-pointed instruments, or climbing naked upon trees armed with thorns. From such scenes as these, the feeling mind turns aside with a mixed sentiment of indignation and pity; whilst the Christian is led to regret, that men should have ever lost the knowledge of the unity and perfections of God, or believed that the performance of rites and ceremonies, so hu-

miliating to human nature, could be requisite to ensure the protection of heaven.

The influence which such a superstition as we have now examined, must have had upon public morals, may be easily anticipated; and in regard to the Hindus, has been exactly such as might have been expected. It has generated pride and presumptuous arrogance in one order of the state, and sunk every other in abject submission to a crafty priesthood. It has unhinged the native energies of the mind, and precluded its votaries from ever rising to any thing elevated or noble. It has corrupted the public morals, by teaching, that men, in serving the gods, may, and must become vicious. By the variety of holidays and festivals which it has appointed, and by the number of idle priests and devotees which it allows and maintains, it has retarded the advancement of the arts, by imposing so heavy a burden upon the industrious part of the community. In fine,

it has contributed as much as any other cause, to stop short the progress of civilization, and effectually to prevent the Hindus from attaining that sum of moral and political happiness, at which they might have otherwise arrived. The influence of its sublimer doctrines has, in all ages, been confined to their Pundits, who studiously monopolize a knowledge, which circumstances appear to be circumscribing within still narrower limits; whilst its pernicious and degrading tenets have received the sanction of authority, and constitute the religion of the state. At the same time, its singular and unsocial spirit renders it a formidable opponent to every other religion, which may endeavour to supplant it; and, as we shall afterwards see, presents obstacles to the diffusion of Christianity amongst the Hindus, that might almost deter us from the attempt.

The laws and political arrangements of a people, over whom superstition has so long

held her iron sway, may be supposed to partake of many imperfections; and it must be allowed by their most partial admirers, that although, in many instances, eminently calculated to preserve social order and good government, the institutions of Hindustan require, in a variety of cases, to be amended. The wisdom displayed in these institutions was highly celebrated by the ancients; and since the moderns acquired a knowledge of the language in which they are written, they have become more fully known, and not less generally admired. By these laws, the spirit of conquest was restrained; and at the same time that the Hindus were enjoined by them to cultivate a friendly intercourse with the nations around them, they were prohibited from intermarrying with strangers. They provided, with the most humane and pious care, for the relief of travellers overcome by the fatigues of their journey, or unable, through poverty, to proceed. Houses for their ac-

commodation were erected upon the public roads, and supported at the public expence; and trees planted, to defend them from the scorching heat of the sun. Under the influence of these laws, agriculture flourished, and arts and sciences were cultivated with the happy success which we have already noticed; but they are now locked up in a language, known only to a few of the Pundits, and by them frequently perverted to their own sordid and selfish purposes. They are manifestly the productions of Brahmins, and prove, beyond a doubt, that this cunning order have been at once the priests and the legislators of India.

We have already remarked, that about the middle of the seventh century, the Mahomedans invaded India, and at length succeeded in erecting an empire, which has subsisted to the present day. Both the number and power of the Moslems established in Hindustan, would prevent us from overlooking them in this place, even

if there existed not other reasons, which render it necessary to notice them. But unless we are acquainted, in some measure, with their customs and character, it is impossible we can point out in what manner these may be rendered more consonant to the progress of civilization; and if we understand not the nature of their government, we can form but a very imperfect idea how the details of administration are conducted, and justice dispensed in British India. Their number, according to the most authentic accounts, is stated to be upwards of ten millions *; and in the British possessions, as well as in other parts of India, many of them occupy places of trust and importance. Their customs and usages differ not materially from those of their brethren in other parts of the Eastern world, and are so well known as to demand from us no particular description. Various

* Vid. Orme's Hist. of Hindustan.

accounts have been given, in regard to the minor traits of their character; but almost all concur, in representing their distinguishing qualities to be perfidy and sensuality. Attached to a religion, admirably accommodated to the depravity of human nature, but which commands its votaries, when engaged in any transactions with *infidels*, to banish from their breasts the milder virtues of the human character, and which regards idolatry as the greatest of abominations, and the worst of crimes; the history of their progress in India is little else than a disgusting repetition of those cruelties which, under the influence of such a faith, it is natural to expect. Nor can we discover any thing which they have done to repair the waste and misery that they have occasioned; unless, indeed, the raising of a mosque, in the place of a pagod, can be termed a reparation. Their annals present, perhaps, but one solitary instance, in which any of their princes have had the wisdom to de-

CHAP. III.

British India—Political geography of Hindustan—East India Company's possessions—Mogul—Nizam, or Soubahdar of the Deccan—Nawaubs of the Carnatic and Tanjour—Of Oude—Rajahs of Mysore and Travancore—Marhatta states—Rajahpoots—Seiks—Government of Hindustan—Of British India—Population—Revenue.

In all those circumstances which we have now remarked, regarding the state of modern Hindustan, and the laws, manners, and customs of its inhabitants, British India partakes;—a name which may, perhaps, with little impropriety, be extended to the whole peninsula, as there scarcely exists a state, which is not either in subjec-

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tion to, or alliance with the English. Before, therefore, we can properly appreciate the power of Britain in Hindustan, it will be necessary to take a short view of its political geography; and, if possible, to ascertain among what states, and in what proportions, the resources of this country are divided. Nor is this so easy a task as might at first sight be imagined; for, notwithstanding the ample accounts which we possess regarding this country, the changes, to which it has at all times been subject, have of late years become so numerous, and rapid in succession, that it would not surprise us, if the next intelligence from India should consign to obscurity, states which we shall now describe, as of great power and importance in Asiatic politics.

The empire of Hindustan may at present be said to be divided between the British, the Nizam, the Marhattas, the Rajahpoots, and the Seiks; the Mogul, as we have already observed, being a prince of little im-

portance or authority. The first of these powers is by far the most considerable, whether we consider the extent of those territories, which it now possesses in the fullest sovereignty, or the influence that it has acquired in the affairs of India. The Nizam or Soubahdar of the Deccan possesses one of the most fertile districts of Hindustan; and that which, under the administration of Aurengzebe, was accounted the most important and richest viceroyship of the empire; but his territories have of late years been greatly diminished, by the cession of some considerable provinces; and he can scarcely be reckoned among the independent princes of India, as he owes his existence to the friendship of the Company, and to a subsidiary British force, stationed at his capital. The Nawaubs of Tanjour and the Carnatic, whose alliance was once courted, and their enmity dreaded by the English, are now reduced to the state of mere stipendiaries upon the British govern-

ment. The civil and military authorities of their countries have been transferred to the Company; and a part of their ancient revenues, sufficient to maintain them in eastern magnificence and splendour, is all that remains of their former power. Nor is the Nawaub of Oude any longer entitled to the name of an independent prince. A great part of his dominions has of late years been ceded by him to the English, who have likewise acquired the right of interfering at pleasure, in the government of his remaining provinces. Mysore, the country of the celebrated Hyder Ally, who once threatened the destruction of the English interests in India, is now possessed in full sovereignty by the Company, with the exception of a small district, allotted, by the treaty of Seringapatam, to the family of the ancient Rajah. This prince, however, holds his dominions upon conditions so degrading, that the government of India cannot, in his case at least, be charged with the impolicy

of setting up small and independent states, in the midst of its territories. The situation of the Rajah of Travancore, whose kingdom lies on the south-west of Mysore, is not less humiliating, as he is obliged to receive a British force into his capital, and burden his revenues with paying for his protection. It seems, indeed, probable, and is consistent with the policy hitherto pursued, that the Company's connection with both these powers, will soon be placed on the permanent foundation of territorial possession.

The Marhatta states were long considered as the most powerful in India; and during the numerous revolutions, to which this country has been subjected, not only preserved their independence, but frequently imposed and levied a tribute upon its conquerors. In the reign of Sahojee, who died in 1740, they appear to have attained their highest splendour; extending at that time, from the Bay of Bengal on the east, to the neighbourhood of Bombay on the

west, and comprehending a district of Hindustan, upwards of a thousand miles in length, and seven hundred in breadth; but the power of this empire, although still formidable, is now considerably weakened by the divisions which have since taken place within it. The authority of the Ram Rajah, or constitutional head of the Marhattas, was usurped by the Peshwa, or chief civil magistrate of the empire, under the reign of Sahojee's son; and the nominal sovereign has from that time been kept, in a state of splendid confinement, in his palace of Sattarah. The Rajah of Berar, encouraged by the successful usurpation of the Peshwa, likewise threw off his allegiance to the sovereign of Sattarah; and converting the lands, which he held in Jaghire, into an independent state, became the founder of a race of kings. These princes were followod in their rebellion by other less important chiefs, whose descendants still inherit the fruits of their usurpation; and the most

powerful of whom are Scindiah, Holkar, and the Guickwar. By these means, the empire of the Marhattas had fallen into disunion, previous to the period, at which the English government in India, endeavoured to obtain an ascendancy at the court of Poonah. The authority of the Peshwa to regulate the affairs of the Marhatta states, came to be acknowledged by the other chiefs (with the exception of the Rajah of Berar), who were ambitious to possess it, and was recognised by the British, who considered it as the easiest mode, by which they could obtain the wished-for direction of the Mahratta councils. The contentions of these powers at length broke out into open war, which terminated in reducing still farther the strength of this empire, and establishing that of the English upon its ruins. By the treaty of Bassein, and the issue of the war in 1803, the East India Company have obtained the management of the Peshwa's councils, and reduced the

field an army of 150,000 cavalry, of which their military force principally consists. It is probable, that their country presents not many inducements, to encourage the enterprize of avarice or ambition; and hitherto they have been removed from the grand scene of European action in India. Whether, upon its having now approached nearer to their country, they will be involved in the same calamities, as have been brought upon other parts of Hindustan, is a problem which we cannot be supposed to solve. The lust of power may, perhaps, regard them as fit to afford it gratification; and the rugged provinces of the Rajahpoots may yet remain, to be added to the fertile plains of Bengal and Orissa, before it be found to say, "*it is enough.*"

The Seiks, who inhabit the provinces of Moultan, Lahore, and the Panjab, as well as some districts in Delhi, are the most singular people in India. At a period, when the former powers of Hindustan are sinking

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into insignificance, they are rising into importance; and although surrounded by the grossest superstition and idolatry, they are said to profess deism in a purer form, than we should suppose it could possibly exist, under such circumstances. In the midst of the most perfect despotism that ever prevailed in the world, their government is represented, as approaching near to the nature of a republic, and affording a degree of freedom, which we would not expect to find in an Asiatic climate. From a mere religious sect, they have become a numerous and powerful nation; and their leaders have advanced, from the rank of apostles, to that of powerful and warlike princes.

Hindustan, amidst all the revolutions to which it has been exposed, has never beheld its inhabitants rising from the abject condition of slaves, or the authority of its princes tempered by those salutary restraints, so necessary to the existence of liberty. Yet, notwithstanding, that despotism, the most

undisguised, has in all ages prevailed among the Hindus, it is by no means easy to obtain an accurate acquaintance with their form of government. Partaking of the nature of that political constitution, which was framed in the happier days of their empire, yet, disfigured by many institutions, borrowed from their conquerors, it presents an aspect more varied and complex, than Asiatic systems of polity are accustomed to exhibit. At the same time there are some general principles, recognized in almost all eastern governments, which may assist us in forming some idea of that established in India. The first, and most fundamental of these, and that which appears best able to account, for the prevalence of despotism in the east, is the principle which acknowledges the sovereign, to be the sole proprietor of the soil. It may, indeed, be said, that the same principle was received in the western world, under the feudal system, and there led to very opposite consequences.

But, in India, it appears to have been followed up by the policy of dividing the land, in small portions, among the *bona fide* cultivators, in whose families it was rendered hereditary; instead of bestowing it, as in Europe, in large estates, upon powerful and warlike individuals. So far from being granted as a reward for services already performed, the express stipulation, upon which it was held in India, was the payment to the prince of a certain proportion of its produce, which the law ascertained and unalterably fixed *. By this means, the growth of great landed proprietors, between the sovereign and the body of the people, was, in Asia, effectually prevented; and to this day, power and influence are sought for in that quarter of the world, not by the possession of property, but of offices, held at the disposal of the prince. In a country, like India, where the principal, if

* Vid. Institutes of Menu.

not the only revenue of the sovereign, arose from the rent of his land, it was, in fact, almost impossible, that any intermediate class, not merely official, could exist betwixt him and the cultivators of the soil *. The same circumstance rendered it his interest to protect these cultivators, upon whom his power so immediately depended, and to establish and respect their hereditary rights. This respect for hereditary succession, however, which the princes of Asia found it necessary to cherish, became at length the means of setting bounds to their power. For, in process of time, it came to be extended to those offices, which had been instituted for the purposes of administering justice, and collecting the revenues of the state; and, in governments where the son invariably succeeded to the possession of his father, was recognized, even in regard to these, notwithstanding its manifest impo-

* Vid. Paton on Asiatic Monarchies.

licy. To the Hindus, it seems to have appeared as natural, that the children of a governor of a province, or of a collector of revenue, should succeed to their parents' offices, as that the son should ascend the throne, or inherit the farm of his father. The consequences of this scrupulous regard to hereditary succession, were, in India, such as might have been anticipated. The Hindu empire, from having been under the subjection of one prince, came in time to be divided among a number of independent chiefs; and, at the period of its invasion by the Mahometans, the successors of its ancient sovereigns were lost among the numerous rajahs, who had risen on their ruins.

At the period, when the greater part of Hindustan was again united into one empire by the Moguls, these principles were found too deeply rooted, to be either safely or easily eradicated. A practice, however, was introduced, unknown to the ancient constitution of the Hindus, and which the

wise policy, that regulated their government, would never have admitted, that of granting lands in Jaghire, as it was called, to the Omrahs, or lords of the court of Delhi. By these grants, which, perhaps, of all the Asiatic institutions, approached nearest to the nature of the fiefs under the feudal system, the revenue of the lands, thus alienated, belonged exclusively to the Omrah, upon whom they were bestowed, who received them as a reward for past services, under the express stipulation, that he should respect the hereditary rights of the subtenants, and exact no more rent than the law had appointed. In the reign of the illustrious Acbar, new classes of officers were instituted, who, under the denomination of Soubahdars, Nawaubs, &c., conducted the civil and military administration of the provinces, over which they were appointed to preside. Others, under the name of Aumils, Dewans, &c., were also instituted, for the purpose of exercising the intermediate au-

thority of government, as far as regarded the revenue department—forming the channel by which the edicts of the sovereign were conveyed; and thus, in some measure, resembling the exchequer appointments of Europeans. These offices were rendered independent of the Soubahdars and Nawaubs, and were held immediately of the emperor himself. All of them were filled by Mahometans, and were personal, not hereditary; whilst the Zemindars, Talookdars, and other inferior officers, whom the Moslems found in India exercising the functions of collectors of revenue, were secured in the hereditary rights to their offices, which, under the ancient constitution of the country, they had acquired. In process of time, the Soubahdars and Nawaubs laid claim to the same right, of transmitting their offices to their posterity; and these as well as the Jaghires, which, by their original constitution, ought to have reverted to the Mogul, upon the death of the Omrahs, in whose fa-

vour they had been granted, became the property of particular families; and Hindustan was again divided among a number of independent princes.

We have already noticed some of those circumstances, which paved the way for this revolution. It only remains to observe, in this place, that, as it was consonant to the fundamental principles of the ancient government of India, it was effected with little difficulty, and, like many other changes to which this country has been exposed, scarcely indeed deserved the name of a revolution. It was attended with no material alteration in the details of administration, and none in the condition of the people. They had at no period been able to form the remotest idea of political liberty, and the whole frame of civil polity remained on the same principles, on which it had been established for ages. The attachment of the natives of Hindustan to this system continued unabated; and when a people,

who had been long accustomed to those sentiments and feelings, which constitute the moral elements of a free government, became their masters; it was deemed equally unjust and impolitic, to attempt substituting any other in its place. Accordingly, the legislature of Great Britain, in framing a constitution for its Indian empire, never lost sight of those principles upon which its ancient government had been established. It vested the supreme authority in India, in a Governor-General, in council, whose power, as far as it more immediately regarded that country, was rendered absolute and uncontroulable. The means which, at the same time, it provided at home, for the purpose of regulating and directing this power, have already been noticed. But in a country like India, where, in order to be obeyed, the ruling power must be looked up to, with equal veneration and awe, the system of restraints and checks, without which a free government cannot exist,

could not possibly be admitted. Nor is the want of it to be much regretted; as, by precluding Englishmen from purchasing or farming lands in India, the legislature has secured to the natives, the property of that soil which they have inherited from their fathers; and, by fixing the land-rent, or revenue of the state, at a moderate and permanent standard; as well as allowing the Hindus and Mahometans to be governed by their own institutions, administered by Englishmen, regularly instructed in their knowledge, and assisted by native lawyers; it has provided for their prosperity and happiness, more effectually than could have been done by any system of polity, however free and enlightened, which was not adapted to their customs, and prejudices. But the legislature, as we have already hinted, has not vested the government of British India in the Governor-General alone. It has provided a Council of three members, to assist him in the discharge of his func-

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tions, and concur in the measures of his administration. It has, indeed, conferred in him the right of interposing his single responsibility; but it requires that this shall be done with the greatest formalities, and that the emergency of the occasion shall be such as to justify his departure from the established order.

Besides this Supreme Government, there are two subordinate Presidencies, each composed of a governor and council, established at Madras and Bombay. These are rendered entirely independent of each other; but are subject to the jurisdiction of that at Calcutta. The nomination of the Governor-General is generally exercised by the crown; but the Court of Directors may refuse to appoint the person thus nominated—a right which, in a recent instance, we have seen them exercise to the exclusion of a nobleman *, supported by the whole weight of administration. The

* Lord Lauderdale.

appointment of the remaining members of the supreme council, as well as of those composing the governments of Madras and Bombay, is exclusively vested in the Court of Directors; which is itself made up of twenty-four members, chosen from time to time, by the proprietors of India stock. The patronage of inferior situations is lodged in the several presidencies; and the whole system of government abroad, more immediately subjected to the directors at home, who are themselves under the superintendence of a committee of his Majesty's confidential servants, by whom every dispatch which they transmit to India must be approved and countersigned. There is also established at Calcutta, a Supreme Court of Justice, consisting of a president and three subordinate judges, whose judicial proceedings, in regard to Englishmen, are regulated by the same laws and forms, as the courts in England, and who try the natives by their own peculiar institutions, subject, however, to

such modifications as the internal security of the country requires. The members of this court are not considered as the servants of the Company, but nominated and appointed by the crown.

The population of Hindustan has, by some writers, been computed as low as sixty millions; while others with greater appearance of truth, have raised it to at least an hundred. Of this number, nearly ten millions are Mahometans; the rest are Hindus, divided into many tribes, but all bearing a striking resemblance to each other. Of the proportion of this population, subject to the British empire in India, it is not easy to form an accurate idea, as the number of inhabitants, in the newly acquired provinces, has not yet been ascertained. But if, in the time of Sir William Jones, it amounted to nearly one-third, we cannot suppose it to be, at present, less than a half. By a late computation, it appears, that, in the year 1805, there were thrity-one thousand Bri-

tish-born subjects settled in India. Of this number twenty-two thousand were employed in the military, and two thousand in the civil service of the Company. The free merchants, and free mariners, who reside in India, under certain stipulations entered into with the Company, amounted to five thousand; the officers and practitioners of the courts of judicature to three hundred. The remaining seventeen hundred consisted of adventurers, who had smuggled themselves into India on board of foreign ships, or in the capacity of gentlemens' servants, on board of our own ships of war and East-Indiamen, and who were suffered to reside, although contrary to law, by the indulgence of the government.

The revenue of Hindustan, in the reign of the emperor Aurengzebe, is said to have exceeded the enormous sum of thirty-five millions Sterling, derived principally from the rent of the land, and partly from imposts on articles of commerce. To what

this revenue may at present amount, it is impossible to ascertain, since, from the period at which the Mogul power fell to pieces, it has been levied by no certain standard, but has varied in different provinces, according to the lenity or rapacity of the collectors. In the year 1802, the revenues of the British possessions in India were estimated at nearly thirteen millions and a half Sterling; and if to this we add that which has since been acquired, both by conquest and subsidy, it will be found at present to amount to nearly fifteen *. But, prodigious as this revenue must appear, it has hitherto been unable to meet the charges of our Indian empire; and a debt, to the enormous amount of upwards of thirty millions, has been accumulated. The greater part of this debt has been contracted since the year 1798, and is to be ascribed, partly to the extensive wars, in which the Company were

* Vide Asiatic Register, 1807. Parliamentary Debates.

engaged, during Marquis Wellesley's administration; partly to the increase of allowance granted to its servants abroad; partly to the diminution of its trade in Europe; and certainly, in no small measure, to the ruinous system of borrowing money in India, at an exorbitant interest, in order to discharge the expences of government, and supply provision for the investment to be sent home. Owing to these, and perhaps other causes, the charges of British India have exceeded both the revenues of its territories, and the profits of its trade; a deficiency of resource which undoubtedly ought not to have existed, but which, in 1805-6, exceeded the sum of two millions and a half *. If, however, the prospect of the Company's forces being long placed upon a peace-establishment be realized, and its expence correctly estimated at nearly twelve millions Sterling, their financial state will not wear

* Vid. Asiatic Register, 1807. Parliamentary Debates.

so gloomy an aspect, as some would willingly represent; as, in this case, there will remain a surplus revenue of nearly three millions, chargeable indeed with the interest of the debt, but still affording an actual overplus of seven hundred thousand pounds.

This is, indeed, the most favourable point of view, in which the affairs of the Company can be placed; and, it must be acknowledged, is far from representing them as in a very flourishing condition, but certainly proves them to be by no means in a state of insolvency. But, if we assume as debts against the Company the amount of the guarantee fund, which, at the expiration of their charter in 1814, should amount to twelve millions, but towards which not a shilling has as yet been allotted; as well as the sum of eight millions, which, in terms of the act 1793, the public should by this time have received, as their share in the concern, but of which only five hundred thousand pounds have been paid into the

exchequer; and if we refuse to receive the value of the Company's forts, houses, and warehouses, &c. in India, estimated at nearly ten millions, as a set-off against these additional debts, we shall be led to draw a very different conclusion; and to believe, that nothing less than a miracle can save them from becoming insolvent, or the Commissioners for India Affairs from exchanging their character of Comptrollers, for that of "Assignees under a commission of Bankruptcy *."

* Vid. Asiatic Register, 1807. Parliamentary Debates.

CHAP. IV.

Civilization—sense in which here understood—Motives for civilizing the subjects of British India—Obstacles to be encountered—1. Stability of customs—2. Casts—3. Other impediments to civilization—Facilities—General principles upon which our plan of civilization must be established.

CIVILIZATION is a comparative term, and admits of several significations. In its common and popular acceptation, it denotes that state in which man finds himself placed in the more advanced stages of society, and by which he is distinguished from the rude and uncultivated savage, whose knowledge extends not farther than to supply the common and returning wants of his nature. In

this sense of the term, the natives of India rank high amongst the civilized nations of the world; and none, perhaps, are able to date the period, at which they acquired a knowledge of the arts and sciences, earlier in the history of our race. But there is another sense in which the term may be used, and in which, we apprehend, it must be understood, when applied to the natives of Hindustan;—a sense, in which the mild and inoffensive Hindu is still far behind the inhabitants of other countries, less indebted than his, to either art or nature. Civilization, in this acceptation of the word, supposes man to enjoy the benefit of those institutions, which it is the province of political science to devise, for the regulation of his conduct, in a social state, in as great perfection as the circumstances of this state will admit; and to be put in possession of all that happiness and freedom, which, consistent with the objects society has in view, it is possible he can attain. That the na-

tives of India have not yet arrived at a great degree of civilization, when this sense is attached to the term, the sketch that we have already given of their history and condition, will be sufficient to convince us. To point out by what arrangements of polity, and by what exertions of administration, they may be raised higher in the scale of civilization, and those obstacles, which have hitherto prevented them from enjoying all the advantages of social life, of which their circumstances will admit, be removed, is a primary object of this dissertation.

It would be superfluous, to enter into a minute investigation of those motives, which should lead us to ameliorate the condition of our Eastern subjects. To promote the progress of civilization among a people, whom the fortune of war has brought under our subjection, will be allowed to be an undertaking, worthy of a humane and liberal nation to encourage. But it must be acknowledged, that, till of late years, little has

been done in British India for this purpose. The views of Englishmen have hitherto been too much directed, to share the wealth, to allow them to think of civilizing the manners, of their fellow-subjects in Hindustan; and with too much justice have we been stigmatised, as a "company of merchants, that fatten on the spoils of pillaged provinces; visit, but to rob, and conquer only to oppress." But, it is to be hoped, that we are at length become ambitious of lessening the evils of conquest to a people, from whom we have derived so many advantages; as well as of making some reparation for the miseries, which we have contributed to entail upon them. Entirely to abandon our dominions in Hindustan, and, as has been recommended by some, to bestow the country upon its rightful owners, is a measure, which neither policy nor prudence will allow; and under the existing circumstances of India, must be looked upon in any light, but that of a repara-

tion for former injuries. To subject the Hindus to the oppression of their ancient masters, or to render them a prey to daring and ambitious usurpers, would be its infallible consequences. A nobler recompence is placed within our power; as we may become the instruments of restoring to affluence and prosperity, one of the most fertile regions of the globe, which has been long reduced to a condition of the most afflicting misery and desolation, by the depraved and despotic governments which have ruled it. The circumstances of our Indian Empire have at length become favourable to any undertaking of this nature. The period of amassing immense fortunes in India, with a rapidity, that bespoke the extent of cruelty and oppression practised towards its natives, has passed away. Englishmen, in that country, now rise to wealth and affluence, by the same slow and gradual means by which alone riches can be attained, where impartial justice is

administered; and we are persuaded, that a greater blessing than the extension of British influence and power, cannot be conferred on the native inhabitants of India. At the same time, motives no less persuasive, arising from the importance of our Eastern possessions, to the security, if not to the existence of the British empire itself, concur in stimulating our exertions to this benevolent object. Whether the loss of the former would involve in it the overthrow of the latter, is a problem which, it is to be hoped, will never be put to the test of experience; but we may learn to appreciate the value of our Indian empire, when we advert to the number of our countrymen, even at home, who depend for their subsistence upon its revenues; and reflect on the eagerness of our most inveterate enemy, to wrest from us the power and influence, which we derive from this source. We shall be guilty, indeed, of a great and fundamental error in policy, if we conceive,

that the danger to be apprehended from our European foes, is all that we have to fear or provide against. The distance of our Indian dominions affords a security against this contingency, far from inconsiderable, but which may undoubtedly be overrated; while the same circumstance exposes them to dangers, against which it is still more necessary to provide; and points out the wisdom, of considering the internal resources of a state, to which, in the hour of danger, succours from the mother country cannot, without the greatest difficulty, be conveyed, as the best means of defending it against foreign invasion, or preserving it amidst intestine commotions. The resources of India are amply sufficient for these purposes; but they can only be called forth with effect, when we bestow upon its inhabitants objects worth contending for. Such objects are the blessings of good government, civilization, and the glorious privileges of Christianity.

The view, which we have already taken

of Hindustan, will suggest to us a variety of obstacles, which we must expect to encounter in the prosecution of our object, as well as enable us to appreciate their importance. Of these, the extent and insecurity of our dominions are not the least formidable, and are the first, that obviously suggest themselves to notice. To carry into execution any plan of general improvement, over a country so widely extended as India, is no easy task; and when we reflect upon the various hostile tribes, by which it is peopled, we must acknowledge, that any means that can be recommended, are liable to be counteracted by a variety of accidents. The British empire, in that quarter of the world, appears not itself to stand on the very firmest foundation. Some of the powers which it has supplanted, have not yet been reduced within limits, circumscribed enough to ensure its safety; and it may be allowed us to doubt, whether it possesses resources sufficient for this purpose. Its

chief places of strength are not situated in those points, from which the energies of its government might be most effectually called forth; while the climate is continually thinning the ranks of its European army, upon which it must, for some time at least, depend, not only for repelling the irruptions of foreign enemies, but for overawing its own native forces. The frequent, though necessary changes, to which the governing power in India is liable, likewise tends to render our empire less secure; and besides, by exposing every line of policy or administration, which may be adopted for the improvement of the natives, to successive alterations, must contribute to retard any scheme of civilization that can be recommended.

The permanence of Indian customs and institutions, is another formidable obstacle in the way of civilization; so formidable, indeed, that from this cause alone, some are induced to conclude, that any scheme of

amelioration, which may be contrived, will ultimately be found unavailing. But the conclusion is certainly drawn with too much precipitation; or it mistakes the object, that we have in view to accomplish. We require not to persuade the Hindu to renounce all the usages of his ancestors; and, at least, until the experiment has been fairly tried, we may be allowed to question the impossibility of weaning him from such, as oppose the progress of civilization. We shall willingly allow his attachment to ancient customs, to be a most formidable, but we cannot so easily be brought to admit, that it is an insuperable bar to his improvement. It certainly acquires a considerable degree of strength, from the natural indolence of his temper, and from the want of that energy and exertion, without which we cannot expect men to co-operate with success, in the promotion of any scheme. Reared under the influence of a climate, which enervates both body and mind; and educated in the

precepts of a religion, that admits not of progressive improvement amongst its votaries, it is to be regretted, that the natives of Hindustan have learnt to submit to their destiny without repining; and to acquiesce in their condition, whatever it may be, as the unalterable appointment of heaven. It will not, therefore, we acknowledge, be an easy matter to convince such a people, by arguments *à priori*, that they either can, or ought to promote the amelioration of their present state; but they must be dead to the feelings of human nature, if the actual experience of those blessings, which a wise and liberal government may have it in its power to bestow upon them, does not teach them this important and necessary lesson, without which, we might well despair of their intellectual or moral improvement.

Another great obstacle, which must be encountered in civilizing the Hindus, is their division into Casts. This institution has been highly extolled, by many in our

own age and country, and, undoubtedly contributed, in the early period of Indian history, to promote the progress of refinement. But it soon carried the Hindus to a point, beyond which they could not advance; and although it possessed the merit of preventing them, from falling back into a state of savage barbarity, it produced, at the same time, a species of contentment, which, considered in a political point of view, is the most inimical to further improvement that can be conceived; and which has rendered them not only the easy, but the permanent victims of oppression. When men unite together in society, for their mutual assistance and protection, the human mind must necessarily submit to restraints, unknown in a state of natural liberty. But when the regulations of policy, adopted by a people, are such as not only to check, but entirely to controul the exertions of genius and industry, we must regret, that it should have ever been compelled to bend to such laws, much more,

quietly to acquiesce in them; however well they may be calculated to promote the subsistence, the security, and the happiness of an infant state. Institutions, which become, from their very nature, obstacles to progressive improvement, cannot be beneficial. But when we reflect for how many ages such institutions have existed in India; how intimately interwoven they have become with the laws, manners, and religion of its inhabitants; and how much it is the interest of those, to whom they have bequeathed, and hitherto succeeded in securing an exclusive monopoly of honour, science, and power, to perpetuate their existence; we must be sensible of the difficulty, with which they can now be removed; and ought, perhaps, to pause, till we have duly considered the policy and safety of the attempt.

Besides the obstacles which have been now enumerated, there are other impediments to the progress of civilization among the Hindus, upon which, it may be expect-

ed, we should next bestow some attention. These, however, will more properly fall to be considered, when we enter upon a detail of the means, by which the improvement of our Indian empire may be promoted. We shall only observe, at present, that there appears to prevail among Europeans, settled in India, a very general opinion upon the subject of civilizing its inhabitants, which leads them to regard any attempt of this nature, as a duty "more honoured in the breach than the performance." The assertion, that the Hindus are already as happy as we can make them, is certainly pleasing intelligence to all, who wish well to the human race. But it must be founded in truth, before it can reasonably afford much consolation; whereas, we are much afraid, that it will be discovered to be nothing more, than the mere asseverations of those who, when they maintain, that, by rendering our native subjects as wise as ourselves, we shall soon enable them to throw off their subjection

to our power, manifest the real ends which they have in view, by crying up the prosperity of a people, who, they are afraid, may escape from under their oppression. That, by any attempt to ameliorate the condition of the Hindus, we shall inevitably reduce them to still greater misery and wretchedness, is an argument which, if it were not brought forward in so general and unqualified a manner, would be entitled to some consideration. But it is to be apprehended, that they who can so vaguely declaim against the measure, from the danger with which it may be attended, are actuated by much the same motives, as those who oppose it on the grounds of its impolicy. Both may be excused, for professing a profound admiration of the ancient systems of the Indians, and of the purity of their doctrines and morals, in former times. But we would require of them the candour to allow, that they are now in a state of comparative degradation; and would request their assistance, in restor-

ing this unhappy people, to their former civilized condition.

But, however little we may have to hope from the co-operation, or however much to dread from the opposition, of those who argue, that, "because an elephant is an elephant, and a Hindu a Hindu, we ought to leave them both on the plains of Hindustan, as we found them," there are circumstances, in regard to the natives of India, well calculated to encourage our exertions in civilizing them. The progress which they have already made in civilization, must be regarded as holding out advantages, under which their farther improvement may be undertaken. Were they still in a state of savage barbarity, accustomed to rove lawless over the face of the country, and unacquainted with the salutary restraints of government, the task of civilizing them would be more arduous. A long period must, in this case, elapse, before they could be brought to that degree of refinement at which they have arrived; and although,

perhaps, we could prevent the occurrence of those obstacles, which have stopped their progress in civilization, we may doubt whether the difficulties, with which, in the first instance, their advancement would inevitably be retarded, might not be more than sufficient, to compensate this advantage. But it has been seen, that the natives of Hindustan are far from being in this uncultivated state. Many ages have elapsed since they exchanged the rude ferocity of the savage, for that mild and inoffensive temper, for which they are distinguished. Neither are they composed of tribes, that speak each a language unknown to the other; whilst the similarity in their laws and customs is such, as must promote any general measures of improvement, which it may be found necessary to advise. The principles, upon which their government has been founded for so many ages, as well as the misfortunes, to which they have been long subjected by foreign powers, have led them

to view, with considerable indifference, any changes in the administration of their country, which are regulated by a proper degree of attention to their deep-rooted prejudices, and which do not too violently assail their established customs. The wisdom of the British government will avoid innovations, which their native subjects would resent as injurious; while the late success of its arms, and the ample resources of its power, must confer upon it a degree of weight and influence, which cannot fail to promote any scheme of amelioration that it may see proper to adopt.

It may be necessary, then, before we proceed farther, to consider upon what general principles every plan of improving British India must be undertaken. The peculiar character of its inhabitants points out two extremes, into one or other of which there is considerable danger of running, but both of which, it is obvious, must be equally avoided; and requires that we suit our means

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to the circumstances of the Hindus in such a manner, as neither to apply too strong a remedy to existing evils, nor allow our exertions to be crippled, by the fear of offending long established prejudices. Our measures, therefore, must be mild in their nature, and progressive in their operation. They must evince a proper regard to institutions, stamped with so venerable an antiquity, as those of Hindustan; but, at the same time, they must not carry this indulgence so far, as to counteract the very end they have in view. They must never lose sight of the attachment of the Hindus to the customs and institutions of their ancestors; neither must they forget, that, in many instances, these are inimical to the progress of civilization. With the same care with which we shun either of these extremes, we must avoid proposing measures, which can only be admitted in speculation; but every means which we recommend, must be such as circumstances will admit of being carried into

execution. It is our business to suit ourselves, not to fancied and hypothetical, but to real and existing situations; and it can serve no purpose to expatiate upon visionary plans of reformation, however beautiful they may appear in theory. If we aim at raising the Hindus to a height of civilization, at which it is impossible they can arrive, we shall undoubtedly fail in procuring for them, that degree of improvement, which they might otherwise be made to attain. Nor are we to suppose, that the object which we have in view can be suddenly accomplished. Civilization is not the work of a day; and the present generation can do little more, than lay the foundation upon which posterity is to build. If we attempt the improvement of our Indian subjects, by any other than gentle and progressive means, we may soon see the work of their civilization, transferred to other hands. Great and important changes in the laws, manners, and religion of a people, can be

effected only by the operation of measures, which gradually and insensibly overcome their prejudices, and wean them from their attachment to ancient usages. It is true, the strong arm of authority might be raised, and they might be obliged to revolutionize their manners, or forfeit their lives. The advice of a writer, on this subject, might be adopted; and we might proceed to "coerce the proud and contemptuous spirit of our native subjects *." But before we have recourse to these expedients, it may be wise to reflect, whether the cure might not prove worse than the disease; and we apprehend, that in regard to the Hindus, such would undoubtedly be the case. Had it been as easy to change their opinions and institutions—"to coerce their proud and contemptuous spirit," as to alter the government of their country, they would have ex-

* Vid. Dr Buchanan's Memoirs of a Church Establishment.

hibited, at this day, a very different aspect; and the exertion of authority, in civilizing a people, if in any case admissible, would, in this, have been both practicable and expedient. It is also requisite, that the general plan of improvement be neither circumscribed within too narrow limits, by an over-regard to economy, nor counteracted by a wasteful prodigality. As circumstances exist, the revenue of the East India Company must defray the expence of civilizing their subjects; and it ought to be our aim to propose measures, which, supporting the honour and character, manifest a proper regard to the resources of this Company.

SECT. I.

Tranquillity considered as a mean of civilization—General importance—To British India in particular—Means of securing it—Union of the Company and British Government—Vigilance—Territorial possession—Subsidiary alliances—Preserving balance of power—Policy best adapted for this purpose—In regard to the Nizam—The Marhattas—The Mogul—The Seiks—Military force—Conciliation of the natives.

WHEN a country is harassed by the operations, and subjected to the calamities of war, its inhabitants have little encouragement to contrive or execute projects of internal reformation; and its government, occupied in preserving its own existence, has not leisure to adopt schemes for its amelioration. Peace is the season, in which re-

finement advances with the greatest rapidity. During this period, the character of the human race is rendered more congenial to the progress of civilization; whilst its security encourages exertion, and promises success to every measure of inprovement. On the other hand, a state of war is, of all others, the most inimical to the cultivation of arts and sciences. They are then prosecuted with little ardour, and consequently, little success; for the stimulus to industry is removed, whenever the chance of reaping its fruits is rendered precarious. In war, the progress of improvement is sometimes retrograde, generally retarded; and when this calamity is attended with its more aggravated miseries, we have seen it plunge nations, once highly civilized, into their original state of barbarity. Of this, the history of the ancient world affords too many melancholy testimonies; and if the consequences of modern war are not equally disastrous, it is not owing to any variation in

its nature and tendency, but to the change, which the situation and circumstances of mankind have undergone. The plains of Scandinavia do not now, as in the days of the Roman empire, swarm with hordes of savage barbarians, ready to overwhelm their civilized neighbours. The nations of Europe are more equally balanced, in regard to refinement of manners; and arts and sciences are not now forgotten among the conquered people, because known and practised by their conquerors. They cease, however, to be cultivated with the same happy energy, as in the period of peace; and a long time generally elapses, before they altogether recover from the shock, which in war they sustain.

But in India, owing to a variety of circumstances, a state of warfare must prove more inimical to the interests of civilization, than in Europe. The rapidity with which warlike operations are conducted in the east, particularly in Hindustan, where, in

many places, natural barriers betwixt hostile and powerful states are unknown, must expose the most remote parts of the country to be suddenly overrun. And we need scarcely observe, that the cruel ravages, which mark the progress of Asiatic armies, have, in all ages, been such, as almost entirely to obliterate every vestige of improvement. The expence, too, of carrying on a war, at such a distance from the mother country, must retard the progress of civilization, by swallowing up the resources which might otherwise be devoted to its promotion. These considerations clearly demonstrate, that to attain a secure and permanent tranquillity, is a matter of primary importance towards civilizing our eastern subjects. Let us first, then, inquire by what measures this can be most effectually accomplished.

When the British legislature, in the year 1784, interfered in the concerns of the East India Company, and, as far as regarded their political and financial affairs, placed

their management in the hands of government, the preservation of peace to our Asiatic territories, was one of the most important advantages, which it proposed by this measure. The history of the Company had abundantly shewn, that an association of merchants, eager to amass wealth, was but ill fitted to discharge the duties of a wise and liberal government, or to command that respectability, in the eyes of their own subjects, and of other nations, which would secure obedience to their commands, and tranquillity to their dominions. It may also be supposed, that a set of men, residing as subjects in England, yet holding and exercising the rights of princes in India, must have been regarded with some degree of jealousy, by their own government, even although the period of their sovereignty was circumscribed within known and determinate limits. The measure of their incorporation with the state, possessed the advantage of removing this jealousy; of throw-

ing the whole weight and influence of the British empire into the scale, to increase the respectability of the Company, as well as supplying it with the most ample resources, in order to repel foreign invasion, or subdue intestine commotion. By these means, the union of the Company and the British government, in managing the affairs of India, promised to secure to it that tranquillity, which, we have already observed, is so necessary to the progress of civilization. It is notorious, however, to all acquainted with Indian concerns, that since the time, at which the Board of Controul was instituted, the Company have been engaged in wars, to a much greater extent, than at any former period of their history. It will not, therefore, we presume, be improper to inquire a little into the nature of those circumstances, which have prevented the benevolent intentions of the British legislature, from being carried into execution. Their discovery, if possible, may point out

how the evils of war are in future to be prevented; or it may, perhaps, cheer us with the prospect, that these evils will cease in a great measure to exist, with the circumstances from which they formerly originated.

By a noble author *, who has treated on this subject, the cause of the late wars in India has been traced, with little hesitation, to that form of government, which was professedly established to prevent them. We apprehend, however, that they may be attributed, with greater justice, to the occurrence of events, which the legislature of Britain could neither then foresee, nor at any time so properly appreciate, as the acting government of India. When the Company began to acquire their present extensive territory, they experienced a diminution in their commercial profits, arising

* See Lord Lauderdale's Inquiry into the Government of India.

from the expence of its acquisition and management, being greater than its revenue could defray. They accordingly deprecated the system of adding to their territorial possessions, and cautioned their servants abroad, to desist from the attempt. These servants, however, paid little attention to their injunctions; but in a short time enabled their masters, to rank amongst the independent princes of India. From this period, they became objects of jealousy to the other powers, among whom this opulent country was divided; and it was obvious, that unless they were willing to forego what they had acquired, they must put themselves in a condition to repel the attacks, which these powers might be inclined to make upon them. To those, who are in any degree acquainted with the state of India, it must be equally obvious, that the Company could, in no way, so effectually accomplish this object, as by placing their own power on the firm basis of territorial possession.

Like every other empire, which has been established in that country, the British must, in a great degree, depend for its existence upon a military force;—a measure, proportionally more necessary, as this empire is less extensive. The system of maintaining this force, at the expence of tributary princes, who were never yet found ready or willing, to implement the articles of subsidiary treaties, must, in every point of view, yield to that of directly supporting it, from the revenues of the state, which it protects. A conviction, on the part of the government of India, and Board of Controul, of the necessity of adopting this policy, led them to pursue it, notwithstanding the regret and apprehension which the Court of Directors manifested. Hence, too, we find Marquis Cornwallis, whose administration has been so much and so deservedly extolled, continuing the war with Tippoo Sultan, notwithstanding the offers of that prince, to settle, in an amicable man-

ner, the differences which existed between him and the British Government, and annexing a great part of his dominions to the Company. The same necessity of providing for the safety of our own dominions, and those of our allies, gave rise to the so much reprobated war of 1803, under Lord Wellesley's administration—a war, which was certainly carried on to a greater extent, and at a much more enormous expence, than any in which the Company had ever been engaged.

We must not, however, be understood as asserting, that the government of India has never had recourse to frivolous and unjust pretexts, for intermeddling with other states, in order to have an opportunity of circumscribing their power within limits, consistent with its own safety and tranquillity; and we are far from advocating the cause of perpetual and restless interference, with the concerns of our neighbours: But, when we consider, that many of the Indian princes are themselves usurpers; and when

we advert to the enmity, which some of the Marhattas in particular, have manifested against our Government, we cannot but regard the late Marhatta war, by which we have reduced the power of Scindiah and Holkar, in the north-west of Hindustan, and, in the east, united Bengal to the northern Circars, by the acquisition of the important station of Cuttack, as promising to secure the perpetuity of peace to our Indian empire. Had these restless and ambitious princes been permitted to extend their power, the late unhappy disturbances amongst our own troops, in the Mysore, would, in all probability, have proved the signal of an united attack upon our dominions, more formidable than any to which they have ever been exposed. But the dignified position, and commanding attitude, which we have attained among the nations of Hindustan, must impress them with an awe, sufficient to prevent them from taking advantage of any internal commotions, by

which the tranquillity of our empire may in future be disturbed; as well as leave the government to chastise, unmolested, the disobedience of its servants. It is true, that, in order to attain this eminence, we have been upbraided with supporting an ambitious subject, in his rebellion, and reinstating him in a power, which he had unlawfully usurped. But it is to be observed, that long before the period of the war in 1803, we had recognized the Peshwa, as vested with the exercise of supreme authority by the Marhatta states; and that we supported him, not against his lawful prince, the Rajah of Sattarah, but against two ambitious usurpers, who first contended with each other, which should possess the power of exercising the authority vested in this officer, and then directed their forces against the English, who had stepped forward to his protection.

We cannot, therefore, ascribe the wars, which have lately occurred in India, to

lowed by all; but the policy which it has pursued, for accomplishing these purposes, has, of late years, led to a variety of discussion, and been regarded, by political writers, in very different points of view. Territorial possession, and subsidiary alliance, are the two bases upon which it has been founded; and although we cannot allow the same degree of merit to the latter as to the former, both may, after all, be found best suited to the actual situation of Hindustan, and best adapted to ensure to it the blessings of peace, and consequent progress of civilization.

Since the Parliament of England declared, that "schemes of conquest, and extension of dominion in India, were measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation," the dominions of the Company have been more than doubled in extent; and circumstances have shewn, that however wise the policy recommended by the legislature may have been esteemed, the nature of our power in India has hither-

the form of government, under which its affairs have been administered since the year 1784. But, at the same time, that we regard a political connection betwixt the Company and Government, as calculated, for the reasons already noticed, to ensure the blessings of peace to our Asiatic dominions, we are aware, that a degree of vigilance and circumspection, proportioned to the dangers to which they are exposed must also be preserved; and that it will be necessary to mark, with a jealous eye, the movements of our eastern neighbours, as well as those of our European enemies. Of the friendship of many of the former, we have too much reason to doubt; whilst all are liable to be corrupted by the influence of the latter. The wisdom, therefore, of the government of India, keeping a watchful eye, over the states with which it is surrounded, and strengthening its power, by every means consistent with a regard to equity and justice, will be al-

to prevented it from being rigidly adhered to. Yet no doctrine in political science is more generally received, than that an increase of territory does not necessarily imply a corresponding increase of power, but frequently indicates the reverse. When the legions of Rome carried the Imperial Eagle beyond the limits, which the wisdom of Trajan had pointed out, so far was the mistress of the world from being rendered more formidable, that, on the contrary, she became an easier prey to her enemies. The English possessions in India have already, in the opinion of many, been carried beyond the bounds which sound policy marks out; and it has been alleged, that, notwithstanding they now comprehend territories, double in extent to the kingdom of Great Britain, the Company were more powerful, because more able to defend themselves, when confined within the walls of Calcutta and Madras. Whether the population of the mother country is sufficient

to afford the number of European troops, requisite to keep in subjection the territories which have since been acquired, is a question which those, who entertain the above opinion, readily determine in the negative. But, allowing this decision to be just, it does not necessarily follow, that every addition which has lately been made to our Indian dominions, must have rendered them weaker, as well as held out a stronger temptation to our enemies to attack them. It would, indeed, be difficult to fix the limits within which, were our forces concentrated, our displeasure would be most dreaded, and our power most respected; but from the view which we have been able to take, of the political and moral state of Hindustan, we have been led to conclude, that the wider the sphere of British influence, operating upon British principles, the greater the prospect of securing tranquillity to the natives of India.

In forming a judgment upon this subject, people are apt to consider every province, conquered by, or ceded to the English, as inhabited by a refractory race of beings, impatient of our dominion, and disposed to embrace every opportunity of throwing it off. They forget, that by far the greater number are indifferent to any change in the ruling power, provided it leaves them unmolested in the practice of their religion and customs; and that they only are discontented at the revolution, who are prevented by it from their accustomed pillage and oppression. Did the great body of natives behold the encroachments of the British power, with that enmity which has been represented; or were they as much disposed, as some would have us to believe, to exert their physical strength in checking its progress, it appears next to impossible, that it could subsist for any length of time. But if, on the other hand, they are not insensible to the blessings, which are derived

from an equal, and just administration of their laws, they must regard, with far different sentiments than those of hostility, the extension of a power, by which these blessings are secured; and if the permanence of an empire is best provided for, by conciliating the affections of its subjects, the strength of the British in India, will not appear to have been diminished by the extension of its territories. If the number of its enemies have been multiplied (which, however, is by no means clear), the resources of its power have also been increased; and while there exists a reasonable prospect, that, by wise and prudent measures, the former will be daily diminishing, we have equal grounds to hope, that in the happiness and prosperity of our numerous subjects, we shall find a corresponding augmentation in the latter. The flourishing condition of those provinces, in which a British system of administration has had time to operate, compared with the misery

that prevailed under their former governments, is the best proof of its happy tendency, even under all the disadvantages to which, in India and at home, it is subjected. Let us but advert to the present situation of Oude, one of the latest of our acquisitions, into which this system has been introduced; and let us compare it with that wretchedness, and insubordination to authority, which prevailed under the government of the Nawaub Vizier, and we must acknowledge, that whatever may have been the means, by which the British Government acquired an ascendancy in the councils of Lucknow, the extension of its power and influence to that kingdom, must be regarded by its inhabitants as a happy æra in their history.

We must not, however, be charged with recommending an unlimited extension of our dominions in India, as a means of securing peace, and diffusing the blessings of civilization, amongst its inhabitants. It

is equally obvious, that such an occupation would divert our attention, from ameliorating the condition of those which we have already acquired, as that there are limits beyond which this extension cannot be carried. Few, for instance, would applaud the wisdom or policy, of annexing to our empire the territories of the Rajapoots or the Seiks, although some regard the acquisition of a chain of military posts, extending as far as the river Attok, in the country of the latter, as necessary to secure our northern frontier from the irruptions of the Tartars. It appeared, indeed, to Marquis Cornwallis, in the year 1805, that the territories acquired by the war of 1803, to the north-westward of the Jumma, ought to be abandoned, and that river rendered the frontier of the Company's dominions to the north of Bundlecund. These territories formed, however, but a very small portion of what had been acquired by the Marhatta war; and as they were separated by the

Ganges and Jumma from the other British possessions in that quarter of Hindustan; and besides, were interspersed with the principalities of a number of petty chiefs, whose newly-formed connections with the Company, Lord Cornwallis was anxious to dissolve, it appeared to him a preferable line of policy, to purchase with them exemption from the stipulations, which, by treaty, we had bound ourselves to fulfil to these princes, than to annex them to our dominions. The plan proposed by his Lordship, of assigning part of them, as jaghires, to the several chiefs who had joined our cause, and dividing the remainder between the Rajahs of Macherry and Bhurtpoor, with the view of raising a barrier betwixt the possessions of Dowlut Row Scindiah, in Hindustan, and those of the Company in the Dowab, is opposite to that policy, which, in order to promote tranquillity, forbids the erection of small states in the neighbourhood of more powerful. But,

by laying the foundation of interminable contests between these chiefs, and affording ample and permanent employment to the arms of Scindiah, who will naturally consider them as his prey, it promises to ensure the blessings of peace to our own dominions. It is farther supposed, that the power of both Scindiah and Holkar has been so much reduced by the late wars, in which they have been engaged, as to render the subjection of the petty states, which we have erected in their neighbourhood, a work of sufficient difficulty to occupy their whole attention; and thereby afford sufficient leisure to the British Government, to proceed in ameliorating the condition of its subjects in that quarter of the empire, unmolested by the calamities of war. The policy which has dictated these measures, will perhaps be more admired for its wisdom than humanity; as it may ultimately be found promoting the peace and prosperity of our own subjects, at the expence of their neighbours,

by holding out to restless ambition so strong a temptation, as weak and unprotected states. Were we, indeed, allowed to argue from the analogy which Europe can furnish on this point, we should conclude, that this would be inevitable. It cannot escape the observation of those who are conversant in the history of that quarter of the globe, that many of the wars, by which it has for some centuries past been desolated, have originated in some of those smaller states, with which it abounds. The period, indeed, seems to be approaching, when the smaller kingdoms are to be swallowed up in the more powerful. It would appear, as if the business of the political drama cannot be properly conducted on the stage of Europe, till the prime actors have driven from it the subordinate performers. How far this event may be desirable to Britons, it may not be easy to determine ; but it seems reasonable to conclude, that by rendering more permanent the blessings of peace, it

would promote the progress of civilization.

Subsidiary alliances with surrounding states, is the other basis upon which we observed that the policy of our Indian government has, for some time past, been founded. It has likewise been the fate of this system to be considered in very different lights; but whether we regard it in a favourable or unfavourable point of view, it must at least be allowed, that it has been carried to a considerable extent; and although now circumscribed within somewhat narrower limits, by the measures which, in pursuance of Lord Cornwallis's advice, have lately been adopted, it still embraces the principal states of Hindustan. It would be a work of no little difficulty, even to enumerate the various treaties, into which the Company have entered with the native princes of India, much less to attempt a discussion of their merits; and it can only be expected that we notice some of the more important, con-

fining our present observations, in regard to them, to the influence which such alliances as they establish, may be supposed to have on the tranquillity, and consequent civilization of our eastern possessions. A considerable part of the Company's military force is, in terms of these treaties, stationed in the dominions of the princes with whom they are in alliance; and was formerly supported by subsidies paid from their revenues. But, by later arrangements, certain districts, proportioned to the amount of the stipulated subsidies, have been specially ceded for this purpose,—a mode of fulfilling the stipulations of subsidiary treaties, in every respect preferable to that which formerly prevailed. It prevents that frequent interference with the government of independent powers, which never fails to give offence; but which, from the inability or unwillingness of the native princes to fulfil their obligations to the Company, had become indispensable. Besides, by introducing into a part

of the dominions of these princes, the operation of a liberal and enlightened system of administration, it promises to promote the progress of improvement throughout the whole of their territories. It has, notwithstanding, been the fortune of almost all the subsidiary alliances, lately entered into by the acting government of India, to be highly disapproved of by the Court of Directors, although they have received the sanction of the Board of Controul, from whom, indeed, they are said to have originated. It was not, perhaps, to be expected, that they should meet the approbation of the Court of Directors, as it was problematical, if they could ever furnish any surplus revenue for the purposes of investment, and were besides attended, in the first instance, with an expence which swallowed up no inconsiderable portion of their resources. But as we are not, in this place, considering their influence upon the commercial interests of the Company, it is sufficient for our purpose to

observe, that the system which has given rise to them, by carrying up the views of the different states of Hindustan to the British power, as to a common protector, ensures to this power a degree of respect, well calculated to secure the tranquillity of its own and the neighbouring territories. It will also, in a great measure, enable us to preserve the balance of power among the native princes of India, by encouraging the union of such as are too weak to defend themselves, and preventing the junction of those, who, by such a measure, would be rendered too formidable to us. So deeply, indeed, are the seeds of dissention sown betwixt some of the native powers, that little is to be either hoped or apprehended from their union. That the Nizam will ever form a cordial alliance with the Peshwa, or Berar Marhattas, is an event scarcely within the pale of probability. The latter states are entirely composed of native Hindus, who entertain the bitterest animosity towards the Ma-

hometans, whom they justly regard as invaders, and would seize the first opportunity of expelling from Hindustan. It is equally improbable, that the Seiks will ever assist any other state, in executing projects injurious to the peace of British India. Separated from the rest of the peninsula, by a difference of religious opinions, and at sworn enmity with both Hindus and Musselmen, on account of many injuries formerly sustained, if they ever form an alliance with any power, it will probably be with the English. From the geographical situation of their country, they are the guardians of India, against the irruptions of the Tartars; and as they are, by all accounts, rapidly rising into importance in the politics of Hindustan, sound policy seems to require, that they should be encouraged to form this alliance. To extend to them our subsidiary system, would be as absurd and impolitic, as to attempt annexing their territories to our empire. States, that may

be said to be just passing from the infancy, to the manhood of their power, are in a very different situation from those that have long felt the infirmities of age; and must be treated in a very different manner by any government, anxious to render them subservient to its measures. The Mogul empire, once so formidable, has now fulfilled its destiny; and almost all those powers, which rose upon its ruins, and aimed at nothing less than rivalling its splendour, have sunk into insignificance. Even the Marhattas themselves, whose movements, when they issued from the Ghauts, to levy their chout, never failed to spread consternation from one end of Hindustan to the other, have ceased, in a great measure, to inspire their wonted terror; while the Seiks, advancing from the temperate regions of Lahore and Cabul, and like the torrents that descend from their mountains, gathering strength as they proceed, are now almost come into contact with the only power in India, that they can regard

as formidable ; and are, perhaps, destined, at no very remote period, to decide the fate of the British empire in that quarter of the world. It must therefore be our interest to cultivate a friendly intercourse with this people, and to attach them to our cause, by every means in our power. They have already planted their banners on the borders of Oude ; and their further progress must be regarded, as the signal of hostility betwixt them and the British government—an event more perhaps to be dreaded, than any that has occurred since the establishment of our empire in India. Besides, if they forsake their native seats, for the richer plains of Hindustan, these may be occupied by the Tartars, who are represented as again ready to overflow their own confines ; and the weak and effeminate inhabitants of India, may once more have reason to bewail, that the cold regions of Tartary, producing a bold and active race of men, have been placed by nature,

in immediate contact with their enervating climate *.

But, although the English have little to fear from an alliance of the Marhattas, with the Seiks, or the Soubahdar of the Deccan, much, according to some writers, is to be apprehended from a junction of the Poonah and Berar states †. This, however, is an event which, since the conclusion of the treaty of Bassein, appears little likely to occur; and, even allowing it to take place, would neither unite the whole strength of the Marhatta empire under one prince, as has been alleged, nor, in our opinion, prove fatal to the British interests in India. Nor is it to be supposed, that either Scindiah or Holkar would view it with indifference; as the extinction of their power, would, in all probability, be one of the first consequences, with which it would be attended. We

* See Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws, vol. i. p. 320.

† Cockburn's Dissertation.

cannot, therefore, perceive that much danger is to be apprehended from this source; even granting the Rajah of Berar to have a claim from family descent, upon the throne of Sattarah; which, it may be observed, is far from being the case, as this prince aspires not to the sovereignty of Sattarah, but to the office of Peshwa, to which, from his relationship to the titular head of the Marhattas, he conceives himself entitled. This, it is obvious, is a claim entitled to little attention; and one which the British government will not be charged with injustice in withstanding, should any real danger be apprehended from its establishment.

Upon what footing our alliance with the Mogul ought to subsist, in order most effectually to secure the peace, and promote the welfare of our Indian empire, was a few years ago, considered as a question of some importance; and a line of policy in regard to this prince was pointed out, which circumstances have since rendered improper

or unnecessary to be pursued. As the rightful, though little more than nominal sovereign of the country, it was urged to be our interest to support him against every usurper. It was justly stated, to be the policy of usurpers to involve their subjects in war, to prevent them from inquiring into the right by which the reins of government are held; whilst the hereditary and legitimate monarch requires not to divert his people, from searching into his claim to possess the throne of his ancestors, by engaging them in the bustle of arms, or in the harvest of expected plunder *. At the period referred to, we had not ceased to regard the Mogul's authority, as the best legal guarantee of our possessions in India; and from observing the advantages, which the French derived from its employment, we became anxious to possess it. But as soon as the issue of the war, in 1803, placed

* Cockburn's Dissertation.

this prince under our protection, we contented ourselves with merely restoring him to personal liberty, of which he had been cruelly deprived by M. Perron, and to a few trappings of external splendour. We rescued him from the tyranny of Scindiah, but deemed it not advisable to restore him to any influence in the politics of Hindustan. Accordingly, no part of the conquered countries was allotted to this prince, by the partition treaties of 1804; and, as his power may now be said to be almost extinct, the government of British India has as little to hope from his alliance, as to apprehend from his enmity. The relation in which it stands to the Peshwa, and the Nizam, has dictated other measures in respect to these powers, whom it has endeavoured to attach more closely to its interests, by bestowing upon them a considerable part of the territories acquired in the late war. The acceptance of this boon on the part of the Peshwa, seems to argue a more

friendly disposition towards the English, than he evinced in 1799, when, upon the division of Tippoo's dominions, he refused the share which was then offered to him; and has already established an intercourse betwixt the British government and this prince, which, by wise and prudent measures, may be improved into the means of establishing a lasting amity. In regard to the Nizam, the old and faithful ally of the English, it may be observed, that he is too dependent upon the protection of our government, to risk its displeasure by any attempts that might disturb its tranquillity; and if not exasperated by harsh and humiliating measures, must be disposed, from a regard to his own safety, to cultivate our friendship.

In addition to the means of securing peace to our Eastern empire, by preserving a balance of power among the native states of Hindustan, and attaching them to our cause; the circumstances, in which it is

placed, require that it be also protected by a military force. Of the requisite extent of this force, we can be expected to say little more, than that it should be formidable enough to command that degree of respect, which will preclude the necessity of putting its strength to the test of experience; and that it should be composed of as great a number of Europeans, as the mother country can spare. It is true, if we can trust the defence of our Indian empire to Europeans alone, it must prove a drain upon the population of Britain, to which it is altogether inadequate; and cause an expenditure of our best resources, for which no commercial or political advantages can compensate *. To retain sixty millions of people in subjection—to levy the revenue of a country comprehending upwards of three hundred thousand square miles—to support ten thousand troops at the capital of the

* Lauderdale on the Government of India.

Nizam—to supply his Highness of Oude with an equal number—to station six thousand at the court of the Peshwa; and to furnish guards of honour to a variety of subordinate princes; will require an army, for the greater part of which the extensive population of India must necessarily provide. Nor can the measure of enlisting natives into our military service, be regarded as dangerous in its tendency, if we are at the same time careful to conciliate their affections by every means in our power. If we succeed in accomplishing this, we may place as much reliance on the troops of the country as upon Europeans, and trust with equal confidence to their exertions in support of our dominion. It would, perhaps, be advisable, that they should be placed on a different footing from that on which they stand at present; and taught to regard themselves as the more immediate servants of the crown of Great Britain, rather than of the East India Company. Their views

ought to be carried up to a source of authority, one and undivided; and the very possibility precluded, of their supposing, that the sovereigns, under whose command they are placed, may be actuated by opposite interests—a supposition which cannot fail to weaken respect, and promote insubordination.

But the most effectual mean of securing tranquillity to our eastern dominions, and at the same time most congenial to the spirit of a liberal and humane policy, must be found in the conciliation of the natives. Without this, the wisest treaties, into which we can enter with other powers—the most watchful eye that we can keep over the motions of our neighbours—the nicest balance of power we can preserve among the native and Mahometan princes; and the greatest military force which we can employ, will avail little. Yet, important in itself, and honourable to the British character, as this mean of securing peace must be regarded, it has

frequently been so little respected by our countrymen in India, that it is to many a subject of surprise, that the arms of sixty millions of people have not long ago driven us from that quarter of the world; which, says a writer upon Indian affairs, "they could do with as much ease, as the sand of the desert is scattered by the wind." Without this conciliation, however, it is in vain to expect a willing subordination to our authority. If we suppose that we have attained tranquillity, when we have merely extorted a reluctant and passive obedience to our commands, we may chance to fall into the most fatal mistake. Where domestic disaffection exists, even when it lies concealed, the danger of rebellion is imminent—if it is openly expressed, the temptations to external aggression are too strong to be resisted. On the other hand, where a cordial co-operation subsists among the subjects of any state; where the governors are careful to gain the affections of the govern-

ed, by the equity and mildness of their measures; and where these latter are, on their part, attached to their rulers, and feel an interest in supporting their power, little is to be dreaded from foreign enemies, still less from internal rebellion. Provision must, indeed, be made by every government, to awe, as well as to conciliate its subjects into submission; but the more we trust to the latter of these modes in our Indian administration, the better shall we secure to the natives the blessings of peace, and to ourselves the possession of the country. We have already had occasion to notice the immense difference between the number of European and native inhabitants of India; a circumstance that every foreign government of that country, which consults its own interest, will regard in all its plans of amelioration. It at once shews the necessity of conciliation, and places, in the strongest point of view, the danger of having recourse to means, which may irritate

the Hindus, and excite them to attempt throwing off the yoke. The patience with which they have supported it, for so long a period, has afforded sufficient proof to convince us, that they are not naturally of a disposition to resent trivial oppressions; and if ever a people, whom climate and religion concur in rendering submissive, are roused to rebellion, we may rest assured, that the fault lies with their government.

It will be allowed, that the present rulers of British India cannot be accused of disregarding the conciliating system which we are now recommending; as far at least as respects the management of its political affairs. But, in their zeal to propagate Christianity among their subjects, if we may judge from the encouragement they give to some, who undertake this important charge, they appear to be in danger of overlooking the mild principles of that religion; and forgetting that there are limits, beyond which both the Gospel, and a prudent policy, forbid us

to interfere with the religious prejudices of a people. It is possible, that the means employed to spread the knowledge of Christianity, may alienate the affections of the Hindus from our government, and oppose the progress of civilization, by involving the country in rebellion; but we may rest assured, that whenever they do so, they are not in the true spirit of the Gospel of Peace; and we feel it our duty to recommend, that their abettors should not be suffered to pass with impunity, much less sanctioned by authority.

It has been asserted, that the conduct of the European military servants of the Company is, in too many instances, such, as to counteract the salutary tendency of that system of conciliation which we are recommending, and consequently to retard the improvement of the Hindus. This charge, like every other brought against a great body of men, ought certainly to be received with considerable diffidence; but we can

easily suppose, that the strict discipline, under which those natives are placed, who follow the profession of arms, joined to the mean estimation, in which the inhabitants of Hindustan are held by Englishmen, may have encouraged many a "pelting petty officer," to exercise the most wanton tyranny towards his troops; and we have seen, in the massacre at Vellore, the length to which military oppression, in support of military foppery, will sometimes proceed, and the sanguinary consequences which, in India, it may be expected to produce. It may, therefore, be proper to restrain the European soldiers from mingling too much with the natives; but, at the same time, every possible means ought to be employed, for cultivating a friendly intercourse betwixt them and the native troops of the service. For if ever the latter are made sensible of their own strength, by being roused by oppression to exert it, there is reason to fear, that they will soon be found

giving law to the former. Every act of the European military, tending, in any degree, to alienate the affections of the native troops, or inhabitants, ought, therefore, to be punished with rigour; and the practice, still too prevalent among Europeans settled in India, of converting the superstitious prejudices of the natives, into a source of emolument, prevented by the severest penalties being attached to its commission, and strictly enforced. It is surely enough, that we derive wealth from the natural productions of the country, and from the industry and ingenuity of its inhabitants; but to consider the religious opinions of a people, as constituting a branch of trade, or affording a source of revenue, is repugnant to every principle of Christian philanthropy, and unworthy of the British character.

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SECT. II.

System of polity best adapted to promote civilization—As it regards the civil servants of the East India Company—Their qualifications—Selection of the Governor-General—His qualifications in particular—Co-operation—As it regards the Hindus.—Their laws and institutions—Abolition of Casts—Of the sacrifice of the Widow—Of polygamy.

WHEN we formerly remarked, that the legislature of Great Britain had rendered the power of the Governor-General in Council, absolute and uncontroulable, the observation was made in limitation to his authority in India. By vesting the supreme management of Indian concerns in the Court of Directors and Board of Controul, both subject to the authority of Parliament, it has introduced, into its Indian polity, that system of checks

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and balances, upon which the whole constitution of our own country may be said to be founded. The great purpose which such checks are intended to answer, is, to prevent the abuse of authority, by creating a degree of jealousy betwixt the bodies, among whom it is divided, sufficient to ensure the watchfulness of each, over the measures of the rest. It is obvious, however, that this system must not be carried so far, as to preclude that co-operation and harmony, without which the common object that they have in view, cannot be properly accomplished. The history of the British constitution will convince us, that there may exist bodies, acting as mutual checks upon each other, yet cordially concurring in promoting the public interest; and there is certainly nothing in the nature of the East India Company's affairs, to render it morally impossible, that the same system, when applied to them, should exhibit the same salutary union. A con-

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sideration of the effects, with which, in this particular case, it has been attended, for a period of twenty-five years, will perhaps enable us to form a pretty correct decision upon its merits, when, in another part of this work, they become subjects of discussion. At present, we shall content ourselves with recommending to the Board of Controul, and Court of Directors, to cultivate a spirit of mutual conciliation, and to act cordially together, in promoting the happiness and prosperity of the countries committed to their government. The policy which ought to direct them, in their selection of those, by whom their foreign affairs are to be administered—the qualifications, requisite in their servants—and the measures to be adopted in regard to their native subjects, so as most effectually to promote their civilization, we shall now attempt to delineate.

That the selection of a person, properly qualified, to discharge the duties of a Go-

vernor-General of India, is a matter of primary importance, when considered in connection with its civilization, will be readily acknowledged; and that, in the estimation of the government at home, it is not altogether indifferent, from what station of life he is chosen, may be learnt, from the policy, which it has for some time past pursued, of appointing to that high office, men of rank and family in this country. The only event that can render necessary a deviation from this practice, is the death of a Governor-General actually in office. In this case, the senior member of Council must necessarily succeed to the appointment, until such time, at least, as the pleasure of the government at home is known. But how far it may be wise, to allow the subordinate servants of the East India Company, to aspire to the first situation which it holds out, or to indulge the hope of being continued in its enjoyment, should such a circumstance, as already noticed, confer it

upon them, is a question about which very opposite opinions have been entertained. It may, indeed, at first sight, appear most expedient, that the person, who presides over the affairs of a trading company, should be selected from those, who have been bred to the mercantile profession. Such a measure may promise greater parsimony in the management of their affairs, as well as greater returns of profit from their speculations; and, were the East India Company merely a set of merchants, might be most expedient, in every point of view. But interests of a higher nature are to be consulted, and men, whose education has been founded on a broader basis, than that of mercantile people generally is, and whose rank and fortune in England, afford security that they will not seek these objects in India by unjust and oppressive measures; are those, whom we should conceive best qualified to preside over the British empire, in that quarter of the world. The views of

men, educated in this manner, and who have been brought up in the higher circles of life, if not so accurate and minute, are generally more magnificent than those of merchants, and may be expected to lead to measures, more suited to the extent and importance of our Asiatic dominions, and more calculated to promote their civilization. The province of a Governor-General of India is, to administer justice among the numerous subjects of the Company—to conduct the wars, in which they may be engaged—to provide for the execution of the treaties, into which they may enter, with other powers,—to superintend the management of their commercial concerns; and finally, to prevent the introduction of those abuses, which, amongst an association of merchants, eager to amass wealth, might find their way into the administration of a country. It is true, that these important and arduous duties have been discharged, with equal judgment and fidelity, by those who had risen

to the situation of Governor-General, through the usual gradations of office in the Company's service, as by men of family and rank from England. But it must be admitted, for the reasons already urged, that persons of the latter description, if possessed of talents and integrity, are, of all others, the most eligible to this situation. Besides, arriving in India, unconnected with the servants of the Company, established in that country, there is little to be apprehended, from partiality for particular persons interfering with the right administration of its affairs—a bias, of which those who have long resided among them, in terms of friendship and intimacy, would not find it so easy to divest themselves. The propriety of being guided by this policy, in the selection of the ruling power, likewise arises out of the peculiar circumstances, in which our Indian empire is placed. In a country, where the power of a prince is frequently measured, by the number of his titles, it may certain-

ly be attended, with beneficial consequences, that the representative of the King of Great Britain, and first servant of the East India Company, be invested with a few. The necessity of enabling him to appear with all the splendour of an Eastern prince, in a part of the world, where pomp and magnificence are the order of the day, is universally acknowledged; and, although this system has been complained of, as having been carried to too great an extent, under Lord Wellesley's administration, much more danger is to be apprehended to the interests of civilization, from the opposite extreme. The subjects of our Indian empire cannot be taught to look up, with too great reverence, to the governing power, which, the moment that it ceases to command their respect, will also cease to enforce their obedience.

The various relations, which take place betwixt a sovereign and his subjects, subsist betwixt the Governor-General and the na-

tives of British India; and consequently, upon the proper performance of the duties belonging to the former, must depend, in a great measure, the happiness and prosperity of the latter. It is, therefore, of primary importance, to the interests of civilization, that the Governor-General, in particular, should be possessed of those qualifications which we are about to enumerate, as requisite in the civil servants of the East India Company; and which we shall lay down, in the words of an illustrious statesman, who, for some time, presided over our Eastern dominions *.

"Since the English East India Company began to acquire the territory and power, which they now possess, their servants have risen from the rank of commercial agents, to that of judges, magistrates, ambassadors, and governors of provinces; and to their original employment, of protecting the trade

* Marquis Wellesley.

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of the Company, and securing cargoes of Eastern commodities, for the ships returning to Europe, have been added, the more important functions of these exalted offices. Their education should, therefore, be founded on a general knowledge of those branches of literature, and science, which constitute the basis of the education of persons destined to similar occupations in Europe. To this foundation should be added, an intimate acquaintance with the history, languages, manners, and customs of the people of India; with the Hindu, and Mahomedan Codes of law and religion; and with the political and commercial interests of Great Britain in Asia. They should be regularly instructed in the principles and systems, which constitute the foundation of that wise code of regulations, enacted by the late Marquis Cornwallis, for the purpose of securing to the people of India, the benefit of their ancient and established laws, administered in the spirit of the British constitu-

tion. With the true and sound principles of this constitution, they ought to be well acquainted, as well as sufficiently founded, in the general principles of jurisprudence, the laws of nations, and general history; that they may be able to discriminate the characteristic differences, in the several codes of law, administered within the British empire in India; and practically to combine the spirit of each, in the maintainance of good order and government. Finally, their early habits should be so formed, as to establish in their minds, such solid foundations of industry, prudence, integrity, and religion, as should effectually guard against those temptations and corruptions, with which the nature of the climate, and the peculiar depravity of the people of India, will be ready to surround and assail them, in every station. The early discipline of the service, should therefore be calculated to counteract the defects of the climate, and the vices of the people, and to

form a barrier against indolence, dissipation, and licentious indulgence. The spirit of emulation, in honourable and useful pursuits, should be kindled and kept alive, by the continual prospect of distinction and reward; nor should any precaution be relaxed in India, which is deemed necessary, in England, to furnish a sufficient supply of men, properly qualified to fill the high offices of the state, with credit to themselves, and with advantage to the public. Without such a constant succession of men, in the several branches and departments of the Indian government, the wisdom and benevolence of the law must prove vain, and insufficient :"—And, we may add, any means of civilization, that can be recommended, ultimately abortive.

In addition to these qualifications, which are requisite in all the civil servants of the East India Company, there are some, which more exclusively belong to the Governor-General. Reflecting that it may

be his duty, sometimes to break in upon the long established usages, and to combat and overcome the prejudices of a people, religiously attached to the customs of their fathers, he should possess, in a more than ordinary degree, those enlarged and accurate views of government—that knowledge of the human mind—and, above all, that acquaintance with the local and national peculiarities of India, which shall enable him to carry every measure of improvement into effect, with the least violence to the one, and the least annoyance to the other. He ought to be one, whose character and talents are held in the highest estimation, that the subordinate instruments of authority may rely, with confidence, upon the wisdom of his plans, and vie with each other in carrying them into execution. Uninfluenced by selfish or interested motives, he ought to give proof of his impartiality, by bestowing favours upon those only that are deserving, without regard to the adventi-

tious circumstances of birth or rank, and without respect to any other recommendation than talents and integrity. These should be the only, and certain road to his countenance, and, under his administration, the only channel, by which wealth and honours should be procured. Equally ready to punish delinquents, as to reward abilities, in every department of the state, no interest, however powerful, should tempt him to screen the guilty from justice; and possessing the courage to quell every insurrection, by a vigorous exertion of his power, none of his subjects should be incited to rebellion, by the hope of escaping with impunity. In short, whilst he leaves his subordinate ministers to manage the routine of business, and to arrange the details of administration, the promptitude, regularity, and ease, with which every department is co[illegible]ed, must prove that the mind, which ought to illuminate and con-

troul the whole, is everywhere present, and everywhere felt.

To insure a succession of men, properly qualified to perform the duties, which the servants of the East India Company may be called upon to discharge, seminaries of education have been established, both in India, and at home. The College of Fort William was instituted, for this purpose, by Marquis Wellesley, upon the same extensive and magnificent scale which distinguished the other acts of his administration; and although every branch of literary instruction, which it was intended to embrace, has not been attained, its primary object, of diffusing a knowledge of the Oriental languages, has been successfully accomplished. The necessity, on the part of the Company's servants, of cultivating this particular branch of study, is sufficiently obvious; while their disputations and examinations, annually held at Calcutta, in the native languages of Hindustan,

prove that such establishments are well calculated to promote its acquisition.

In order to render these institutions a powerful means of spreading the blessings of civilization, it only remains, that the students, when they enter into public life, and apply their knowledge to the public service, should heartily co-operate in the measures of such a ruling power, as we have already described. To insure this happy concurrence must, in a great degree, depend upon the supreme magistrate himself; and he must expect to find it, in the affability of his temper, the prudence of his administration, and especially in the exertion of his power, to render all, subordinate to his authority, happy in their several stations. The example of a Governor-General, who entertains a proper conception of the duties incumbent upon him, and whose measures prove him alive to a sense of integrity and virtue, cannot fail likewise to procure the ready assistance of every honest servant of

the Company, in promoting schemes of improvement. At the same time, every one ought to be impressed with the consideration, that he himself, is individually entrusted with the charge of supporting the honour of the British name. Every Englishman in India who forgets this, and allows himself to sink into the vices and voluptuousness of eastern manners, must retard, instead of promoting, the best concerted schemes of amelioration; and if ever the evil becomes general, we must expect to see the fairest prospects of success end only in disappointment. Nor is this merely an imaginary danger. There is something in the insinuating allurements of an Indian climate, which steals upon the native hardiness of the British character, and insensibly assimilates it to the voluptuous and effeminate temper of the Asiatic. It will not, it is acknowledged, be easy to inspire the native of Hindustan with that activity and love of exertion, which distinguish the inhabitants of colder regions; but we shall

give up every hope of being the instruments of effecting this desirable revolution, if we ourselves become converts to his indolent voluptuousness. That sumptuary laws, if strictly enforced, would tend to check the progress of this evil, will readily be admitted; but that any sanctions which the legislature could enact, would enforce their obedience, may very reasonably be doubted. Our interest in counteracting the influence of those indulgencies, into which Englishmen, in India, so generally fall, will appear in the strongest point of view, when we reflect, that, if persevered in, our enemies will find less difficulty in the overthrow of our empire, than ever we have experienced in its establishment. The necessity, therefore, of adopting every measure, in any degree calculated to answer this purpose, is such as must lead every prudent government of India to employ them.

Two very opposite opinions, in regard to the Hindus, appear to prevail among Euro-

peans settled in India, both of which must be corrected, before the civilization of this people can proceed with any tolerable chance of success. Of these, the one looks with so hopeless an eye to their improvement, as to pronounce it impossible; the other regards it as unnecessary, beyond the degree which they have already attained. By those who entertain the former opinion, and who appear to be far the more numerous class, the circumstances of the Hindus seldom become a subject of investigation; and hence we are enabled to explain, how the usages of so singular a people have attracted so little attention. The abettors of the latter, lay claim to an intimate acquaintance with their customs, and express so high a veneration for their civil and religious institutions, as to lead many on this side of the Atlantic, to entertain an idea, that they are at this day the most civilized people in the world. Of the two opinions, the latter is not only the more honourable to the Hin-

dus, but we apprehend, that those who entertain it, are the more likely, notwithstanding, to promote their improvement. Both, however, must be made to approach nearer to each other, if we would raise the natives of India higher in the scale of refinement. For if the very men, to whom the means of civilization must, in a great measure, be entrusted, entertain too mean an idea of those who are to be civilized, we can look for little success to the undertaking; and, until they learn to regard, with some degree of respect, the people upon whom their labour is to be bestowed, we cannot hope to see the condition of this people much ameliorated by their means. One would not think it difficult to teach Englishmen, to honour the Hindu as a being of the same species with themselves, and to take a livelier interest in his improvement. They might remember, that whilst their own ancestors were in a state the most rude and uncultivated, those of the poor Indian, whom they

affect to despise, were enjoying all the blessings of civilization; and if they cannot respect the present race for their moral or intellectual endowments, they might at least honour them, for the sake of their forefathers, and study to reinstate them in their former happy condition. On the other hand, those who regard the Hindus, as having arrived at the summit of improvement, appear to us to err, in applying the measure of their former attainments in civilization to their present state; and in entirely overlooking, at once the deterioration, which has undeniably taken place, in the condition of this people, and the tendency of many of those ancient institutions, whose wisdom they so much admire. If both would divest themselves of prejudice, and endeavour to acquire a knowledge of the present political, moral, and religious state of the natives of Hindustan, by an actual inquiry into their existing circumstances, the one would be more able to appreciate

the degree of improvement, to which they have attained, the other to determine, of what they are still capable; while the little endearing offices, which in this way they might be led to perform to the Hindus, would, perhaps, have a better effect, in improving their condition, and attaching them to our cause, than many other means, apparently more important.

The system of polity, established in India, has been frequently complained of, as too detached in its parts, to insure the greatest strength and security to the whole; and as necessarily delegating too great a share of individual interference, in the management of the empire, to the subordinate instruments of authority. There is reason, however, to believe, that the former of these evils exists not at present, to the same extent, as when our dominions were even comprehended within narrower limits; and that, as every part of the British empire in India, has become more accessible to the

immediate influence of the ruling power, the latter has also, in a great measure, been remedied. Such internal arrangements as, concentrating the power of government in one point, enable it to emanate equally to its remotest dependencies; and which, directing all its operations to one object, the happiness and prosperity of its subjects, connect them together, in such a manner, as most effectually to promote this end, are those which, in good policy, ought to be adopted. An acquaintance with the plans of amelioration, which the government of India may see proper to adopt, must, therefore, in their general outline at least, be possessed by its inferior agents; otherwise, the progress of improvement may be impeded by its subordinate instruments counteracting each other. The propriety of this measure must appear obvious to all who advert to the considerable share of power, with which, under the present system of Indian administration, it is

necessary to invest even the lower servants of the Company—a circumstance, which clearly shows, that, in order to promote the civilization of our Asiatic empire, a regard to harmony in the different parts of its polity, connected with this object, is essentially requisite. Every internal arrangement should also be made, with a view, not only to procure the co-operation of the Company's servants, but to alleviate the miseries of subjection to the native inhabitants—to punish every abuse of authority; to take advantage of every circumstance, favourable to their civilization, and to obviate whatever may impede their improvement. They should be calculated to support and preserve the British character, amidst the temptations, with which public life in India, is surrounded, and, by extending to the natives the same privileges and immunities which Europeans enjoy, they should, in this manner, lead them to forget that they are a conquered people. We shall thus succeed

in gaining the affections of our Eastern subjects; and in establishing the empire of refinement among them, let us hope, that we shall secure our own on the firmest foundation.

So far as regards Europeans, settled in India, a greater latitude is allowed to the British Government, in adopting any system of polity, which it may judge best adapted to promote the interests of civilization, than it must expect to meet with, in what more immediately concerns the Hindus. Here, we are told, our unalterable beacon and directory must be, "that no evil is more dreaded, among this people, than innovation—no duty more sacred, than a compliance with the customs of their ancestors,"—a principle, which must circumscribe our exertions within narrower limits than might otherwise be assigned to them; but in compliance with which, the Hindus have already been permitted to live under their own laws, administered in the spirit

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of the British constitution. That the means which have tended to polish and refine a people, should continue to preserve among them the blessings of social life, and their privation to replunge them into their original barbarity, is consonant to reason; but at the same time, furnishes a rule, which, when applied to the natives of Hindustan, must be taken with considerable limitation. Their history, indeed, affords the most ample and striking proofs, how much their prosperity depends upon the preservation of their ancient usages. The first Moslem conquerors of India were so zealous to convert the Hindus to the religion of Mahomet, and to a regulation of their manners, by the laws and precepts of the Koran, that no means, however tyrannical and severe, were left untried, to compel the votary of Brahma, to forsake, along with his Sastras, the institutions and customs of his ancestors. The fruitlessness of these attempts, more, perhaps, than the pernicious consequences with which they

were attended, compelled the Mahometan princes of Hindustan to desist from the experiment. In the reign of Alla-ud-dien, in whose estimation no duty was so obligatory, as that of converting an infidel, nor any exertion of power oppressive and criminal, which could increase the number of the faithful, we are told, that the peasantry were reduced to despair and misery; the cultivation of the lands was neglected; and many of the most opulent Ryots forsook their habitations, and fled to the woods. In that of the illustrious Acbar, who at once revered the wisdom of the Hindu laws and institutions, and generously allowed his native subjects the exercise of their religious customs, the Ryots returned to the habitations which they had forsaken; agriculture again flourished; and this magnanimous prince acknowledged, that the Hindus were more civilized, than their haughty conquerors. A very slight acquaintance, however, with Hindu customs, will convince us, that

to grant to our native subjects, the unrestrained exercise of their ancient customs, would effectually counteract almost every mean of civilization that could be adopted, by perpetuating the influence of their superstition. Without pretending to point out every instance, in which these customs are hostile to refinement, or repugnant to the spirit of true liberty, we shall endeavour to suggest some regulations, which it appears requisite to adopt, in order to promote the progress of improvement. These will be found to be, in some cases, supplemental; in others corrective: for the ancient polity of Hindustan is both deficient in many provisions, necessary to promote civilization, as well as disfigured with institutions, hostile to its advancement.

To the laws and institutions of the Hindus, has been ascribed their peculiar character; but it appears more reasonable to believe, that the former derived their prominent and characteristic features from the

latter. Before the laws, which have regulated the manners of this people, since the days of Alexander the Great, could have been compiled and regularly digested, a long period must have elapsed; and the character of the Hindus must have taken its peculiar bias, long before we can suppose their institutions to have had much influence upon it. These laws have been for ages distinguished by the wisdom which, in many parts, they display; and were once no less remarkable for the equity with which they were administered. The singular and happy propriety, with which they were accommodated to the disposition of the people, whose manners they were destined to regulate, has secured to them a permanence, unexampled in the history of the world; and, in the prosperous days of the Hindu empire, led to that successful cultivation of arts and sciences, which excited the astonishment and envy of surrounding nations. Many perversions, however, have, since that

period, found their way into the Gentoo code of laws; and in numberless instances, they are daily misrepresented by the Brahmins, who interpret them, and urged as sanctioning practices, which they either altogether condemn, or very slightly commend. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that, in framing these laws, even the first Indian legislators themselves appear to have been directed, not so much by the moral turpitude of crimes, as by a regard to the preservation of those artificial distinctions, which they established; and, as far as respects the female sex, by that jealousy, for which eastern nations have in all ages been distinguished. In short, the great merit of these institutions consists in their being so admirably adapted to the peculiar character of the Hindus;—their great defect, in being calculated to perpetuate the reign of despotism and superstition. Among a people, remarkable for their mild and compassionate disposition, they have wisely established

few punishments, and these neither severe in their nature, nor execution; but by the religious doctrines and duties, which they inculcate and command, they have impaired the native energies of the mind; and by the cruel and inhuman penances, which they either enjoin or permit, they have forcibly engrafted a sanguinary temper upon the character of a people naturally compassionate.

The lenient character of the Hindu laws, which it would manifestly be improper to alter, and their tendency to support a system of the most degrading superstition, which must necessarily be counteracted, point out the principles upon which the government of British India must proceed, in rendering the institutions of their native subjects more congenial to the progress of civilization. If the former of these circumstances shews not the impolicy, of at all enacting penalties, for insubordination to any new system of affairs, that may be establish-

ed, it points out, with what caution such measures should be adopted, and promises the greatest success to every mean of improvement, which in lenity, imitates the spirit of Hindu institutions. How the obstacles, presented by the latter, are to be removed, without the risk of violating this rule, is one of the greatest difficulties which we must prepare to encounter. The great engine, by which they have hitherto been perpetuated, is the division of Casts; and, as the abolition of this institution would confessedly do more, towards the total overthrow of Hindu superstition, and Brahminical tyranny, than any other measure that can be recommended, we ought not to be appalled by the difficulty of the task, from all attempts whatever to accomplish it.

The idea of abolishing the institution of Casts, has by many been treated, as absurd and ridiculous in the extreme; and, perhaps, by such reformers of Hindu usages, as have proposed accomplishing this object

by a special legislative provision, this ridicule may not have been altogether undeserved. But there appear no just and conclusive reasons, why the institutions of Hindustan, or that of Casts in particular, may not, like those of other countries, be at length moulded into a shape, consistent with the progress of improvement; or if necessary, even altogether abolished, by the operation of prudent and gradual measures. When, indeed, we consider, through how many ages, the institution of Casts has subsisted among the Hindus; how intimately it has wrought itself into their habits and prejudices; and that it forms, as it were, the basis upon which their customs and usages are reared, there can be no doubt, that its immediate and direct abolition would be an impolitic and dangerous attempt, on the part of any government. But when, on the other hand, we reflect, that scarcely a single measure of improving our native subjects, can be carried fully into

execution, without infringing some one or other of their laws regarding Casts, the necessity of attending to that part of the Hindu code, which regards this institution, and of correcting the pernicious tendency of the laws, more immediately established for its preservation, is equally obvious. It follows, therefore, that every proper measure should be adopted, by the government of India, to abrogate an institution, of which talents and integrity are not the foundation, and which its warmest advocates acknowledge, to be necessarily calculated, to cramp the native energy of the mind, and frequently to crush genius in its birth, by confining men, fitted by nature to discharge the duties of a higher station, to the performance of menial offices; but that every mean, employed for this purpose, should be conducted with the greatest deliberation, and sufficient time allowed to the Hindus, to conform to practices so much at variance with their established opinions.

What period must elapse, before any government of India could venture, with safety to itself, to abolish the institution of Casts, by a special legislative provision, it is impossible to determine; but the government, whose measures are regulated by the principles which we have now laid down, may find this formidable obstacle to civilization, gradually disappearing, without the necessity of having at all recourse to such provisions. It is, at least, reasonable to presume, that if it yields not to this prudent and conciliatory policy, it is too firmly rooted, to be overthrown by coercive measures. If by countenancing the gradual encroachments, which have been making upon this institution, ever since the settlement of Europeans in India—by preventing, whenever it can be done with safety and propriety, the laws regarding it from being carried into execution—by encouraging the members of different casts, to enlarge their intercourse with each other;

and particularly, by protecting the outcasts, who may have incurred the penalties of superstition, without having violated the precepts of morality;—if, by these measures, the English Government shall fail in destroying that arbitrary distinction among their subjects, which Casts have established, we see not, we acknowledge, how this can possibly be accomplished; and convinced of the advantages which would result to the interests of civilization, from surmounting this obstacle, we cannot sufficiently regret our inability to accomplish it. But even upon the supposition that we are obliged to tolerate it, to the same extent, as it has existed for many ages, we apprehend, that the Hindus are still capable of being raised higher in the scale of civilized nations, than they stand at present; and we ought not, on this account, to relax our exertions, where there is more prospect of their being successful.

The height of civilization to which any people have attained, may perhaps be pretty accurately appreciated, by the respect which their customs and institutions evince to the female sex. Among nations, that are as yet in a state of savage ferocity, unacquainted with those arts and sciences, which polish and refine the human race, the women are treated in a manner the most barbarous, and employed, like beasts of burden, in all the servile and laborious offices of life. In proportion as these nations advance in refinement, the female sex come to be treated with more respect, and to acquire a greater influence in the society. Even among the voluptuous nations of the East, where they are now herded together in harams, and seraglios; secluded from the world, and watched with the eagle-eye of jealousy and suspicion; there no doubt once existed a period, when they were treated with that respect, and permitted to enjoy that liberty, which are most consistent with the

progress of improvement. But, as soon as they came to be regarded, merely as the instruments of sensual gratification, and a religious faith to be established, which denies to them a soul, nor even allows them to be objects of future reward or punishment, their condition became worse than that of slaves; and the nations among whom such customs and opinions were received, were from that period precluded from enjoying those advantages, which a more just and liberal treatment of the female sex would undoubtedly have procured to them. It requires, indeed, but a very slight acquaintance with the history of the world, to learn how much influence the female part of our species may have, on the progress of civilized manners, if they are allowed to assume their legitimate sphere of action, and accustomed to mingle in the intercourse of life. To them are we indebted for that delicacy and urbanity of manners, which distinguish the age of refinement in which we live. It

is they who bestow those fascinating charms upon the social and domestic circles, which cheer us amidst the toils, and support and comfort us, under the misfortunes of life. These enviable blessings, the barbarous customs and institutions of Asiatic countries have so long denied to their inhabitants, that they appear to have lost even the idea of their existence, and cannot be persuaded that any addition to their happiness could be derived, from relaxing the restraints which have been imposed upon the female sex.

The wisdom of the Hindu institutions has not prevented them from falling into an error, so prevalent over the eastern world; and it has often been observed, that when they treat of the female sex, they descend from their accustomed dignity, and speak in terms, the most contemptuous and absurd. Since the subjection of Hindustan to the Mahometan power, the restraints, under which women are placed in that coun-

try, have become still more strict and severe; and if the natives can be charged with having borrowed any one custom from their Moslem conquerors, it has been that of treating the female sex with greater disrespect than formerly. But, long before the disciples of Mahomet had established their empire in India, the low estimation in which women were held in that country, had given rise to customs admirably calculated to perpetuate their degradation. Of these, one appears to be peculiar to the Hindus; as we know of no other nation, in which the sacrifice of the widow on the funeral pile of her deceased husband, is established. Another is common to them, with almost every other people in the East, and is perhaps less prevalent among the Hindus, than among their neighbours. The practice of polygamy, however, to which we refer, is more replete with pernicious consequences to the progress of improvement, than the sacrifice of the widow; and,

as it is more congenial to the depravity of human nature, and to the licentious dispositions of Asiatics, will be found infinitely more difficult in eradicating.

Since the establishment of the English power in India, it has been observed, that the Hindu and Mahometan women have been treated with less restraint than before; and notwithstanding the existing prejudices, in favour of ancient customs, have, in many things, imitated the manners of Europeans. Women, even of the Brahmin Cast, appear publicly driving about the streets of Calcutta, in English chariots, without even the ceremony of a veil; and are represented as extremely fond of mixing in society. It only remains for the government of British India, to encourage them to appear in public, by every means in its power, and to treat them with the same respect and affability, which European women of the same rank are accustomed to receive. In particular, every incitement should be held forth,

to inspire them with a taste, for those public amusements, to which both sexes mutually contribute.

Although the practice of immolating the widow, upon the funeral pile of her deceased husband, has prevailed for ages among the Hindus, their Pundits represent it, as not so much enjoined, as merely permitted by their laws; and the English Government has frequently interposed its authority, in order to prevent its being carried into execution. It is to be regarded as a mean, to which eastern jealousy has had recourse, to preserve the domestic authority and life of the husband, and to secure the superiority and respect which he had usurped. The Indian legislators likewise appear to have looked upon it, as the duty of a woman, to abstain from a second marriage. They seem, however, to have considered it as next to impossible to carry this duty into execution; and they allowed the cruel custom under consideration, as preventing the com-

mission of what they esteemed a far greater crime. This slight commendation of the practice, the Brahmins are careful to construe into a positive precept, enjoining its performance. They are well aware, that such a scene, as the sacrifice of a woman exhibits, while it fills with awe the surrounding multitude, rivets faster the chains of superstition, and strengthens the power and influence of the priesthood. At these sacrifices the noise of drums and other instruments is employed, to drown the cries of the wretched widow; and lest her resolution should fail, upon the flames beginning to scorch her, the Brahmins are accustomed, as part of the ceremony, to throw logs of wood upon the miserable victim, to prevent her making her escape, from the pile. When they have been restrained from doing this, there have occurred different instances, in which the feelings of pain have overcome the dictates of superstition, and the devoted widow has

chosen, rather to bear the reproaches of her kinsfolk, and forfeit the choicest blessings of a future life, than submit to so cruel a destiny.

At the same time, if we can believe that upwards of two hundred women are still annually sacrificed in the neighbourhood of Culcutta alone *, it would seem, that, notwithstanding these encouragements to interpose our authority, the government of British India are cautious of interfering too far, even with this barbarous custom of their native subjects; and consider some degree of delicacy as necessary in attempting its abolition. Such caution, if it is not carried so far, as to regard this cruel practice with indifference, cannot be blamed; and is dictated by that policy, which wisely trusts the abolition of such Hindu usages, as are adverse to the progress of civilization, to

* See Buchanan's Memoir.

the operation of gradual and conciliating measures.

When we consider the many miseries, which polygamy necessarily entails upon one part of our species, and the unnatural crimes to which it invariably leads; and when we reflect how great an enemy it is to domestic comfort and happiness,—inducing, at the same time, that indolence and inactivity of mind and body, by which the inhabitants of Hindustan have been so long characterized; it certainly becomes an imperious duty, on the part of our Indian rulers, to counteract, if possible, its pernicious effects. That no people, among whom this custom is established, can attain that height of refinement, at which they might otherwise arrive, nor, indeed, justly deserve the appellation of civilized, may be asserted without the fear of contradiction. But the safety of attempting to eradicate a custom, which, as we have already observed, is so congenial to the depravity of human nature,

and to the licentious dispositions of Asiatics, may certainly admit of some dispute. The incalculable advantages which would undoubtedly result from the success of such an attempt, will prevent every enlightened government of India, from losing sight of this object; whilst a regard to its own safety, and the happiness of its subjects, will dictate the measures which ought to be pursued. To restrict the number of wives allowed to Hindus and Mahometans, by a special legislative provision, will not, we apprehend, be one of these measures; nor, perhaps, will it be accounted safe, to impose a tax, as has also been proposed, upon all above a certain number. It may be in the power of government to adopt other measures, which we cannot be expected to suggest, equally efficacious, and less liable to give offence to their native subjects. But after all, the abolition of polygamy in India, must be trusted more to the progress of refinement, and to the diffusion of Christianity, than to

any measures, expressly employed for the purpose.

SECT. III.

Encouragement of arts and sciences considered as a mean of civilization—Arts—Useful and elegant—Agriculture—Importance of—State of in India—Zemindars—Tenure of land—Defects in Hindu agriculture—Remedies to be applied—Architecture—Common arts of life—Means of improving the Hindus in their cultivation—Elegant arts—Sciences—Ancient state—Present state—Remedies.

THE encouragement of arts and sciences is an obvious mean of civilization; as the progress, which any people have made in their cultivation, is a just measure of their attainments in refinement.

A division of the arts into useful and ele-

gant, according as they minister to the wants, or embellishments of mankind, has been adopted. Of the former of these, agriculture is the most important, because the most intimately connected with the happiness and comfort of society. This, as it furnishes the materials, has been denominated the mother of the arts; and is, at the same time, the parent and the measure of population. It is also the source, from which all the wealth of a country is derived, and into which it ultimately resolves itself. Were all other arts unknown, agriculture alone would preserve the existence of mankind, by supplying the necessaries of life; and the history of the world shews us, that when the knowledge of men extended little farther, than to cultivate the soil, upon which they trode, they were a temperate, a vigorous, and a happy race. In the annals of many nations, that have risen to power and splendour, and again sunk into insignificance, we find, that the

first great step towards their aggrandizement, was the encouragement of agriculture; the first symptom of their decay, the neglect of this art. When the Roman senators and generals were taken from the plough, to watch over the interests of the state, and to command its armies, its councils were marked with the greatest wisdom, and its exertions in the field, crowned with the happiest success. But when agriculture gave place to those arts, which afford the luxuries of life, and minister to the acquired and vitiated taste of mankind, the period of its ruin rapidly approached, and it became at length a prey to *barbarians*, whose knowledge was circumscribed within the narrow limits, of cultivating the earth, and procuring from its bosom the necessaries of life.

Nor are these the only arguments, that should lead every government, desirous of promoting the improvement of its subjects, to protect and encourage the labours of the

husbandman. Whenever a country, observes an acute and intelligent writer *, in encouraging the arts, neglects agriculture, it resembles an architect, who, in order to carry the superstructure to a greater height, withdraws the materials, which constitute the foundation. In such a country, adds he, the value of the necessaries of life must be raised; whilst that of the articles of luxury, the produce of the arts, is diminished; and the artist is left at the mercy of those, who at their own price supply him with provisions. But when a people join the cultivation of agriculture, to that of the arts, they have every thing within themselves, necessary for their existence and preservation, and every seed of future greatness and prosperity †.

To ascertain how far the system of polity, established in British India, is calculated to promote the advancement of agriculture, it is necessary to be acquainted with the

* Abbé Raynal. † Ibid.

principles, upon which it is founded. These, like almost all the principles, that regulate despotic states, are neither very numerous, nor complicated, and present not many difficulties in their investigation. The first and most fundamental, as has already been observed, acknowledges the sovereign to be the sole and absolute proprietor of the land. Another recognizes no intermediate class, not merely official, between him, and the *bona fide* cultivators; in whom, upon condition of paying to the sovereign a certain proportion of the produce, is vested, by a third, the hereditary possessory property of the soil *. It necessarily resulted from these principles, that the land was originally portioned out among the cultivators, in very small allotments; and a class of officers, rendered necessary, in order to collect the proportion of its produce, due by the Ryot or farmer to the prince. These ministers of the sovereign at length acquir-

* Vid. Paton on Asiatic Monarchies.

ed the right, of transmitting their offices to their posterity, as we have already remarked, and in process of time, came to be regarded as the proprietors of the districts, over which they had originally been appointed as collectors *. By this means, the connection between the farmer and the sovereign, which the Hindu laws had with so much wisdom established, became less intimate, and less perceptible; and one of the very evils, which these laws seem to have aimed at preventing, namely, that of the existence of great landed proprietors, inevitably followed to a much greater extent, than could otherwise have happened. For as the districts, of which a person was appointed to collect the revenue, were necessarily much larger, than any individual in a society could have acquired in property, by ordinary means; so when these districts were rendered hereditary, private estates, if they can be called so with propriety, to the ex-

* Vid. Grant on the Zemindary Tenure.

tent of ten thousand square miles, were the consequence. The effects, which this revolution produced upon the progress of agriculture, were such as might have been anticipated. The cultivators lost by it, the immediate protection of the prince, which they had formerly enjoyed, and whom a regard to his own interest, would have always prevented from oppressing them; and were left at the mercy of those, whose interest in supporting them, was at least not so evident. Accordingly, so long as the fundamental principles of the ancient polity of India remained inviolate, agriculture flourished, and the happiness of the Hindu farmers, was a subject of admiration and praise, with other nations. But when the intermediate officers, whom this polity had rendered necessary, became hereditary, and no longer owed their situations to a faithful discharge of their duties, agriculture appears from that day, to have declined among the Hindus. Had those who

held such offices, become the absolute proprietors of the soil, or, in other words, the sovereigns of their districts, the condition of the farmers might have been little altered, and they might have been equally protected as before. But as the Zemindars, (the general name by which this class of officers was known,) were not powerful enough, to throw off their allegiance to their prince, and, perhaps, still looked upon him, as the absolute owner of the soil, they continued to pay to him the proportion of produce stipulated by law. Of what remained to the farmer, after payment of this rent, or revenue to the sovereign, they were careful to leave only as much, as was barely necessary for his subsistence.

In the happier days of the Hindu empire, it does not appear to have been requisite for the sovereign, to support a military force, in order to controul payment of that part of his revenue, which arose from land. The law alone seems to

have been sufficient for accomplishing this purpose. But when the changes, which we have noticed, took place, this measure became necessary, and a body of troops was retained in the service of every Zemindar, as well as forts erected in their districts; the expence of which was defrayed from the general revenue. These officers then probably first assumed the title of Rajahs, or princes; and in some instances, by appropriating to themselves, the revenues which they were wont to collect for their sovereign, became wholly independent of his authority. By this revolution, the class of intermediate officers, who seized upon the absolute property of the soil, acquired a manifest interest in protecting its cultivators; but the struggles of the lawful prince, to regain his authority, and of these usurpers to support and preserve their independence, counteracted any good effects, which would have resulted to agriculture, from this change: and, as, since that period, either

these struggles have continued, or the system in which they originated, been re-established, this art has sunk in India, to a state of comparative degradation.

The steps, by which the East India Company have attained their present power, among the states of Hindustan, were somewhat similar to those, by which the officers of the ancient Hindu and Mogul government, rose to the rank of independent princes. Soon after they had obtained settlements upon the shores of India, they procured from the Court of Delhi, the appointment of collectors of revenue over some rich and extensive districts. They occupied the intermediate offices between the Mogul, the absolute proprietor of the soil, and the Hindu Ryots, or possessory proprietors; and, as is well known, afforded no greater encouragement to agriculture, by protecting those, who were engaged in it, than their predecessors in office had done before them. When, however, they became

the sovereigns of the country, by acquiring the absolute property of the land, or in other words, appropriating the revenue, arising from it to themselves, one would have thought, that their interest in encouraging the farmers, to increase its produce, must have become sufficiently evident, to insure this encouragement. The increase of their own revenue was the principal object which the Company had in view; and common sense might have shown them, that a revenue, arising from a rent of land, paid in a proportional part of its produce, could only rise with the augmentation of that produce, and that this augmentation could only be looked for, by protecting the cultivators of the soil. At the same time, their own experience, while they held the Dewanneeoffice, might have taught them, that the oppression and injustice exercised by the collectors of the land-rent, had always been one of the greatest impediments to the progress of agriculture in British India, and

consequently to the wealth and power of its government, whose revenue is principally derived from this source. Yet even under these able instructors, they pursued, for some time, a system more ruinous to the interests of cultivation, than any that had been established under the former governments. By depriving the Zemindars of their hereditary offices, they oppressed and irritated this powerful class of their subjects; and by selling their Zemindaries to the highest bidder, they took the most effectual measures, that could have been proposed, to extend the oppression to the cultivators. It is almost unnecessary to observe, that at this period, agriculture declined, and the scenes which had disgraced the reign of Alla-uddien, were again re-acted by the Company's government. It may not, however, be impertinent to remark, that at this period, the Company's servants amassed the greatest fortunes; and by the most shameful acts of tyranny and injustice, imprinted the deepest stain upon the British character.

To remedy these abuses, which the acting government of British India had principally contributed to introduce, the government at home interfered with their authority; and, after several struggles with their servants abroad, established, under the auspices of Lord Cornwallis, the system, by which their polity, in regard to Hindu agriculture, (in as far, at least, as concerns the tenure of land,) is still regulated. In settling this system, a question of considerable importance arose, namely, whether the Zemindars, and corresponding officers, were to be regarded as the private landed proprietors, or as the collectors of the revenues, of their districts*. If the East India Company had not lost sight of the principles, upon which the ancient polity of Hindustan was established, they would have found this class of their subjects to be merely ministerial, notwithstanding that their of-

* Vid. Grant on the Zemindary Tenure; Rowe on the State of Landed Property in Bengal.

fices were, for the most part, hereditary in their families; and they would, perhaps, have hesitated, before they erected them, by the act of *perpetual settlement*, as it is called, into great landed proprietors. When, however, this measure was adopted, it remained to take such steps, as would prevent these proprietors of great estates, from oppressing their tenants; and the restrictions, under which they were, for this purpose, confirmed to them, are not altogether reconcilable with the idea of private property, which we in this country are apt to entertain. By these restrictions, the Zemindars are prevented from exacting above a certain rent from their farmers, which is besides unalterably fixed at a determinate amount; and it is even doubtful, whether they can sell their estates without the consent of the government. Accordingly this class of the Company's subjects, notwithstanding its liberality towards them, have seldom shown much gratitude to their be-

nefactors, but on the contrary, are always ready to league with the enemies of the British power.

Under the ancient monarchs of Hindustan, the medium rent of land was estimated at a sixth-part of its produce. It appears, from the ordinances of Menou, compiled about thirteen hundred years before the Christian æra, that this rent varied, according to the difference of soil, and the labour necessary for its cultivation; being sometimes a twelfth, an eighth, or a sixth. In cases of urgent necessity, as in times of war and invasion, it was lawful for the prince, to exact the fourth part of the produce of land, as rent or revenue; but above this, it seems never to have risen; and it was expressly enacted, that all that remained after payment of this proportion, should belong to the Ryot. Whether this rent was paid in kind, or by an established modus, is not perfectly clear; although it is generally supposed, that the former method was the

more prevalent. In the reign of Acbar, a survey was taken of the whole lands of the empire; and a fourth part of their valued produce, deemed equivalent to a half when taken in kind, was fixed as the land rent. This, however, appears to have been the case, only in regard to grain, and the common and least expensive productions of the soil. For, in respect to such as required a great disbursement and labour on the part of the cultivator, only one fourth, or *rebba*, was exacted as rent, when levied in kind. In framing this system, Acbar was assisted by Tudor Mull, a native Hindu, who was intimately acquainted with the ancient institutions of his country, and borrowed many of his agricultural regulations from this source. In order to ascertain the receipts and disbursements of the farmer, Tudor appointed an officer, called a *Putwary*, to reside in every village; and another, denominated a *Canongoe*, to protect the Ryot against the unjust exactions of the

Zemindars, and other collectors; or rather, more properly speaking, he continued these officers in the functions, which they had discharged under the ancient system of polity. He also caused rent-rolls, or *Hustaboods*, of every district, to be made out and lodged with the Canongoe. By these rent-rolls, the English were afterwards assisted, in ascertaining the amount of their territorial revenue, and enabled to put a stop to the unjust exactions, which the Zemindars, under various pretences, had imposed upon the Ryots.

Besides the lands, which are held by the common, or as it is called, *Pottah* tenure of hereditary possession, there are others, denominated *Coss*, and *Comar* lands; the former being such as, for want of farmers, are under the immediate superintendence of government; the latter, such as having no native tenants, are cultivated by contract. The *Coss* lands are said to be very extensive in some parts of India, and have been

brought into their present condition, by various accidental causes, but principally by the oppression and injustice of collectors. They have also been depopulated, by their inhabitants resorting to such of the neighbouring lands, as have at any time been erected into *Talooks*, which are districts held under a tenure, that confers many indulgencies upon their tenants, and exempts them from several heavy taxes, to which other lands are subject. In cultivating the *Comar* lands, the Zemindar advances to the farmer, the necessary capital; and when the crops are gathered in, receives an equal share of the produce with the cultivator; who is, besides, obliged to account for the advances which have been made to him, and over and above taxed with a heavy interest by his landlord.

The nature of the tenure by which land is held; the certainty or uncertainty of reaping its produce; and the share which will ultimately be allowed to the cultivator,

as a recompence for the capital and labour employed in its tillage, must necessarily have a great influence, upon the mode of culture, established in any country. Many districts of Hindustan are naturally so rich and fertile, as to produce, with very little trouble to the husbandman, two crops of grain, in the course of the year. Others owe their fertility, less to nature, than to art, and without considerable labour and expence, would be wholly unproductive. Exposed to the parching rays of a vertical sun, many parts of India would be rendered unfit for the purposes of tillage, if an artificial supply of water, by means of *Tanks*, or reservoirs, could not be procured. By means of these, however, the profusion of water, which falls in the rainy season, and which would otherwise be lost, is stored up, and applied, during the period of heat and drought, to refresh and fertilize the soil. To erect, and keep in repair these *tanks*, many of which were of prodigious extent,

was declared, by the ancient laws of the Hindus, to be one of the most imperious duties imposed upon the sovereign, and one of the most beneficial modes, in which his revenue could be expended. Accordingly, when these reservoirs were carefully prevented from falling into disrepair, the labour of the husbandman was sufficiently productive, to support an immense population. But when, in the progress of those wars, which afterwards distracted Hindustan, they came to be less attended to, and sometimes to be totally destroyed, the horrors of famine were frequently experienced. In a country, like India, no other means of fertilizing the soil could, perhaps, make up for the want of a very plentiful supply of water; but even the ordinary methods employed, in other parts of the world, for recruiting the soil, are unknown to the Hindu Ryot. The rearing of cattle, to supply the necessary article of manure, is a branch of husbandry, which we cannot expect to

see encouraged, so long as the superstitious notions, regarding the use of animal food, retain their dominion over the minds of the Hindus; and besides, the little of this article that is procured, is employed as fuel, instead of being applied to the purposes of agriculture. Hence, the only method employed to recruit the soil, is by laying it out in fallow; in which state it is often necessary to allow it to remain for five or six years, before it is again fit for cropping. Nor are these the only imperfections, with which the mode of culture, established among the Hindus, is chargeable. Their instruments of husbandry are rude, and inadequate, requiring much unnecessary and superfluous labour; which, in its turn, is ill-divided, and consequently disadvantageously employed.

To enumerate the objections, to which this system of agriculture is liable, would be a task of no ordinary labour. But, before we can suggest the proper remedies to

be applied, it is necessary to notice some of the more prominent. The first and most obvious is, that it labours under a great and fundamental error, (but one which we can scarcely expect to see removed), in having established too close a connection between the revenue and the agriculture of the state. This error is chargeable upon the ancient polity of the Hindus; and nothing but the respect and veneration, in which the husbandman was held, and the equity and justice with which the laws were administered, joined to the institution of Casts, could have prevented it from being attended with the same pernicious effects to the interests of cultivation, in former, as in modern times. The labour of the Ryot is regarded by this system, as the great fund, from which every expence must be defrayed, and to collect its produce, is the great end which the government has in view; while the farmer is continually surrounded by a multitude of officers, who can

only be considered as so many harpies, ready to prey upon his industry, after having first purveyed for the wants of the state. Under such a system, it is impossible, that the cultivator can ever acquire a capital, with which to carry on his business to a greater extent; or indeed even feel a desire to augment the produce of his labour, beyond what is barely sufficient for his subsistence; assured that whatever may remain after this, will be swallowed up, either as revenue by the government, or as *awaubs* or taxes, by the Zemindars. To this cause, as much, perhaps, as to climate, religion, or any other, is to be ascribed, the indolent and inactive temper of the Hindu. It is equitable, that the cultivator of the soil should support the government, to which he is indebted for protection; but when more than his proportional share of this expence is laid upon him, and when this is levied in an unjust and oppressive manner, it is in vain to look for exertion;

and without exertion, equally vain to expect, that agriculture can flourish.

To farm out the revenue of a country is allowed, on all hands, to be a ruinous and unthrifty system; to extend it to that which arises from a land-rent, cannot fail to be particularly adverse to the progress of cultivation. Had the East India Company, when, by the act of *perpetual settlement*, they erected the Zemindars into great private landed-proprietors, taken from them the right of collecting the land-rent of their Zemindaries, and granted them, in lieu of this, as much of the *Coss* lands, or of those which they held free of any rent to the state, as would have been esteemed an equivalent for the loss of their hereditary offices, they would have provided more effectually, than they have done, for the interests of agriculture. Had they followed up this system, with commuting the rent of the Ryots, which is paid in kind, into a tax

to be levied in money, and to increase, not with the improvement of the land, but according as the exigencies of the government might require: and, instead of assessing them so directly, as is done by the present system, had made them to contribute to the expence of the state, in a more round-about manner, those interests would have been still more powerfully promoted. To grant to the Ryot all that encouragement, of which the imperfection of human institutions will admit, it would have only remained, to extend to him the right of alienating his property, or letting it to another for a rent; and to have provided, for the administration of justice, such a system, as would effectually secure the rights and property of every individual.

It may, perhaps, be objected to this system, that, by leaving the Ryots entirely to their own discretion, the cultivation of the lands would be neglected. It does not ap-

pear, however, that if the cultivators were disposed to be remiss in this respect, the authority of government would afford any adequate remedy for the evil; which may, therefore, exist, as much under the present, as under any other. But, in fact, so far would this be from the case, under the system which we are now recommending, that, on the contrary, the cultivation of the soil would be more encouraged, than before. Such of the Ryots, as were unable to cultivate their farms, would find themselves under the necessity of disposing of them to others; and a spirit of property being by this means introduced, would soon have the effect of preventing the land, the most valuable and permanent of all property, from being neglected. In this case, it would not be necessary for government to interfere, under pretence of protecting the interests of agriculture. A regard to their own interest would lead the landed-proprietors, to look after this object; and to them

it might be safely left, to take every measure, requisite to increase the fertility of the soil. Their superstitious opinions might, indeed, stand in the way of fully accomplishing this object; but if there is any prospect of overcoming their religious prejudices, it is surely greater, under the free and liberal system, which we have proposed, than under that, which has so long prevailed among the Hindus.

Were it asked, with what degree of hope, we ought to look forward to the adoption of such a system, for the encouragement of agriculture in India, we should say with little —perhaps with none, so long as that country is subject to a distant power, much more to an association of merchants. The revenues of every country are levied, in order to enable their governments, to provide for their protection; those of British India, for the express purpose of enriching its sovereign, who resides in another quarter of the globe.

The system, therefore, which is calculated to provide most effectually for the latter object, will always be preferred to that, which aims only at the former. It is, too, a received maxim, in political economy, that the revenue of no government ought to be greater, than what is requisite for the protection of the state. But, however much that of India may ever exceed this amount, it is almost in vain to expect, that, under its present administration, the surplus will be employed, as it certainly ought to be, in augmenting its capital, and increasing the produce of its land and labour. But even under the present system, which the interest of the East India Company will always prevent from undergoing any material alteration, considerable encouragement may be afforded to the agriculture of India. The British government, regulating its measures according to the spirit of the ancient institutions of Hindustan, which held in the

highest estimation, the character and labours of the husbandman, may protect and encourage the Ryot, by checking the abuse of that power, which, by the present constitution, is lodged in the hands of the Zemindars and other renters. By exempting the Ryot from paying his rent in kind, and commuting a certain sum of money in lieu of it, a stop may be put to that wanton and inhuman tyranny, which exacts from him four-fifths of the produce, instead of the proportion appointed by law, and then prevents him from selling what remains, so long as his superior has any to dispose of. He may be encouraged to employ his industry, by the sure prospect of reaping its fruits; assisted by means of proper implements, in the art of increasing its produce; and stimulated to exertion, by the hope of honour and reward. He has the happiness to live in a country, which will richly reward his labours; and he pos-

sesses advantages, of which few other nations can boast. The neighbouring empire of China, less fertile than Hindustan, supports a still greater population, and affords a most striking proof, how extensive the resources of a country may become, when its inhabitants apply themselves with spirit and assiduity, to the improvement of agriculture; and when public honours, and public rewards await the husbandman, who distinguishes himself in his profession.

After providing food for the support of life, the next care of the human race would be to protect themselves against the inclemency of the seasons; and the cultivation of architecture would form the next step, in their progress towards civilization. In India, this art once attained a very high degree of perfection; but, like almost every other, is now sunk into a state of comparative degradation. Amidst the most magnificent monuments of its progress in former ages, the mean and miserable huts of the present

Hindus, are represented as forming a melancholy spectacle. They are coarsely constructed of the slightest materials; and, at the same time, that their damp and confined condition renders them injurious to health, they are scarce able to afford security against the vicissitudes of the weather *.

To ameliorate the condition of the Hindus, in this respect, the means are obvious. If the country can afford materials, proper for constructing comfortable and substantial houses, they ought to be employed for this purpose. If the art of applying these materials to architecture, is lost or forgotten, it cannot be very difficult, either to recover it, or substitute another in its place. If materials of a more solid and lasting nature cannot be procured, bricks may, in many places, be made of the soil; while the extensive forests, with which the country abounds, will supply the requisite timber, to erect dwellings sufficiently substantial

* Vid. Sketch of Hindu Manners, &c.

and good. To encourage the Hindus, to aspire after greater comfort and elegance in their houses, it has been proposed, that pecuniary rewards should be bestowed on those, who set the example in this species of improvement. But the difficulty of finding funds, for defraying the expence of such a measure, is a serious objection to any proposal of this nature; and besides, the cultivation of a more elegant mode of architecture, is not to be expected, from special legislative provisions, enacted for the purpose; but will naturally arise out of the progress of civilized manners, the increase of public wealth, and the improvement of public taste.

In those arts, that furnish the utensils, by which the common operations of life are performed, with ease and expedition, we cannot expect a people to be very expert, who are so deficient, as the Hindus, in agriculture and architecture. Their ample forests

furnish them with timber, of every quality; but the instruments, with which they work it, are rude and inadequate, and the utensils they form from it, ill-constructed, inelegant, and inconvenient. Their country supplies them with abundance of that clay, which is employed in the art of pottery; but they are unacquainted with the mode of working it to the greatest advantage, or producing from it, that variety of structure, and that neatness and elegance of fabrication, to which European artists have attained.

To obviate these disadvantages, and promote the progress of civilization among our Indian subjects, by instructing them in a better mode of cultivating the arts, the means are so manifest, as to render any discussion regarding them unnecessary. If the Hindus are once placed upon a level with the British subjects of the country, in point of civil and political privileges; if they are assigned their proper rank in the

society; and treated with that respect and lenity, which their influence in the state demands, and to which, as our fellow-men, they are entitled, they will soon strive with their European brethren, in the race of luxury, and assiduously cultivate every art, that contributes to promote its progress. In some of those, which are more properly denominated elegant, than useful, they are already our superiors. In works of ivory, and in cutting and polishing the precious stones, with which India abounds, they are undoubtedly the most expert of any people, in the world. In weaving and dyeing, they have also, says Dr Robertson, "acquired an expertness and delicacy of hand, which Europeans, with all their superior knowledge, and the aid of more complete instruments, have never been able to attain *." The muslins of India, though said by some, to be inferior to the

* Vide Robertson's Disquisition.

British, in fineness of thread, and uniformity of texture, far exceed them in durability of colour, and in the elegant glossiness of their fabric. Yet these muslins, it is well known, are manufactured upon rude temporary looms, raised under the shade of a tree, and so slightly constructed, as to be easily removed to a distance by the weaver—a mode of manufacture exposed to a number of disadvantages, but admitting of an easy remedy. It may, however, be doubted, whether any change, in this respect, would be attended with beneficial consequences; as the superior quality of Indian manufactures, may, perhaps, be owing, in some measure, to those very circumstances, which we account unfavourable. How far it would be consistent with the true policy of this country, to encourage a manufacture, which may eventually drive our own from the market, we shall leave to be decided by those politicians, who regard the prosperity of one part of the great com-

mercial world, as necessarily involving the ruin of another.

When men have attained the knowledge of those arts, which more immediately minister to their wants, the next object, to which they turn their attention, is the prosecution of such as improve and dignify their nature. In proportion as the Sciences are cultivated, the sphere of human happiness is enlarged; new sources of the most sublime gratification are opened; and the best means of improvement are placed within our power. The extent to which this cultivation is carried among any people, is the most correct criterion, by which we can estimate their progress in refinement; and when applied to the case before us, proves the natives of Hindustan, to have once held a very high rank in the scale of civilization. On this subject various opinions have, indeed, been entertained; and some writers are unwilling to allow, that the Hindus were, at any period of their his-

tory, acquainted with the sciences, to that extent, which an examination of their works has led others to maintain. But the appeal that has been made to the writings of the ancient Brahmins, places this matter beyond dispute; and bears an honourable testimony to the proficiency in the fine arts, which the inhabitants of India once acquired. Nor is it difficult, to reconcile the present ignorance of the Hindus, with those monuments of learning, which are still extant among them. When we reflect upon the nature and tendency of their political and religious institutions, and on the scenes of devastation and misery, which ambition, fanaticism, and avarice, have successively introduced among them, we cease, in a great measure, to wonder, that the picture of modern Hindustan should, in this respect, differ so widely from that of ancient India; or that the sciences should have become neglected, and are now almost forgotten.

In the fine arts of poetry, painting, sculp-

ture, and music, the Hindus have exhibited specimens of their proficiency, which would do honour to men in the most civilized state. If, in the first of these, their productions are inferior to the classic models of Greece and Rome, in correctness of taste, and simplicity of imagery, they glow with the enthusiasm of a warmer imagination, and abound with similies, more sublime and elevated. To judge of them, by the phlegmatic rules of western criticism, or to style them bombastic, when they rise beyond the limits, which it has assigned to the poet's fancy, is perhaps unfair. The same reasoning may be applied, to estimate their progress in music, painting, and sculpture; although, it must be acknowledged, that in these, their productions are of an inferior description, and often betray a conception, unnatural and fantastic, corresponding to the notions inculcated by the vulgar system of superstition. But the period has long ago elapsed, since the sages of India disputed the palm

of science, with the philosophers of Greece and Rome. The present race of Brahmins are, for the most part, unacquainted with the language, in which the researches and speculations of their ancestors are contained; and the few, to whom this knowledge is confined, are represented as men of little genius, and wholly unambitious of emulating the wisdom of their forefathers. They revere, but attempt not to cope with, the learning of former ages, and are merely distinguished from the herd of their ignorant brethren, by having the Vedas, and other sacred books, in their custody, and possessing a knowledge of the Sanscrit, barely sufficient to understand them.

To raise the present race of Hindus, nearer to a level with their ancestors, in those sciences, which are now almost forgotten, and still farther to refine their taste, the means are sufficiently obvious. If the works of the ancient Brahmins are translated from the Sanscrit, in which they are now

buried, into the vulgar languages of Hindustan; and if, in addition to these, the admired and classical productions of other countries, be transferred into the same tongues, we shall go far to accomplish this object. It is natural to suppose, that the Hindus will study the former with peculiar pleasure, and, in process of time, acquire a taste for relishing the latter. If the attention of their youth, in particular, be directed to these productions, and every incitement held forth, to encourage and reward the efforts of genius; if the government of British India is careful, to watch over the interests of learning, and by measures, similar to those, which they have employed in regard to their European servants, to excite a spirit of emulation among their native youth, the progress of knowledge, and consequent civilization cannot fail to be promoted. In this manner may the means of improvement in science, at present so scanty in India, be increased; and even

the interests of general literature promoted, by the historical and chronological legends of the Hindus supplying facts which are deficient in the records of other nations. What is excellent in the Hindu laws may be retained; and their selfish tendency corrected, by transferring into their code, the spirit of more liberal institutions. By this means the treasures of ancient and modern erudition may be opened, and the natives of Hindustan instructed in the sciences of medicine, geography, natural and experimental philosophy, and some others, of which they have always been astonishingly ignorant.

Ethics, or that branch of science, which teaches us to discriminate betwixt what is virtuous, and what is vicious; investigates the proper motives of action; and lays down rules for the regulation of life and manners; is, of all others, that with which the happiness of mankind is most intimately connected. It may, therefore, be proper to bestow

a little more attention upon this part of our subject, and to inquire more particularly into the state of morals amongst the inhabitants of India. Such an investigation will render us better able to point out, in what manner their condition may, in this interesting respect, be ameliorated. We are told by the Grecian writers, that the ancient Indians were the wisest of nations; and in moral wisdom, they certainly were peculiarly eminent. Their Nitre Sastra, or system of Ethics, is yet extant; and the fables of Vishnuservan, who is now ridiculously denominated Pelpay, are pronounced by Dr Robertson *, to be the most beautiful, if not the most ancient, collection of apologues in the world. From many of their writings, we discover, that they paid particular attention to the study of Ethics; and that the sublime speculations, which, in after ages, rendered the philoso-

* Vid. Robertson's Disquisition.

phers of Greece so illustrious, had engaged the researches of the Indian Brahmins, long before Plato or Pythagoras flourished. Like the Greeks, the Indians were divided into sects, whose opinions were often directly opposite. That, whose doctrines are founded on principles the most generous and dignified, which reason, unassisted by revelation, is capable of attaining, taught, that "man is formed for action, not indolence—that he is born, not for himself alone, but for his fellow-men—that the happiness of the society, to which he belongs, and the good of mankind, should be his highest objects—and that, satisfied with the purity of the motives, which induce him to act, he may enjoy that approbation of his own mind, which constitutes genuine felicity, regardless of the power of fortune, or the opinions of men." The golden precepts, of loving even our enemies, and of doing unto others as we would that they should do unto us, formed a part of the

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Hindu code of morality, and bespoke the liberal and benevolent spirit, which it sometimes breathed.

But, it may be asked, do these noble precepts produce a corresponding effect, upon the lives and manners of the Hindus? It is fair to judge of the tree by its fruit; and here, it must be acknowledged, that the system of Hindu morality is wofully deficient. It appears, indeed, to have succeeded, along with other causes, in rearing up a harmless and inoffensive people, distinguished for the mildness of their manners, and pious resignation to their destiny. But, destitute of a proper standard, to which to direct their views, and dreadfully disfigured by superstition, it has failed, alike in animating to the practice of the nobler virtues, and in preventing the commission of some of the most detestable vices. Its sanctions are poorly calculated to ensure obedience to its precepts; and the ease, with which the guilt of transgression may be wiped away,

by a few penances, or ablutions in some sacred river, only encourages to their more extensive violation. - Imperfect, too, as the ancient Hindu code of morals is, it is now scarcely known to the present race. To its nobler precepts they are entirely strangers, those only being retained by the Brahmins, which contribute to strengthen the influence of superstition.

To apply the proper remedies to these evils, is an object of the first importance. To improve the morals of our Indian subjects, and to bestow upon them a rule of life and manners, which shall be free from superstition, dignified in its motives, perfect in its prescriptions, and which, instead of being guided by, shall counteract the influence of their climate, and institutions are measures indispensably necessary to their civilization. The translation of the Nitre Sastra, stript of its frivolous, superstitious, and immoral appendages ;—the dispersion of treatises, containing a purer system of ethics;

and particularly, the careful instruction of youth in the principles of sound morality, are means, from which much benefit must be derived. But we can look to CHRISTIANITY alone, for a radical cure to these evils. To the influence of the noble and elevated doctrines and precepts of this benign religion, are the polished and refined nations of Europe indebted, for that degree of knowledge and civilization, which they enjoy. Before they were converted to its faith, they were in a state, ruder and more uncultivated than that of the Hindus; sunk in the grossest superstition, and accustomed to the most immoral and inhuman practices. They "*sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death,*" till the glorious light of the Gospel dispelled the clouds of ignorance and vice, in which they were enveloped. In vain had reason, for the space of four thousand years, endeavoured to guide the footsteps of the human race. The boasted nations of Greece and Rome, the most renowned of her children,

exhibited a melancholy proof of her imbecility; and, under her tuition, became as superstitious and immoral, as the *barbarians* around them. Even their celebrated philosophers, who affected implicitly to follow her dictates, were unable to rise to any thing truly elevated and noble; and their feeble attempts to stem the torrent of increasing depravity, uniformly terminated in their giving way to the stream. Christianity was at length announced. The noblest incentives to action were now held forth, and the highest rewards promised by this religion, to a life of virtue and holiness. The standard of morals, which had sunk so low, was raised to its proper level; and the most perfect pattern of holiness was exhibited for imitation, in the life of Jesus. Human victims ceased to bleed upon the altars, and the frivolous and immoral rites of superstition, fled before the simple and more noble ceremonies of Christianity.

SECT. IV.

Commerce—Advantages of—Little regarded by the Hindus—Internal trade—Means of promoting—Foreign trade—Monopolies regarded as influencing civilization—As they affect the country against which they are established—Little demand for British produce in India—Causes of this—How to be increased—Effects of monopolies, in regard to the countries with which the monopolist trades—Advantages of monopolies, and when admissible—Arguments in favour of the East India Company's monopoly—Objections to the present system—Remedies to be applied to it.

HINDUSTAN, abounding, as it does, with gold and silver, is almost destitute of the coarser metals; and although the ingenuity of its inhabitants furnishes, in superior excellence, many of the articles of luxury,

they are precluded from rising to perfection in some of the common arts of life, by the scarcity of proper materials, for carrying them on. They are therefore debarred from many of those comforts and conveniencies, of which they might otherwise partake; and consequently checked in their progress towards civilization. To remove these disadvantages, the plain and obvious measure of encouraging commerce suggests itself. In what manner this object may be most effectually promoted, and the productions of other countries, which minister to the happiness and comfort of civil and domestic life, but of which the Hindus are at present destitute, exchanged for their commodities, and these in their turn increased, is an inquiry not less difficult than important.

It may be laid down, as a fundamental principle, that without commerce, foreign or domestic, no nation can ever arrive at a high degree of refinement. Men appear to be scattered over the face of the earth, and

the gifts of Providence unequally distributed, for this, amongst other purposes, to render requisite an intercourse betwixt their remotest tribes. Their reciprocal wants give rise to a reciprocal communication, in order to supply them; the social principle is strengthened by this intercourse; and nations, inferior in refinement, are stimulated to greater improvement, by observing the power and influence, which others derive from a higher degree of civilization. Industry, which would lie dormant, after we had supplied our own narrow circle of wants, is roused to exertion, in order to furnish other countries with those articles which are only found in our own; and to receive in exchange the commodities of those countries, which cannot be procured at home. Men are, in this manner, linked together, and the most remote nations taught to regard each other, as branches of the same family, whose duty and interest it is, to supply their reciprocal wants, and set

at work their respective industries. The discoveries in science, and the improvements in the arts, which may be made by one nation, are by means of commerce speedily communicated to all, and the advantages resulting from them universally diffused. A way is also opened, by which the blessings of the Christian religion may be extended to those nations, who, in the language of Scripture, "*yet sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.*"

We have already remarked, that India early became interesting, as a scene of commerce; but that its trade has, in all ages, been engrossed by foreign nations, and little regarded by the Hindus themselves. It has, consequently, never attained that height, which the resources of so rich a country are able to support; and even internal commerce, which must exist in some degree amongst all nations, however little advanced in civilization, has never, perhaps, made that progress amongst the inha-

bitants of Hindustan, that might have been expected. The view, which, in the former part of this dissertation, we have given of the laws and character of the Hindus, will suggest a variety of reasons, sufficient to account for their being so far behind other nations, in this respect. Debarred by their political and religious institutions, from engaging in foreign commerce, they have been compelled to be comparatively passive, in the pursuit of gain by this channel; and one of the greatest inlets to national riches and prosperity, has been effectually shut against them. Had they, perhaps, inhabited a climate less enervating, or cultivated a soil which required much labour to render it productive, these laws might have been enacted to little purpose; and their religion itself might have vainly enjoined that abstinence and self-denial, which have contributed, in a great measure, to retard their progress in commerce. Their industry might have then realized a

capital, sufficient to carry on the operations of trade, to the full extent of their country's resources; and the same spirit of enterprize, to which commerce has given rise among the nations of Europe, might have actuated the inhabitants of India.

It is not our intention to enter into any detail, how the progress of internal trade may be promoted in British India. Many of the means by which this may be most effectually accomplished, are so obvious, as to render any discussion regarding them unnecessary; while local circumstances must dictate others, with which we cannot be supposed acquainted. Constructing canals and highways, in order to open a readier communication, betwixt the remote parts of the empire;—affording security, protection, and a sure and ready market to the merchant;—exempting him from many oppressive taxes, to which he is at present subjected;—rendering such as are necessary, as light as possible; and particular-

ly, putting a stop to that system, by which every petty chieftain in India, levies some tribute upon goods, merely passing through his territories to a distant market,—are measures of promoting the progress of internal commerce among the natives of Hindustan, which, in order to be adopted, should only require to be mentioned.

The consideration of the foreign trade of British India involves in it greater difficulties, and will require a closer investigation, as well as a more ample discussion of the important subjects with which it is connected. In entering upon it, two questions of the greatest moment, demand our attention; namely, how far the monopoly of the East India Company is favourable, or otherwise, to the prosperity of our eastern empire; and, supposing the present system of managing our Indian affairs to be abolished, what other can be substituted in its place, so as most effectually to provide for this object. The former of these questions can-

not be discussed, without adverting to the political, as well as to the commercial character of the Company; and the latter requires for its determination, a knowledge of legislative jurisprudence, to which we are very far indeed from laying claim. Did we, however, possess this knowledge, the limits that we have assigned to the present work, would confine us to the few following observations upon these important topics.

Monopolies, regarded in a commercial point of view, and in this remote manner, affecting the interest of civilization, are generally, and we apprehend justly, accounted detrimental. By destroying that rivalship in trade, which never fails to bring its commodities to market at their proper value, they raise the price of these commodities to the consumer, and consequently lessen the demand for them—the two great evils which it is the business of all political

economy to avoid *. By this means, the consumer is injured, in being denied those articles, which he might otherwise procure for a reasonable equivalent; and the artist, being unable to find an outlet for the surplus of his industry, is thrown idle, and consequently becomes dissipated and vicious. The manufacturer also, who labours for the monopolist, being left at the mercy of those, who regulate his industry by operations so injudiciously contrived, as the measures of monopolists generally are, has no stimulus to excite him to exertion, nor any encouragement to improve the quality of his manufacture. For, whatever additional price the monopolist may exact from his customers, for work executed in a superior style, the wages of labour are not, on that account, always raised to the workman. And in fact, the monopolist himself is found regardless of ameliorating the qua-

* Vid. Smith's Wealth of Nations.

lity of his goods, in the confident security, that he cannot be driven from the market, by others offering the same, of a superior quality, at an equal, or even a lower price. Although he may be actuated by the love of gain, as much as the individual trader, another great stimulus to industry, the fear of losing, is in a great measure removed. When, at the same time, this monopoly is vested in a numerous body of merchants, it is difficult to convince any single member, that much depends upon his individual exertions; and hence, that indolence and inactivity, so much complained of in large companies. If such companies are engaged in extensive commercial speculations, the waste and prodigality attending the management of their concerns, are necessarily enormous, and generally, in the end, prove totally ruinous.

Such are some of the pernicious effects which monopolies entail upon those, who, as they are more immediately within the

sphere of their influence, are the first to suffer from their operation. This influence, however, is not confined to so narrow a circle, as either the manufactures or consumers of those commodities, in which monopolists trade. They will often be found preventing a part of the capital of the country, against which they are granted, from going into a channel, in which it would, perhaps, naturally flow; and consequently, compelling it to seek others, that are less profitable. If, indeed, they had the effect of forcing it into the home trade, the channel of which might not be full at the time, they ought to be regarded as beneficial; inasmuch as it is more profitable to employ the capital of a country, in the home trade, than in one of foreign consumption. But if we suppose the home-trade, and foreign consumption trade, to have absorbed as much capital, as they can profitably employ, the surplus capital, which ought to flow in the channel, occupied by the monopoly,

must, if employed at all, be vested in the carrying trade; the most unprofitable, according to Dr Smith, in which it can be employed. At the present period, when, perhaps, by the measures of our enemy, a great part of the capital of this country, which was formerly employed in the foreign consumption trade, is unavoidably withdrawn from it; and which, for the same reasons, cannot even be employed in the carrying trade, it would, without doubt, be greatly to the advantage of this country, if it could find employment in supplying the Indian market with the manufactures of Britain, and Britain with the commodities of India. But of the possibility of employing it in this manner, even if the trade were completely open, there are many circumstances which may create a doubt.

It has long been the subject of complaint, among the manufacturers of Great Britain, that whilst other parts of the British dominions take off a great proportion of our

commodities, and set at work a great part of our industry, India, the most extensive and populous of them all, has, in these respects, been attended with the least effect. This has generally been ascribed, to the operation of the exclusive charter of the Company; but it appears obvious, upon the established principles of commerce, that this cause is inadequate to account for the effect. For if there really exists in India, an effective demand for our produce, it would so manifestly be the interest of the East India Company, to supply it, that it would soon be done to at least nearly the full extent. It is absurd to suppose, that any association of merchants would forego the advantage, if within their reach, of gaining the double profit, arising from the sale of British produce in India, and Indian produce in Britain; and it must be allowed, that such companies would be better able to supply, and regulate this demand, than private traders, for some time at least, could possibly be. It would be in their power to regulate

their investments out to India, according to the demand, then existing for our commodities, so as to run no risk, of overstocking the market with any one, and by depreciating its value, injuring the productive industry of this country; or of understocking it with another, and, by raising its price, hurting that of their Indian customers. It does not, therefore, appear a satisfactory solution of the phenomenon, to ascribe the want of sale for British manufactures in India, to the inertness and inactivity, incident to all great companies. The same love of gain, which first prompted merchants to associate together, must still continue to actuate them; although, undoubtedly, as members of an extensive Company, they must feel it less than as individual traders. But many other circumstances concur, in rousing the East India Company from any inactivity, into which they might naturally be disposed to fall. They are not allowed to slumber on a bed of roses. They are

surrounded by a host of enemies, whose attacks they cannot regard with indifference; and it is too much their interest, to conciliate public favour, to permit them overlooking measures, which would both secure this object, and increase their pecuniary profits. But the fact is, that there does not exist in India, what, in mercantile language, is called an effective demand for the produce of other countries—a circumstance, which some attribute to the climate, religion, and customs of its inhabitants; whilst others * will scarcely allow these to have any influence in regulating the demand of India for foreign commodities, even although the Hindus have, in all ages, been remarkable, for despising the goods of other countries, and regarding the precious metals, as the only adequate equivalent for their own. Gold and silver may, indeed, be regarded as the commodities of every country, and we are

* Vide Lauderdale on the Government of India.

somewhat disposed to consider so much of them, as is exported from Britain, as nearly the same with an equal value of its manufactures. At the same time, it would certainly, on many accounts, be more profitable, directly to exchange the produce of Britain, for that of India, than to do so, through the intervention of those markets, at which we barter our manufactures, for the precious metals. But if the assertion is founded on fact, that the gold and silver, annually sent to India from other countries, never again finds its way back to them, this alone might convince us, that there exists not there a demand for foreign commodities; the real cause of which may, perhaps, be found to take its rise from a source, very different from any of those that have been alleged, and one, which cannot be rooted out, without a total change of the policy, which has in India subsisted for ages. How, it may be asked, is it possible, that an effective demand for the produce

of other countries, can exist among a people, whose political constitution leaves them little or nothing wherewithal to purchase it? The Hindu has been accustomed to pay all the produce of his farm or industry, over and above what is necessary, for supplying a very narrow circle of wants, to the governing power, as revenue, or to some grinding collector, as the perquisites of office. The surplus produce of the land and labour of British India, after defraying the necessary expences of the state, and satisfying a variety of claims, exorbitant and ill-defined, has for many years been annually exported to other climates; and so long has nothing been left to its inhabitants, with which to gratify a taste for foreign luxuries, that they have now almost ceased to know what it is to feel it. We cannot, therefore, wonder, that the attempt, which was made by the British legislature, in 1793, of increasing the exportation of our manufactures to India, by compelling the Company

to provide annually, three thousand tons of shipping, for the express purpose of carrying out the goods of private adventurers, should not have been attended with the anticipated effect; or that only two thousand tons of the shipping should have been employed, in the space of nine years *. After such an experiment, it is sufficiently manifest, that the disadvantage, under which the mother country labours, in her trade to India, would not be removed, by merely depriving the Company of their exclusive charter. The only way of accomplishing this, would be to bestow property upon our Indian subjects, with which to barter for our manufactures, by measures such as we have recommended under the head of agriculture. But we have there seen, that there is little ground to hope, that such a bene-

* See Third Report of the Special Committee, on Private Trade—Parliamentary Reports, 1807.

ficial revolution in their circumstances will ever take place.

It may easily be imagined, that the pernicious effects of monopolies are not confined to the country, against which they are granted, but extend to that, with which they establish the relations of commerce, on so narrow a basis. Accordingly, every country in this situation is compelled, as has already been observed, to purchase foreign commodities at the price, which the monopolist may choose to affix to them; and having no other outlet, for the surplus of its own industry, to accept for it whatever he may be willing to allow. If it should happen, as in the case before us, that they who exclusively trade to, also rule this country, these evils must be still farther increased; as, upon this supposition, the means of excluding rivals from the market, are placed in the hands of those, who are too much interested in carrying them into execution, not to avail themselves of every opportunity of

doing so. Did they, indeed, consult their interests as sovereigns, the first object of their care would be, to increase the produce of the land and labour of their subjects: to enable them to purchase the commodities of other countries, with the smallest possible portion of their own, would be their second. But their interests, as merchants, who may, perhaps, soon cease to act as sovereigns, is apparently, at least, the reverse. Were the exclusive charter of the East India Company rendered perpetual, they could scarcely fail to perceive, that their interests, as sovereigns, and merchants, are identically the same; but so long as it is limited to a short period, and in so much danger of being annulled, they will naturally prefer the rapid profits of the latter, to the slower but more permanent advantages of the former. By acting upon this system, and confining the produce of their subjects' industry, to as much as is barely sufficient to supply the market, to which they are to convey it, they

will be enabled to keep up its price in this market; and by exchanging the foreign commodities, in which they trade, for as great a quantity as possible of this produce, their profits will be still farther increased. So inconsistent, it appears, are the measures of such monopolists, that the one has a necessary tendency to defeat the other.

Monopolies are not always, however, without their use; and the disadvantages, which we have enumerated, can only be fairly objected against them, when carried beyond a certain extent. That there are cases, in which they are not only necessary, but highly expedient, has been acknowledged by the warmest advocates of commercial freedom. Even Dr Smith himself admits, that "instances are conceivable, in which a temporary monopoly of this kind may be vindicated, upon the same principles, upon which a like monopoly of a new machine, is granted to its inventor, and that of a new

book to its author *." An encouragement of this nature may be absolutely necessary, to prevail on any merchant, to embark his capital in a speculation, which it is expected, will be ultimately advantageous to the country, but, which, it is acknowledged, is in the first instance attended with considerable risk. The premium, that naturally suggests itself, for incurring the danger of opening a new, and uncertain market to the public, is the exclusive possession of this market, for such a period of time, as is sufficient to afford an equivalent, for the risk attending the first speculations. But it is obvious, from what has already been advanced, that if the monopoly is continued, beyond the time which is deemed adequate for this purpose, it cannot be defended upon the general principles of commercial economy; and the necessity of a measure, so directly opposite to these principles, must be

* Book v. ch. i. Wealth of Nations.

founded on circumstances, peculiar to the branch of commerce, in which the privilege of trading is exclusively granted to any merchant, or company. The monopoly of the East India Company has long ago ceased to rest its justification, upon the general principle which we have now laid down. The right, by which they hold their present charter of exclusive privileges, is founded on purchase; and cannot be called in question. But when the period arrives, at which this right will legally expire, what are the arguments, upon which the expediency of renewing their exclusive charter will be founded? and what the objections which will then be urged, by the enemies of the present system? There can be no great harm in anticipating this period as arrived; and as the subject has already received such ample discussion, both in and out of Parliament, that we can expect little, if any thing new, to be then brought forward on either side of the question, we may

be able to form some opinion on the merits of a system, which, however numerous its enemies, is far from being destitute of friends.

The first stand made by the supporters of the present system, will be on the grounds, that the trade to India is of so peculiar a nature, that it cannot be carried on, without the encouragement of exclusive privileges; grounds, from which, indeed, they have repeatedly been driven, but may not, therefore, be found to have abandoned. It will be alleged, that a branch of commerce, in which the capital required to carry it on is so large—the returns from it so slow—and the difficulty of selling or procuring cargoes, without resident agents in the country, so great; can never be carried on with advantage, by private adventurers. This argument, however, although it should be allowed to show the necessity, of the Indian commerce being carried on by companies, by no means proves, that these companies

should be vested with exclusive privileges. But, in fact, it is equally inconclusive in both respects, and contradicted by the experience of the Portuguese and Americans; the former of whom traded to India, for nearly two centuries, without exclusive companies; while the latter must admit, that, though altogether carried on by private merchants, their Indian commerce is the most lucrative, which they possess. Could we keep the case of the Portuguese altogether out of sight, we should willingly concede to the advocates of monopoly, that, did not companies with exclusive privileges exist, the success of private adventurers might be less extensive, and the argument drawn from it, in support of an open trade, less strong and conclusive. If these companies had not previously acted as pioneers, to remove the obstacles, which impeded the commerce to India, private traders, it may be urged, would have experienced difficulties, which their slender resources could not

have easily overcome. But when, by this means, the ground was cleared and explored, they found it no very arduous matter, to come in for a share of the plunder; and although, when they chanced to push their skirmishes into the Indian market a little too far, they generally contrived, by a judicious retreat, to interpose, betwixt them and danger, the broad shield of protection afforded by the existence of these companies, they were ready enough to cry out against their exclusive privileges, as restrictions highly detrimental to Indian commerce.

But the argument, founded on the inability of private traders, to carry on the commerce of India, is not only contrary to experience, but at variance with the established principles of commercial economy. For if cargoes of Indian commodities cannot be procured, or European goods disposed of in India, without agents resident in that country, some of the merchants at home, employed in this trade, would find it to be their interest

to employ their capital for this very purpose, and by following it to India, as they would naturally do, render it unnecessary to incur the expence of employing others to transact their business. The danger of colonization, to be apprehended from such freedom of intercourse with India, will afterwards come under our consideration. We shall only observe, in this place, that if this danger is to be guarded against (and we are clearly of opinion, that it ought), it is evident, that the Indian trade can never be laid open to private adventurers, in the most extensive meaning of the word. But in the same manner as the navigation act of England is a measure, whose political wisdom overbalances its commercial absurdity; so, we apprehend, ought that system to be regarded, which prevents the capital of England, from aiding the industry of India; but more than compensates this disadvantage, by the security, which it affords

the inhabitants of the latter against the aggressions so natural to colonies.

Another argument in support of the East India Company's monopoly, and one to which its advocates are too strongly attached, to be easily persuaded to give it up, is founded upon the Company giving more encouragement to the industry of Great Britain, than private traders could possibly afford. It is, at first sight, difficult to imagine, how a set of merchants, exclusively possessed of any branch of commerce, can render it more beneficial to the productive industry of the country, against which their monopoly is granted, than could be done, if it was alike open to all who chose to embark in it. But the difficulty vanishes, when we are informed, that this is accomplished, by the Company sending out to India, at a loss which no private trader could sustain, a greater quantity of British manufactures than the Indian market can take off their hands; and rather than suffer the workmen at

home to be idle, sending out their work, to pamper the rats and mice, that have fortunately taken up their quarters in the warehouses of Bombay and Calcutta. We are far from disposed to call in question the assertion, that by exporting every year the article of woollens alone, to the amount of upwards of a million Sterling, the East India Company give employment to forty thousand industrious persons in England, at an annual loss to themselves, of nearly thirty thousand pounds. It appears, however, that this liberality, by which the Company would recommend itself to the public favour, is far from being beneficial to the public interest; as by every operation of this kind, so much as the Company lose, is lost for ever to the circulating capital of this country. Could we ascertain to what this capital amounts, the common rules of arithmetic would enable us to foretel the day, upon which its remains would be consigned to an Indian grave. It is true, that

if the Company merely gained nothing by this well-meant exportation of British produce, the evil would be less, and not, perhaps, to be compared with the opposite advantage, of employing a great portion of British industry. But it is obvious, that a trade which annually devours a part of the capital, by which it is carried on, must, in the end, be ruinous. In the hands of private merchants, no such evils could exist, for any length of time. For if the trade did not return to them, within a reasonable period, their capital, with the ordinary profits of stocks, it would soon be relinquished; and a more profitable substituted in its place. India would, indeed, cease to be a market for British produce; and under such disadvantages, the sooner it did so, the better for this country. There must first be an effective demand for our commodities in India, before they can be sent there, with any real advantage to our manufacturers. To persist in sending them, when no such de-

mand exists, is certainly far from being the wisest and most effectual method of increasing their produce; nor is it to be expected, that even the great East India Company will long persevere in such a system. Could it lay claim to the merit of promoting the happiness of their Indian subjects, much might be said in alleviation of its commercial folly; but it does not at least appear to consult their prosperity, by stimulating their industry.

It has hitherto been, and will no doubt again be urged, as an argument for continuing the present system, that however beneficial the laying open the trade to India, and thereby raising the price of its commodities in its own market, and lowering them in this, may be to both countries, upon the supposition that these commodities are consumed in Britain; it must be ruinous to England, which exports for foreign consumption the far greater quantity of

what is imported, by enabling other nations to undersell us in the continental market. This argument appears, at first sight, to carry with it considerable weight, and has always been regarded, as one of the strongest commercial reasons, adduced in support of the Company's monopoly. But when properly examined, it will be found to overlook the first principle of commercial science, that all trade is carried on for the mutual benefit of the trading and consuming world; and to forget, that if by the expansion of any one, the consumers are benefited by the diminution which necessarily takes place in its profits, the traders at large receive an equivalent, perhaps a greater advantage, in the investment of a larger capital in this particular concern. By laying open the trade, the country will gain this double advantage, in regard to that part of its commodities which is consumed at home. In respect to that which is sent

abroad, it will be benefited as much as ever, by the gains of the traders. The East India Directors may not, however, consider this as a satisfactory refutation of what appears to be with them a favourite argument; as it is not so easy to convince a set of monopolists, as an individual trader, that it is more for their interest, to make small profits upon a large capital, than large profits upon a small one. And even, if driven from this last commercial resource, they will betake themselves to the political advantages derived from the present system; a strong-hold, of which it may not perhaps be so easy to dispossess them.

But, before considering the political arguments, urged in support of the present mode of administering the affairs of British India, it may be proper, to advert a little to the state of the Company's trade, as it more immediately concerns themselves; and to ascertain, if possible, whether the profits which it affords, are such as, in any degree,

to compensate the disadvantages, to which, in a commercial point of view, we have seen it to be liable. In entering upon this investigation, we are met by a debt, which has accumulated to the enormous amount of nearly forty millions; with any part of which, if it could be shewn that the trade of India is chargeable, there would be little difficulty in forming an opinion upon this subject. This, however, is as strenuously denied, on the one side, as it is maintained upon the other; and to arrive at a knowledge of the truth, we must regard the assertions of neither party, but attend to the evidence of facts.

Upon the sound principles of commercial economy, a trade can only be said to be thriving, when the value of its exports is replaced by that of its imports, with the ordinary profits of stock. In applying this rule to that of the East India Company, it must be recollected, that a part of their im-

ports, consisting in the surplus revenue of their territories, after deducting the expences attending their management, is not immediately procured in exchange, for what is exported; and, in balancing their profit or loss, ought not, perhaps, in fairness to be taken into the account. Allowing it, however, to replace expences properly commercial, and examining the Company's trade upon the principles, which we have laid down, we shall find it, for a considerable period after its establishment, to have been greatly in their favour. But when Lord Wellesley, upon taking charge of the government of India, in 1798, reviewed the state of its finances, he found that the investments sent home, had, for a considerable period, exceeded the funds destined for their provision. This deficiency it had therefore become necessary to borrow, in order that the investments might not be diminished; and as notwithstanding his Lordship's endeavours, to prevail upon the Court

of Directors, to increase their exports from Europe, and thereby prevent the necessity of contracting loans at Indian interest; as well as his assertion, that the demand in India for British manufactures was increasing, and the average profit upon their sale as high as 25 per cent. at Calcutta, and 35 at Bombay; the Company's exports became still less considerable than before, while the investment home continued as great as ever; this deficiency, and consequently the debt, by which it was supplied, went on increasing. The real truth then appeared to be, that as soon as the territorial revenue of the Company came to be required, for upholding their increased civil and military establishments, and their commerce to be, by this means, deprived of the assistance of a powerful ally, by whom it had hitherto been supported, it was found unable to do that of itself, which without this assistance it ought to have accomplished, before it could be called profitable, or persisted

in with advantage. Had the Company, in this situation of their affairs, acted as any private trader, in similar circumstances would have done, and as prudence pointed out, they would have diminished the amount of their investments, in proportion as the funds destined for their provision decreased. To borrow money at an interest of eight, ten, and even twelve per cent. to be vested in commodities, which, when brought to market, were sure to encounter goods of the same kind and quality, purchased without so expensive a resource, and a great part of which this market was besides unable to take off, was evidently a system replete with ruin. We are tempted, indeed, to believe, that the Court of Directors were not aware, that any part of the debt, which was accumulating in India was chargeable upon their commerce. It is true, that even under this conviction, they might forget to give credit, in their balance-sheet, for an item of so appalling a

description, or resolutely refuse it admittance, when pointed out to them; but we cannot suppose that they would have persisted, in pressing upon their servants abroad, the necessity of procuring as great an investment as possible, without warning them against seeking it by so ruinous a system. Neither can we give them credit for urging this measure, from a conviction of its being closely connected with the prosperity of their native subjects; or from perceiving, that every departure from it must have been attended with a corresponding decrease in their industry and happiness. But whatever may have been their reasons for persevering in a system, which, although well calculated to increase the produce of the land and labour, and consequently to promote the improvement of India, was heaping embarrassments upon their own finances, and clearly demonstrating their trade to be a losing concern; they failed not to trace their disasters to the

fruitful sources of extensive warfare, and increased expenditure in their civil and military establishments abroad. An impartial observer, however, will discover, that the increased revenue of the Company's territories has not fallen so very far short, of defraying the expence of their acquisition and management, as the enormous debt contracted would point out; and that this debt must, in a great measure, be ascribed to the ruinous system, of borrowing money at Indian interest, to carry on a trade, which has been pushed far beyond any solid capital, on which it is supported—to the waste and extravagance with which the affairs of the Company have been conducted—to the expensive manner in which their trade is carried on, in ships better adapted for the purposes of war, than commerce; and, perhaps, above all, to the formidable rivalship of the Americans, and other neutrals, who, by an impolitic, and in regard to the former, ill-de-

served liberality, are enabled to undersell them in every foreign market.

In marking the progress of the European trade to India, from the earliest period of its history to the present day, it cannot escape observation, that those nations, who confined their connection with that country, within the limits of a mere commercial intercourse, derived from it greater riches and power, than those who, by seizing upon its government, became possessed of the very sources of its wealth. The necessity which compelled the states of the ancient world, to be satisfied with sharing the riches of India, through the channel of commerce alone, may, perhaps, be regarded as one of the principal causes, to which the advantages they derived from this source, are to be ascribed. It will not, at least, be denied, that the opportunities which aided the ambition of modern nations, to establish a closer connection with that country, have already contributed to accelerate the ruin of

some, and may eventually prove the destruction of all, by whom it has been formed. That the commercial relation established between Great Britain and India, has grown into a connection of that peculiar nature, as to threaten, with the dissolution of the system, under whose auspices it has been formed, the overthrow of the liberties of the former country, is the great political argument, urged against any change, in the present mode of administering the affairs of British India. To understand upon what grounds it rests, we must bear in mind the extent of our Indian establishments, and the vast patronage which they afford, by the disposal of so many lucrative employments, and the management of so extensive a pecuniary concern. The danger of this patronage falling into the hands of the crown, or the minister of the day, and thereby enabling them to overturn the liberties of the people; and the impossibility of lodging it anywhere so safely, as in its present hands, appear to

the Directors of the East India Company, to be reasons, sufficient of themselves, to forbid any change in the existing mode of administration. It is obvious, however, that the happiness of their Asiatic subjects, is here entirely overlooked; although the previous question, which ought in justice to be discussed, is, how far this is affected by the present system. It may be safely assumed, that a system which we have seen to be so commercially bad, cannot, in regard to them, at least, be politically good. It may, indeed, afford some advantages towards their civilization. It may allow an unity and concentration of design, in carrying any means adapted for this purpose into execution; and by proper measures, calculated as far as possible to counteract its pernicious tendency, it may contribute to promote the progress of refinement. But as these advantages may be found in other systems, resting on a very different basis; and as the evil of throwing a dangerous ac-

cession of power into the hands of the crown, or the minister, does not necessarily result from a change of the existing polity, but may be prevented, although another is substituted in its place, the argument drawn from hence, in support of the present mode of administering the affairs of India, is evidently entitled to little attention.

But the present system not only labours under a paucity even of political arguments to support it, but is also liable to not a few political objections. Some, indeed, which we have seen urged by its opponents, are of that vague and general description, as, if taken without limitation, to lie with equal force against the wisest institutions of policy. Thus, in all governments in which a system of checks and balances is established, a great deal of time must be consumed, betwixt the conception and execution of their measures. As each, in whatever department of the legislature it may originate, must pass through all its branches, in order

to receive their approbation, it is easy to suppose cases, in which the opportunity of employing them to advantage may be lost, before they are ready to be carried into execution. If the equivalent, however, which is gained by such a system, for the loss of time necessarily resulting from it, is such as fully to compensate this loss, it is unfair to charge the system itself with imperfection, or, at least, to hold it out as less perfect than others. An objection, precisely of this nature, has been raised against the present mode of administering the affairs of British India, where measures, originating in the Court of Directors, must receive the approbation of the Board of Controul—must by it be remitted to the Court of Directors, and by them sent out to the acting government abroad, without adverting to the security, which this legislative machinery affords against injustice and oppression; and without considering, that, under whatever form of government our

Indian empire may be placed, its interests can only be properly consulted, by a system founded on similar principles.

But although the loss of time, necessarily incurred by every system of polity, founded on the same principles as that of British India, cannot be fairly imputed to any as a fault, until such time as human governments, ceasing to be a mere compromise of advantages, arrive at absolute perfection; the want of unity of object, in the several parts of which their legislature is composed, must be regarded in another light; and if well founded, in the case before us, must be considered as forming a strong objection against the present mode of our Indian government. When the British Parliament passed into a law the act of 1784, already referred to, it must have foreseen, that by establishing a Board of Controul, and Court of Directors, betwixt the administration of Indian affairs by the government abroad, and the supreme share, which it reserved to itself,

it might happen, that these affairs would not be conducted with that regard to unity of object, which it must have been its intention to promote. But, limiting, as it did, the authority of the Indian Commissioners to a power merely superintending, it could not be expected to apprehend so many evils as have actually sprung from this source. The history of the Company since 1784, has, however, abundantly proved, that this unity of object, so necessary to good government, has been far from being attained. For during this period, we find Parliament declaring it to be contrary to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this country, to extend our dominions in India, and the Court of Directors applauding its wisdom, and censuring their servants when they departed from its injunctions; while, on the other hand, the Board of Controul, and the Government abroad, agree in preferring a contrary line of policy; and having the power in their hands, accordingly

adopt it. The details of administration are, in the mean time, conducted in such a manner, as to render it impossible to say, what share of these schemes of policy is to be ascribed to the Court of Directors, and what to the Board of Controul. But in the midst of this uncertainty and doubt, we cannot help sometimes pitying the situation of the former of these branches of our Indian legislature, whose measures arrive in India, and are executed by the government abroad, before they are even known to exist, by this part of the legislative authority at home; and whose dispatches to their servants are not only withheld by the Board of Controul, but others, recommending a very different line of conduct, substituted in their place; and by some means or other, sanctioned by the approbation of their own Secret Committee, or cabinet council. Whether Parliament, upon consideration of these circumstances, may adopt another system of Indian administration, when the present

expires, in 1814, remains to be seen. The existing form of government may, perhaps, be found to answer other purposes, which it will deem of greater importance, more fully than any new system that could be proposed; and the risk of losing known and acknowledged advantages, in the pursuit of those that are speculative and uncertain, may, perhaps, go far to prevent the experiment of a change from being hazarded. But, until something like unity of object, in conducting the affairs of British India, be consulted, we cannot expect to see the security and welfare of our native subjects, and the interests of the mother country, most effectually promoted.

The source of all the evils, with which the present complicated system of Indian administration is attended, will, perhaps, be found in its constitution having placed in the same hands, the management of the political and commercial interests of the empire. By one of those anomalies,

with which the history of human governments abounds, there are here two objects, distinct and separate, blended together in such a manner, as necessarily to preclude the distinction and separation, which ought to subsist between them; and only to render it evident, that, did all the departments of government co-operate in promoting one of these objects, it could scarcely fail to be at the ruin of the other. The mischief in the case before us, is, that whilst the Board of Controul, and the administration abroad, are intent upon political objects, the Court of Directors, as we have seen, are deprecating the system which they pursue, and complaining that they have forgotten what the interest of their native subjects requires them to forget, as soon as possible, that the Company are merchants, as well as sovereigns. And hence, as the authority of all these branches of the Indian legislature has been extended, whether legally or not, both to the political and commercial concerns of

British India, neither have been properly consulted. The Court of Directors, acting in the spirit of merchants, look for great profits from their trade; and accordingly are perpetually urging upon their servants in India to watch over the investments; while the Board of Controul are sanctioning the government abroad, in extending their dominions, enlarging their civil and military establishments, and adopting measures, calculated to promote the happiness of their native subjects, but which swallow up the resources whence the investment is to be derived. Under this system it seems impossible, that the interests of either policy or commerce can be so consulted, as at the same time to promote the prosperity of our Indian empire, and to afford great profits to the holders of India stock. Nor is it obvious, that the evils attending it would be removed, upon the supposition, that all the branches of the Indian government, as presently constituted, agreed in

promoting one, and the same object. On the contrary, it appears reasonable to suppose that they would not. For allowing the Court of Directors to concur with the Board of Controul, and the Government abroad, in extending the British power and influence in India, by the acquisition of new territories, or the adoption of larger civil and military establishments; it is plain, that in this case, the interests of the Company's commerce must suffer, or rather, that it would soon be altogether annihilated. On the other hand, supposing the Board of Controul and acting government to regard commercial objects alone, it is no less clear, that they would cease to discharge the duties which every government owes to its subjects, with a proper regard to justice, and would thereby perpetuate the reign of extortion, and oppressive tyranny in India. In the former case, the Company would trade with all the profusion and extravagance of princes, and con-

sequently soon bring ruin upon their own heads. In the latter, they would govern with the narrow and avaricious spirit of merchants, and necessarily oppress and impoverish their subjects. When the clerks become governors of provinces, magistrates, and collectors of revenue, the business of the counting-house must be indifferently looked after :—when the governors of provinces, magistrates, and collectors of revenue become clerks, the interests of the empire will be worse than neglected.

It will follow, then, as a necessary conclusion from the premises which we have laid down, that if we could consult the interests of either British India, or the mother country, the commercial monopoly of the East India Company ought not to be prolonged beyond the period to which it is limited by law; and that, in whatever hands the government of the former may be placed, its political and commercial concerns should not be so intimately blended together, as

under the existing mode of administration. That it can never be for the advantage of any people, to be ruled by a company of merchants, appears *à priori* to be a proposition, which admits not of controversy; while the history of India affords so many proofs of its being well established, that we need search the records of no other nation, to be convinced of its truth. If we reflect upon those scenes of injustice and oppression, which, at one period, rendered the name of an Englishman odious in the east, and advert to the singular and important fact, which ought never to be overlooked, that it was not until our political interests had gained an avowed ascendancy over our commercial, that these scenes were exchanged for others, more becoming our national character and honour, we can be at no loss to ascertain the merits, or decide upon the fate of the present system.

It seems as unnecessary to seek, as perhaps impossible to find, any alternative, be-

twixt depriving the Company of their commercial monopoly, and laying the trade open to all, who may choose to embark in it. The danger of colonization is the only evil which can rationally be apprehended from this source; and, to obviate the tendency to this, which an open trade would necessarily create, seems the only political object, for which a little commercial freedom ought, in good policy, to be sacrificed. The introduction of British settlers into India has, indeed, been often recommended, as a mean of strengthening our dominions, and securing the blessings of peace and civilization to their inhabitants; and, could we counteract the natural tendency, which all colonies have, to become independent of their mother country, and to oppress the people among whom they are established, might be entitled to some consideration. But their history, in all ages of the world, will teach us how vain it is to look for success in such an undertaking;

and if we would at once insure prosperity to our eastern possessions, and their dependence upon our power, must ever prevent such a measure from being adopted. It is not, perhaps, hazarding too bold an assertion, to maintain, that if ever colonies have tended to civilize a barbarous country, it has been, either by extirpating its barbarism, and its inhabitants together; or by driving the latter to the recesses of their mountains, and uncultivated wilds, to suffer, for ages, all the miseries and hardships of a blockaded people, and to be at length, fairly starved into a surrender. The circumstances of British India will not, however, admit of the latter of those modes, by which colonization promotes the moral and political improvement of a country; and consequently, if we look for success from its employment, we must seek it in a skilful and vigorous use of the former. The orator may be excused for representing that part of the present

Indian polity, which prevents colonization, as exhibiting to the eyes of the Hindus, " nothing but an endless flight of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing, for a food that is continually wasting *;" but, the politician must soberly weigh the merits of opposite systems; and in adopting that which appears best calculated to promote the prosperity of the people, for whom he legislates, can only be expected to obviate, by every means within his power, the disadvantages to which the most perfect are liable. The remedy to be applied to those evils, which the eloquence of Burke has painted in such glowing colours, is an impartial and strict administration of justice, by the acting government of India. If this object is properly provided for, (and the measures already taken augur well that this will be the case,) the Hindus will have no cause to regret, that the per-

* Burke.

sons in whose hands the government of their country is placed, and to whom its posts of trust and importance are confided, regard them as a people, among whom they are merely passengers.

It appears somewhat more than probable, that these important subjects will very soon receive the serious attention of the British legislature; as it is generally understood, that the propriety of continuing the charter of the East India Company beyond the year 1814, will speedily be discussed in parliament. That this charter will be prolonged with little material alteration, is an event which we are strongly tempted to anticipate; or, if any considerable change take place, it may be expected to be rather in what respects its commercial, than in what regards its political provisions. It may not, indeed, be found an easy task to separate these from each other; but, as the monopoly of the Company is now, strictly speaking, confined to

the single article of *piece-goods*, it is but a short step to the trade being laid entirely open. Before, however, they can be deprived of their share in the Government of India, other hands must be found, in which it can be placed with safety, to the liberties of this country; and, what will be found a no less arduous undertaking, measures must be adopted for discharging the immense debt, with which the Company are at present burdened, and which must necessarily accompany the territorial revenue. The views of different political parties will lead them to suggest different modes of accomplishing both these objects; whilst the latter may perhaps present obstacles to any change, which, after all their contentions, will compel the victors to rest satisfied with a mere triumph upon the speculative points.

If the patronage of British India is sufficient, as has been maintained, to enable any minister of England to overthrow, with ease,

the liberties of the people, it would follow, that it ought not to be vested in the Crown. But, if to bestow it upon the legislature at large, or upon any parliamentary commission, chosen from time to time, is much the same as to make a compliment of it to the minister of the day; and, if to vest it in any body, independent of either the crown or parliament, be equivalent to raising up the so much deprecated *imperium in imperio*; this will turn out no despicable argument for allowing it to remain in its present hands, where it is unattended with either of these effects. But, upon what grounds the power of the East India Company can be continued, after depriving them of their commercial monopoly, it is not so easy to conceive. If, after this event, they are to employ their capital in trading to India, as a private and unprivileged association of merchants; their share in its political administration may enable them to lay its commerce under as great restrictions as at present, and is con-

trary to all the principles of good government, which have been laid down. If, on the other hand, they cease to employ their capital in this manner, and, as was done in the case of the South Sea Company, convert it into an annuity stock, with the interest of which the revenues of India must necessarily be burdened, what right can they have to interfere in the government of our Indian empire? or what necessity can there exist, for introducing, what may then indeed be properly denominated *a fourth estate*, into the constitution of this country? Or, even supposing such an estate to be erected, under what influence is it likely to fall?

We start, without attempting to solve, these important questions; and hasten to conclude our observations, upon this branch of our subject, with remarking, that of all the systems which may contend for the honour of superseding the present, that of vesting the government of India in the

Crown and Parliament, and laying open its trade, appears to be, in every point of view, the least exceptionable, and the best calculated to promote the prosperity of our Asiatic empire, and the interests of the mother country. If the debts which have been contracted on account of India, cannot be discharged by its revenues, without bringing an additional incumbrance upon the finances of Great Britain, there will remain but one step to be taken, that of giving up all political connection with India;—a measure, than which none can be conceived more destructive to the peace and prosperity of Hindustan, nor more fatal to our own intercourse with that quarter of the globe; as the day which terminates our political, will infallibly close our commercial connection with India.

SECT. V.

Diffusion of Christianity—Progress hitherto made by Christianity in India—Obstacles to its reception—Means of promoting its progress amongst the Hindus.—1. Purity of morals, on the part of professing Christians—2. Observance of religious ordinances—3. Translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar languages of Hindustan—Missionaries considered as a mean of diffusing Christianity in India—Alleged facilities for their exertions discussed—Danger to be apprehended from their employment—Conclusion.

When the first promulgators of the Christian religion confined their labours to the Roman world, their success in spreading their faith was astonishingly rapid. But

when they approached the confines of India with the "glad tidings of salvation," they met not with the same cordial reception. Happy in the practice of their popular superstition; and torn by no civil or religious dissensions, the natives of Hindustan heard with cold indifference the doctrine of a Redeemer preached amongst them; and if we give credit to the tradition, that they were visited by one of our Saviour's Apostles, yielded not even to the evidence of miracles. In the western world, the greater part of the Roman empire became Christian, in the space of three centuries. More than seventeen have now elapsed, since the Gospel was first preached to the inhabitants of India; yet the same superstition prevails in that country, which was established in the days of the apostles; and there are perhaps fewer Christians amongst the Hindus at this day, than during the labours of the first missionaries, who undertook the pious work of their conversion.

Many of the obstacles, which first obstructed the introduction of the Gospel into India, still exist, to retard its progress in that country. In the western world, philosophy paved the way for Christianity, by banishing religious enthusiasm from the minds of men. In the east, science is still the slave of superstition, and has never succeeded in extricating the human race from her trammels. In Europe, the victories of a barbarous nation were the means, in the hands of Providence, of establishing the empire of the Gospel. In India, the proudest triumphs of the most enlightened and civilized, have never been able to erect the banner of true religion upon the ruins of idolatry and superstition. In preaching to the barbarous hordes of Scythians, who overran the Roman empire, the Christian missionary had to address a people, in whose wandering mode of life, no spot was more consecrated than another—no order of men more sanctified than their brethren.

The canopy of the heavens, which covered their heads, formed the temple in which they worshipped their deities; and the father of the family officiated, in the sacred functions of the priest. When they settled in the fertile provinces of Italy, and Gaul, they for the first time imagined it necessary to fix the habitations of their gods, and to lodge them with magnificence and splendor. The simplicity of the Christian faith was congenial to their natural disposition and manners; and the pleasing doctrines which it held forth, of the immortality of the soul, and a future life, captivated their imaginations, and secured their belief. The natives of India presented a scene widely different indeed. In preaching to them, the Christian missionary had to combat the prejudices of a people, who had been for ages accustomed to contemplate with sacred awe, the habitations and worship of their gods, and to venerate and obey their priests. The simplicity of his faith was here an ar-

gument against its divine authority; and his challenge to every other to contend with it, for the prize of superiority, was regarded as impious and profane, by a people, whose religion accounted it equally criminal to receive, or become a proselyte. The pleasing and attractive doctrines which he taught, and which paved the way for the conversion of the western world, failed in making proselytes of a people, amongst whom they had been inculcated many ages before the promulgation of Christianity.

Could the want of success in proselytizing India, be attributed to a want of exertion, since the days of the first Christians, by whom it was visited, it might still be expected, that perseverance in the employment of the ordinary means, would attain the wished-for object. But it must be acknowledged, that the religion of Brahma owes not its permanence to having hitherto escaped the attempts of rival faiths, to alienate the affections of its votaries. The zeal

of the Moslems, to establish the doctrines and worship of Islamism; the insidious and accommodating arts of the Jesuit, to extend the power of the Papal see; and the warmest enthusiasm of the Protestant missionary, to diffuse the knowledge of a purer faith; have alike failed in making proselytes amongst the Hindus; although no means which persecution could invent, or the most crafty cunning, and greatest zeal devise, have been left untried. The Moslems, satisfied of the impracticability of the attempt, have long ago ceased from their endeavours to convert the votary of Brahma into the disciple of Mahomet. The missionaries of the Papal see, once so zealous in extending its influence and its creed, have relaxed in their exertions to prosecute a work, from which so little success has at any time resulted; and the undertaking has now devolved upon a few individuals, sent to accomplish it by the Baptist and Missionary Societies of England. The

accounts of their pious labours, which have already been published in the transactions of these societies, do not warrant us in indulging the hope, that, in their endeavours to convert the natives of India, they will prove more successful than their predecessors; but reasoning from analogy should rather lead us to conclude, that even the zeal of an Anabaptist will subside, when opposed to the prejudices of a Hindu.

That the Gospel has been professed in India, since a period little posterior to the age of the apostles; and that the number of Christians in that country was greater during the fifth and sixth centuries, than at the present day, are facts sufficiently well authenticated to justify belief. Of the success which attended the labours of the Syrian Christians, who first settled on the coast of Malabar, in the fifth century, it is now impossible to form any accurate opinion. Their present number is estimated at 150,000, and they are represented as

living in great simplicity and peace. There is every reason, however, to believe, that almost all the Christians, whom Europeans found upon the sea-coasts of India, were the descendants of Christian colonists, who sought a refuge in that country, when the Roman empire was overturned by the Saracens, and not, as has been maintained, converts from the faith of Brahma. The prejudices of the Hindus in favour of their peculiar institutions, civil and religious, have been in all ages the same; and there are no grounds to suppose, that at any period of their history, since the promulgation of Christianity, this attachment has been weaker, or more easily subdued, than at present. The Christians who settled in their country, would appear to have received that protection in the exercise of their religion, in pursuit of which, many of them, perhaps, first visited its shores; and if we may judge from what is known of the present character of the Brahmins, secured its

perpetuity, by prudently forbearing to interfere with the established superstition, so far as to incur the enmity of that powerful order; and, perhaps, by yielding in some degree to the idolatrous examples, to which they were exposed. Time, which, according to Orme, has formed in India a mighty nation of near ten millions of Mahometans, from those who were left behind by the armies, which first subjected it to their power, and from adventurers, encouraged by the success of the Moslem arms, to forsake the desarts of Tartary and Arabia, for the richer provinces of Hindustan, may also have easily raised up, from the beginnings which we have noticed, all the Christians, that are at this day found in India, without rendering it necessary to suppose, that any of them are converts from the Hindus. In the 17th century, the tranquillity of the Christians, who had settled in India, was disturbed by the missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church, who appear to have been

more eager, as well as more successful, in compelling their Syrian, Armenian and Nestorian brethren, whom they unexpectedly found in that country, to believe in purgatory and invoke the saints, than in converting the natives. The success of the Protestants in attaining the last of these objects, has been still less than that of the Roman Catholics; and nowithstanding the united labours of both, for upwards of two hundred years; and after all that we have been told of the exertions of different missionaries, the whole number of their converts, at this day, does not exceed twelve thousand, out of a population of an hundred millions of Hindus, and those almost enterely composed of Pariars or outcasts *. To this number, the Baptist Missionaries of Bengal, after nearly ten years labour, were able, in 1803, to add forty-eight! "over some of whom," say they themselves,

* Sketch of Hindu manners, &c.

"we rejoice with great joy; for others we tremble, and over some we are compelled to weep *."

It cannot, however, be denied, that the greatest blessing which we could confer upon the natives of India, would be their instruction in the doctrines, and precepts of Christianity; and, if to attempt their conversion were liable to no other objection, than the little prospect of success, that can rationally be entertained from it, the very possibility, that we may, in this respect, prove more fortunate that others, may both demand, and justify our perseverance. It will not, indeed, in this view of the subject, be easy to absolve the Church of England, from the charge of having hitherto neglected a duty, which the extension of the British empire, seems naturally to have devolved upon her; or from that of having left it to those, who do not content themselves with

* Bap. Miss. Vol. iii. p. 21, 22.

simply dissenting from her doctrines and worship, but whom she also regards, as desirous of subverting her government. Nor will it, we apprehend, be altogether easy to explain, why the British and Foreign Bible Society, have publicly disavowed all connection with the missionaries employed in India. It fortunately happens, however, that whatever difference of opinion there may exist, in regard to some of those means, employed for converting our Indian subjects, which will fall to our province to consider, there are others, which all must agree in recommending. It will scarcely be controverted, that purity of life and conduct, on the part of Christians settled in India, may have some influence in rendering the Hindus and Mahometans, more disposed to embrace the profession of the gospel; as it cannot be denied, that a want of conformity, betwixt the precepts of Christianity, and the practice of Christians, has hitherto contributed to repel converts from

our faith. *But he has no religion,* qualifies the most honourable character of an Englishman, when given by a Hindu,—a charge, which does not, indeed, prove our countrymen in India, to be destitute of religious principles, but which is certainly far from recommending their faith to a people, whose every action, in civil and domestic life, is regulated by religion.

When we consider the enervating influence of a tropical climate, and the insinuating allurements of Asiatic manners, the necessity of religious principles, to guard against the temptations, to which Englishmen in India are exposed, will be readily allowed. It has, however, been alleged, that at the early age, at which young men are generally sent to that country, these principles cannot be very deeply rooted in their minds; and when unassisted by the restraints, which parental authority and filial affection impose, must be too weak to prevent them yielding to those powerful

temptations, with which they will be assailed. It has accordingly been proposed, that the servants of the East India Company should be kept at home, till the period of life at which religious principles are commonly firmly established. It is not, however, easy to fix the precise time, at which this may be the case; and as our countrymen, destined for the Indian service, are not less alive to a sense of religion, than those of the same age and rank of life, who are educated for similar occupations at home, it may be doubted whether keeping them a few years longer in England, would have the effect of rendering them more religious in India. When they arrive in that country, they are not generally called into public service, until a period of life, at which, even at home, they must be left to their own discretion; and all that it seems possible to accomplish, is to cherish and keep alive those religious feelings and sentiments, which the education of their early youth must have inspired.

For these purposes, the observance of the public ordinances of religion—social worship—and the regular offices of an established clergy, are peculiarly adapted. With such aids as these, it is not to be supposed, that the religious impressions of early years would be easily eradicated, even amidst all the voluptuousness of Asiatic manners; and without them, it cannot be denied, that the youth in Britain would "run riot" to as great an extent as their brethren in India. Hitherto, however, our countrymen in that quarter of the globe, can scarcely be said to have enjoyed the benefit of institutions, so necessary to restrain the licentiousness of human nature; and it is not much to be wondered, if, amidst the moral depravity with which they are surrounded, they should sometimes yield to temptations, which with all the aid, that these institutions can afford, and where less powerful allurements to vicious practices are held forth, are not always successfully resisted.

To this cause too, as much as to any other, are we to ascribe the irreligious character, which the English have obtained amongst the Hindus.

In the extensive and populous empire of British India, where ten thousand priests are not unusally attached to a single pagan temple, the whole regular establishment of Christian clergy exceeds not seventeen chaplains; and seldom amounts to more than two-thirds of that number *. In a country, whose face is studded with Hindu Pagodas, and Mahometan Mosques, there is scarcely a single Christian church to mark the religion of its government; and amidst the numerous and splendid festivals of pagan worship, the Christian Sabbath is scarcely distinguished in any other manner, than by displaying the British flag on the ramparts of Fort-William. It cannot, therefore, be a matter of much astonishment, that a regard to Christian duties should insensibly wear away, in a country, where no Christ-

* Vid. Buchanan's Memoir.

ian institutions are observed; or that a people professing the purest creed upon earth, should be stigmatized as destitute of any religious faith whatever. At the same time, were the public ordinances of religion established, and its sacred functions discharged by a regular and respectable clergy, it cannot be doubted, but there would be found among the servants of the East India Company, that veneration for the religion of early life, and that regard to its precepts and sanctions, which so powerfully tend to produce purity of heart, and rectitude of conduct. Nor would the beneficial effects of such a measure be confined, even in the first instance, to Europeans alone. When the professed disciples of the Gospel are seen engaging in the external ceremonies of religion, and meeting together for the purpose of public and social worship, the natives of Hindustan will entertain greater respect for our faith; may be led from curiosity to frequent our assemblies; and, hearing the

doctrines and evidences of Christianity explained, may at length acknowledge its divine origin and truth, and be persuaded to embrace its profession.

The form of ecclesiastical polity, which ought to be established in British India, is a question that does not appear to merit any particular attention; and must seek for it in vain from us, who account no one form of church government, to be of divine authority more than another; and who can leave it without scruple to the administration of every country, to adopt that, which its circumstances may suggest, as best suited to answer every good purpose. A regard to the finances of the East India Company, may render its government partial to that which is attended with the least expence. But, if in order to procure men of learning and talents to undertake the clerical duties in India, it be deemed necessary to establish a gradation of rank and rewards in her church, it will naturally adopt the Episco-

pal; which may also be found more agreeable to the feelings of the greater number of Englishmen, settled in that country. In a *Memoir* on this subject lately published by one of the Company's chaplains at Calcutta, the adoption of a hierarchy, consisting of one archbishop, and three bishops, is warmly recommended. With some of the provisions, proposed by this author, particularly with that by which the establishment of Indian clergy is to be kept full, without constant reference to England, the government of British India can scarcely be expected to comply. If indeed they ever carry into execution, the general measure proposed by this writer, they will probably adopt the system of sending out cadets for their religious, as well as for their civil and military services; reserving to the government at home, the power of appointing to the Metropolitan and Episcopal offices. But there is little prospect, that such a system will soon be adopted; and it can-

not be contended, that it is absolutely necessary to the preservation of religious knowledge amongst our countrymen in India. This object may no doubt be attained, if the Company would increase the number, and be careful in the selection of their chaplains.

The translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar languages of Hindustan, and their dispersion amongst its inhabitants, is another mean of diffusing the knowledge of the gospel, about which, a difference of opinion cannot exist among Christians. It comes, too, recommended by no less an authority than that of Sir William Jones, whose piety as a Christian, and whose intimate acquaintance with the religion, laws, manners, and customs of India, are universally acknowledged. It has, acccordingly, been already adopted to a considerable extent. Besides a translation of "such chapters of the prophets, particularly Isaiah, as are indisputably evangelical, together

with one of the gospels, and a plain prefatory discourse, containing full evidence of the very distant ages, in which the predictions themselves and the history of the divine person predicted, were severally made public*;" the whole Scriptures have been translated into the Hindustanee and Bengalee languages; and other versions into the Tamulic and Malay tongues, are said to be now either completed, or in a state of considerable forwardness. Of the success which has attended this measure, it is difficult to form an accurate opinion. By some accounts it is represented, as having produced a wonderful spirit of inquiry in Bengal and other parts of India, where the lower classes are said to seek after the Scriptures, with an avidity, which all the power and threatenings of the Brahmins cannot restrain. It would appear, however, from the testimony of the Baptist Missionaries themselves, to

* Asiatic Researches.

whom the translation and dispersion of the Scriptures have, in the opinion of some *, been injudiciously confided, that so far from being always received with thankfulness, and perused with attention, they are often treated with every mark of disrespect. But notwithstanding these discouragements, the measure of putting the sacred records of our faith into the hands of our native subjects, cannot be sufficiently recommended. They may find access where the preacher could not; and if accompanied by judiciously written tracts, pointing out their divine origin and authenticity, may succeed in undermining a fabric, which ruder attacks seem only to strengthen and support.

That little success can reasonably be expected, from employing missionaries in the conversion of the Hindus, ought therefore, we apprehend, to be allowed by the most strenuous supporters of the measure. But

* Vid. Dangers of British India.

enthusiasm, blind to the obstacles which impede the object it pursues, augurs success where defeat only should be anticipated; and yet frequently leads men to achieve, what a more sober survey would have pronounced impossible. Enthusiasm is, therefore, a necessary ingredient in the character of a missionary; and, it must be confessed, generally makes the most prominent figure among the virtues of those who undertake this office. As we cannot, however, suppose the missionaries of other churches, who attempted to convert the inhabitants of Hindustan to Christianity, to have possessed this virtue in a less degree than those of the Anabaptist and Missionary Societies of England, we cannot allow, that their superior zeal in the cause, will enable them to succeed where their brethren have so often failed; nor, sincerely as we desire to see the natives of British India forsaking their superstitions and embracing the gospel, can we flatter ourselves with the hopes of these objects being accomplished by the labours

of brothers Ringletaub and Thomas. That their pious attempts will be attended with consequences, directly opposite to those of promoting the happiness of our Indian subjects, and securing the safety and prosperity of our empire, is an opinion, which appears to be every day gaining ground. We enter upon the examination of the grounds on which it rests, fully aware, that, according to the decision which we shall be led to pronounce, the epithets *serious* or *profane* will be liberally bestowed upon us. We have only to premise, that of neither of these appellations, in their modern sense, do we profess ourselves ambitious.

It happens, that in arguing this, as well as many other questions, one of the contending parties is compelled to occupy grounds, far less advantageous than the other. The great and inestimable benefits that would infallibly be derived to the heathen world, from its conversion to Christianity; and the duty of Christians of every denomination to contribute to accomplish this lau-

dable object, not only prepossess us in favour of those who urge this duty as binding under all circumstances whatever; but impress us with an unfavourable opinion of those who can argue, that any consideration can supersede and justify our not complying with it. As Missions have been found an effectual mean of spreading a knowledge of the gospel amongst other nations, it must rest with those who deprecate its employment in India, to show why it should so far alter its nature and tendency, when applied to the Hindus, as to become pernicious. To enable them to do this, they must found their arguments upon local and national peculiarities, so widely different from those of any other people, that their very existence is in no small danger of being discredited by those, who have not inquired minutely into the subject. A knowledge of these peculiarities, as it is only requisite to one side of the question, is, in general, carefully concealed, if not sometimes artfully misrepresented on the other. But the

slight sketch of the manners and institutions of India, which has been given in this work, may, perhaps, assist us in ascertaining to what attention the arguments drawn from this source against the employment of missionaries, are entitled.

Before, however, applying the little knowledge that we have been able to glean, on this subject, to the discussion of so important and dangerous a question, as that regarding Indian Missions, it may be wise to lay down a few general propositions to direct our steps, even at the risk of appearing somewhat tedious and verbose. It may be safely assumed, that the duty of diffusing the knowledge of Christianity, can only be called in question by those, who deny its divine authority, and shut their eyes upon its salutary influence on human happiness. But that the obligation of attempting this at all risks whatever, is a doctrine originating in the wildness of enthusiasm, will not, perhaps, be so readily allowed. It cannot, at least, be maintained by

those who assert, that it is by no means submitted to our judgment, or to our notions of policy, whether we shall embrace the means of imparting Christian knowledge or not*;—a proposition, from which, however plausible it may appear, this corollary must be deduced, that neither is it for us to discuss the nature, or calculate the consequences of these means, before it can answer the purpose, for which it is here brought forward. Entering our dissent from such doctrines, as subversive of the very principle upon which the duty of converting the heathen world is established, we regard the question, how far it ought to be attempted in any particular case, as one, which the visionary enthusiast may consider as unnecessary, or deprecate as profane; but which requires from the sober Christian, the most serious discussion, and can only be resolved by impartially weighing the facilities afforded on the one hand, and

* Vid. Buchanan's Memoir, p. 29.

the difficulties and dangers to be surmounted on the other.

When Providence places the government of a heathen nation in the hands of a Christian people, it does not therefore impose upon the latter, the duty of employing *every* means in their power to accomplish the conversion of the former; but it lays them under the strongest obligation to inquire what means, consistent with universal benevolence, upon which the duty of conversion is itself established, are brought by this revolution within their reach; and their neglect to avail themselves of these, can alone be justly charged upon them, as a dereliction of their duty. Persecution is a mean of procuring, at least nominal proselytes to a new religion (and we can never be certain of effecting more,) which has often proved eminently successful, and is within the power of every government to employ for a time. But persecution, in every shape, is repugnant to the mild precepts of the gospel, as well as subversive of that principle,

which dictates the duty of conversion. If, therefore, the circumstances of any people are such, as that certain means of conversion, otherwise commendable, must, in regard to them, necessarily resolve into persecution, toleration of their idolatry, so far as not to employ these means to remove it, will be required even upon Christian principles. If, in addition to all this, the employment of such means shall render it more and more difficult, ever to succeed in the work of their proselytism—if it shall attach the people to be converted more than ever to the religious faith which we would overthrow, and render them more and more inimical to that which we would substitute in its place—if it shall expose to certain misery and wretchedness, those who may embrace the new religion, and at the same time, threaten with ruin the very government itself, that attempts to subvert the old—if, in fine, it shall incur the danger of placing the power of taking advantage of a more fortunate crisis, for attempting this

important object, for ever beyond our reach; it is difficult to conceive upon what grounds it can be shown to be a duty; and to proceed in the face of so many obstacles, which Providence has not yet seen meet to remove, is a work that enthusiasm may applaud, but which genuine Christianity refuses to sanction.

With these general principles to guide us, we may now be permitted to advert a little to the arguments which have been adduced on either side of this question. That it is unnecessary to convert the Hindus, because they may live happily, under their established superstition, the most severe of whose penances are voluntary on the part of the sufferer, and therefore not entitled to commiseration; and that it is inexpedient and impolitic, because they are most easily governed in ignorance, we dismiss with little ceremony, as the arguments of those, who regard the progress of the gospel, with the cold indifference of unbelievers.

That the circle of duty is strongest, the nearer it is to its centre, and that the good we can do at home, if smaller in amount, is more certain in issue, are propositions, to which we may yield our assent, without inferring from them, that the Christian missionary ought to employ his labours in converting the infidels of his own country; or that he becomes a downright religious knight-errant, when he visits foreign regions in quest of pious adventures. *We* have already said, that we cannot flatter even the zealous Baptist with any hopes of success, when sent to accomplish a work, which in seventeen centuries has made so little progress; and others have ill-naturedly enough remarked, that he will benefit his own country more by his absence, than the Hindus by his advice *. Yet in the Memoir, to which we have already referred, it is maintained, that no truth has been

* Edinburgh Review. Vol. XII. art. 9.

more clearly demonstrated than this, that the communication of Christian instruction to the natives of Hindustan is easy *—an assertion, which we cannot easily reconcile, with what the same author elsewhere advances, that the Hindu has not "a disposition accordant with the tenor of Christian principles †," and will "scarcely ever forsake his idols;" and that the Mahometan, if you touch his religion, "grasps his dagger ‡."

According to this writer, one great facility of converting the Hindus, arises from their being a submissive and a divided people §, little disposed to resent any attempt to change a religion, about which no two of them can agree together; and who, it seems, would long ere this time have been converted to Christianity, had not Christians refused to instruct them in its precepts. Without adverting to the very poor compliment, that

* Vid. Buchanan's Memoir. p. 40.
† Ibid. p. 31, 36.
‡ Ibid. p. 30.
§ Ibid. p. 25, 27.

is here paid to those missionaries, whose exertions are so warmly applauded, and whose success is so exultingly dwelt upon, in another part of this Memoir *; or noticing the censure that is here conveyed upon the government of British India, and the church of England, let us see how these assertions correspond with the real circumstances of the case. Happy shall we be to find, that, in order to convert the Hindus, we have only to send amongst them, men able and willing to instruct them in the great truths of the Gospel; and we venture to say, happy will the government of India be, to encourage, and assist such men (for protection, it appears, they will not require,) in this pious and most honourable of employments.

That the Hindus are a submissive people, has been long known and acknowledged; but if the history of Mahomet Gazni and

* Buchanan's Memoir p. 69, 66.

the Portuguese, is not sufficient to convince us, that this is only so long as their religion is untouched, nothing, perhaps, but a repetition of the same experiment, which prevented the former from conquering Hindustan, and banished the latter from its coasts, loaded with the curses of its natives, will produce this effect. He appears to us to have read the annals of the Mahometan empire in India with little attention, who has not discovered, that its Moslem invaders, who openly professed to extirpate the faith of Brahma, were never able to secure the subjection of the Hindus; whilst such as wisely desisted from persecuting this mild and submissive people, on account of their faith, found little difficulty, with less extensive resources, to retain them under their dominion. The history of the Portuguese in India, who alienated by their missionaries those countries, which their generals had subdued *, is not less decisive upon this

* Vid. Dangers of British India.

point; and when joined to the testimony of the missionaries of the present day, must entirely preclude us from drawing any argument for the facility of converting the Hindus, from the circumstance of their being a submissive people.

But, in order to encourage our exertions in this undertaking, we are told, that the Hindus are not only a submissive, but a divided people. That there exist amongst them an hundred different religious Casts, none of which will associate together, and that even the Brahmins, who reside within the walls of the college of Calcutta, refuse to eat with each other *, are assertions, the truth of which we are far from being disposed to call in question. But why this should render it easier to convert them to Christianity, we confess ourselves unable to comprehend. To these prejudices in favour of their particular tenets and practices, and

* Buchanan's Memoir, p. 26.

which, it is here confessed, not even the precepts and daily example of the Christian members of the college of Fort-William can overcome, in their brother teachers, has been ascribed the want of success, which has uniformly attended every attempt of this nature. But it is, perhaps, unnecessary to enter into any farther examination of this argument, than again to appeal to the testimony of the Baptist missionaries themselves; from whom we shall find, that however much the Hindus may disagree in other respects, they are any thing but a divided people in their resistance to Christianity. "The enmity against the gospel, and its professors is universal," says one of these missionaries *. By another, we are informed that the barber of the village uniformly runs away, when requested to shave a convert †. Yet must we be told, that the

* Bap. Miss. Vol. iii. p. 38. † Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 372.

Hindus come to us, and ask a religion, which we refuse to give them* !

It is a maxim with the Hindus, that the faithful of all religions are accepted in the sight of the Supreme Being ; and Heaven is represented by them, as a palace with many doors, at which those of all profession may enter. This doctrine led them, even at a time when the means of persecution were in their power, to tolerate every system of religious faith that appeared amongst them ; regarding them, not as rivals, but as children of the same great family with their own ; and will, perhaps, explain how so little religious animosity prevails amongst themselves, notwithstanding the numerous sects into which they are divided. It may be remarked, as one of the singular phenomena attending this people, that their abstaining to associate with those of a different sect from their own, arises

* Buchanan's Memoir, Appendix, p. 107.

not from the hatred which a difference of religious sentiments is so apt to engender, but from a principle of duty. Are we, then, with the writer, whose work has furnished us with the opportunity of entering into the present detail, to infer from this toleration of other faiths, that the votary of Brahma is but feebly attached to his own? and with him, to deduce from this source, another argument for the facility of his conversion *. If rightly appreciated, this circumstance may, perhaps, be found to be no inconsiderable obstacle to every attempt of this nature. It will not certainly be easy to convince that man, of the superiority of any particular faith, who is so firmly persuaded that all are acceptable in the sight of Heaven, that he refuses to enter into any discussion of their comparative merits. Before a victory can be obtained, there must necessarily be a struggle, and both parties must try their

* Buchanan's Memoir, p. 27

strength, before either can fairly lay claim to the honours of a triumph. To decline the combat is not here equivalent to an acknowledgment of being vanquished; for the Hindu deems it impious even to enter the lists; and rather than be guilty of what he is taught to consider as a crime, will cheerfully submit to being told, that he anticipates a defeat. We are, indeed, informed, that crowds of people listen with attention to the disputations between the missionary and the Brahmins, and even, sometimes, compel the latter, when driven from the field, to return to the combat *. This information, were it not at variance with what the missionaries themselves assert, would inspire us with some hope; convinced, as we are, that the Brahmin has only to fight, in order to be conquered, if not convinced. We are pleased, indeed, to find these missionaries saying, that by the dis-

* Buchanan's Memoir, p. 23. Note

tribution of many copies of the Scriptures, and of some thousands of religious tracts, a spirit of inquiry has been excited among the Hindus, to a degree unknown at any former period; but very different sentiments are excited, when we learn from their own mouths, that "so long as people do not understand the import of their message, they appear to listen; but the moment they understand something of it, they either become indifferent or begin to ridicule *."

There are other facilities which, according to the author of the Memoir, render the present era peculiarly proper for disseminating the knowledge of our faith throughout the Eastern world, which it might, perhaps, be unnecessary to notice. But as our not employing the means which, according to this writer, Providence is

* Bap. Miss. Vol. ii. p. 273.

placing within our power, and even bribing us to employ, by the certain prospect of *advantage*, is so plainly charged upon the British nation, as the neglect of a solemn and imperious duty *, it may not be improper to see what they are, in order to ascertain the extent of this dereliction. What hope of success can reasonably be derived from them, the judicious reader must be left to determine for himself. Perhaps their bare enumeration will be regarded by him, as bestowing upon them a greater share of attention than they can justly demand. As a proof, that the present period is destined by Providence, for diffusing the light of the gospel over Asia, we are told, that "to the east and west of peaceful Hindustan, there is '*a shaking of the nations* †." That there will be "a shaking of the nations," in the most tremendous meaning of the words,

* Buchanan's Memoir, App. p. 124.

† Ibid. p. 124.

before ever Christianity is established in India, is an opinion to which we are strongly inclined. But we can recognize nothing in the "signs of the times," to indicate its approach; nor can we bring ourselves to believe, that amidst the wreck of the mighty empires of Asia, the dominion of a distant state, resting, it may be said, upon the feeble basis of opinion, will remain a stately monument of European power, to spread religion and civilization amongst the surrounding nations, so soon as they shall have recovered from the concussion.—In order still farther to encourage our exertions, and upbraid our inactivity, we are told, that the Wahabians, whose country is scarcely known upon the great map of Asia, are extinguishing Mahometanism, the religion of a hundred millions of the human race *!—that the great empire of China is on the eve of a terrible convulsion!—that a prophecy is

* Buchanan's Memoir, Appendix, p. 124.

spread abroad, that the end of the Tartar dominion is at hand!—that the Chinese may choose any religion they please! and that the press in China is free *!!

But if these encouragements cannot excite, nor the extension of the British power in the East enable us, to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel amongst the surrounding nations, may not the latter circumstance afford great facilities for converting our own native subjects? There are some who readily resolve this question in the affirmative; whilst others maintain, that the day on which the Hindu is convinced, that we have formed a design against his faith, or even intend to interfere with it, will be the first of real danger to our Asiatic possessions †. By the success of the British arms, in the north of Hindustan, the great temple of Jaggernaut has fallen into our hands; and the author

* Buchanan's Memoir, Appendix, p. 124.

† Vid. Dangers of British India.

of the Memoir remarks, that it must have a very beneficial influence upon the whole Hindu system, if we employ our power in chastising the enormity of their superstition, at the fountain head *. We acknowledge we cannot comprehend, in what manner this salutary discipline is to be applied to the superstition of the Hindus, without their regarding it in the light of coercion; and if there exists any necessity, as this author himself seems sometimes to admit †, that they, at least, should not consider it in this point of view, we cannot look upon the success of the British arms, and the extension of its power, as affording any great facility for converting our native subjects. These events may, and unquestionably they have at length afforded them a security against oppression and injustice, to which they have been long unaccustomed; and we are persuaded, that the inhabitants

* Buchanan's Memoir, p, 49. † Ibid.

of India do now acknowledge our dominion, to be the greatest blessing that they have enjoyed for many ages.

Such is the catalogue of encouragements afforded to missionary exertions in India, and the East; and such, in our humble opinion, the degree of weight, to which they are severally entitled. We have endeavoured to consider them impartially; and although we cannot allow them to deceive us into the same hopes, which they have led others to entertain, happy, indeed, shall we be to find, that we have all along been appalled by imaginary difficulties. But a sincere desire to see the natives of British India converted to Christianity, is not surely inconsistent with an acknowledgment, that the work will not prove easy of execution; and that the circumstances, in which they are placed, so far from presenting facilities, are surrounded with difficulties, which the most sanguine cannot coolly consider, without subscribing to their magnitude, nor the

less enthusiastic part of mankind regard, without pronouncing them almost, if not altogether insurmountable by means of missionaries. "*We may assure ourselves, that neither Mussulmen nor Hindus, will ever be converted by missions from the church of Rome, nor from any other church;*" are the words of Sir William Jones, whose opinion might almost be regarded as decisive upon this point.

But it is maintained, that to attempt diffusing Christianity in India, by means of missionaries, is a work which will be found, not only fruitless in the issue, but dangerous to the peace and prosperity of that country, and ultimately fatal to the British empire in the East. We can be at little loss, after the sketch that has been given of the state of British India, to discover the circumstances that render it so hazardous to interfere with the religious prejudices of its inhabitants. That these are not to be attacked with impunity, is what none, acquainted with their history, in former

ages, will deny; as well as what recent circumstances have abundantly shewn. It may even be admitted, that the great body of the Hindus are indifferent to any change in their religion; but, to suppose that their priests will not murmur, when their temples and altars are attacked, is to display the grossest ignorance of human nature. To assert, that they have little interest in supporting the established superstition, and possess not the power of exciting the people to rebellion in its defence, are positions equally untenable. The tendency of the missionary system, to lead them to exercise this power, may, in part, be gathered from the effects, with which it has already been attended; as well as from the circumstance of its being now discouraged by the government of India, by whom it was formerly countenanced. Reasoning, indeed, from what is known of the history and character of the Hindus, we should be led to imagine, that so long as the mission-

aries of any religion, received no support from the government of the country, and conducted themselves in a peaceable and orderly manner, they would meet with as little opposition as attention. But if they proceed so far as rudely to attack the established faith; and are in this attack countenanced by the government, a very different reception ought to be anticipated. A people, who would not take arms to make proselytes to their faith, may yet be found ready enough to wield them in its defence; and if a hundred millions of Hindus arm in support of the religion of their fathers, the issue of the contest with thirty thousand Europeans, the greater part of whom care little about the religion which they would establish, cannot long remain doubtful.—Such an experiment, the enthusiast, who presumptuously expects the miraculous interference of Providence; or who would hail, with the exultation of a martyr, the greatest disasters that might result from it,

may not scruple to recommend; but a real regard to the interests of Christianity in India, should lead its government to deprecate and prevent the attempt. The danger of its occurrence from missionary exertions, joined to the little success that has hitherto attended, or can be rationally expected to flow from this measure, appear to be reasons of sufficient weight and importance to forbid its employment. It must, indeed, be admitted, that the imprudence of some of those men, who have been employed to carry it into execution, has, in a great degree, tended to bring it into disrepute. But even in the hands of the most judicious, it must be allowed, that if pushed so far, as to arouse the attention, it cannot fail, under existing circumstances, to excite the jealousy and provoke the hostility of our native subjects.

From a consideration of all these circumstances, we are led to this conclusion, that the only means of diffusing the knowledge

of Christianity over India, that can be employed with safety, and from which any rational hope of success can be entertained, are those which we first considered. By the employment of these, and by the progress of knowledge and civilization, the obstacles, which at present obstruct the advancement of the Christian religion in that country, by means of missionaries, may at length be surmounted; and the circumstances of the Hindus so far changed, as to render their exertions not only safe but successful.

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MINISTRY OF CULTURE · GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
संस्कृति मंत्रालय · भारत सरकार

GSL

ERRATA.

Page 16. line 10. *for* ceetury, *read* century
23. 20. *for* Attoch, *read* Attok
42. 11. *for* Mahometan, *read* Mahometans
— 15. *for* Burrampootu, *read* Burrampooter
108. 12. *for* it, *read* they
236. note, *for* Rowe, *read* Rouse
322. line 15. *for* could, *read* would.