is diffused they will daily gain more strength. Let us hope, however, that, as knowledge advances, the sound national sense of an English public will keep pace with it, and judge all questions that are constitutionally important, free from the party feeling, the interests, the passions, or the theories of those, from the active exercise of whose ambition, industry, talent, and enthusiasm, it derives its best lights.

Notwithstanding that happy tenacity of usage and respect, even for the forms of establishments, which characterizes the majority of Englishmen, there exists in the present state of society an expectation of their progressive improvement. Such improvements, however, must be made with great caution, lest more be sacrificed than gained; and we may lay it down as an axiom, that the true value of all institutions depends upon their being in unison with the community and government to which they belong. If we desire their stability, we must adapt them to the strength, the weakness, the prejudices, the virtues, the vices, all the qualities, in short, of those human beings for whose benefit they are founded.

That sound public opinion, which it is so essential to carry along with every branch of our free government, has been very partially exercised in respect to the administration of Indian affairs. The problem of the best mode of governing that country is so difficult to be solved, the interests

affected by it so remote and complicated, that few have given it any deep attention. When the privileges of the Company were last renewed, the question was considered as being at rest for twenty years. The expiration of this term is not yet sufficiently near to excite the activity of those parties which that event will bring into collision; but it is most desirable that, before the arrival of that period, the subject should undergo the fullest investigation, for it involves questions of great national importance, the consideration and decision upon which should not be left to the hurried moment of a conflict between parties swayed by their respective interests, and striving to attain their objects through every means that temporary impressions can make upon minds uninformed of the nature and merits of the question which they are called to decide.

Viewing the actual establishments with reference to the facts and principles which have been stated, it should be calmly examined how far they are, or can be, rendered efficient to the purposes for which they were intended; considering that, of all governments, that is least likely to command respect, and gain strength, over which a sword is always suspended, and which holds existence under respite, it would be better either to abolish the Company as a medium of governing India, or to give to that body a broader, more solid, and more permanent foundation. To judge this point, it would be

necessary to look minutely to the benefits which might be anticipated from its preservation; to its defects as an organ of rule; to the possibility of remedying these defects; to the practicability of substituting a better medium; and, lastly, to the probable consequences of placing our vast territories in the East under the direct rule of the king's government. In forming our judgment upon these important questions, we must never for one moment lose sight of the peculiar character of our empire in India, which bears little analogy to any power that ever existed in the universe. This compels us to look, almost exclusively, to its own history for those lessons which are to guide us through the difficulties we must expect to encounter in its future administration; and the experience which that affords is limited, for the government we have established has hardly one feature in common with that of former conquerors, most of whom became inhabitants of the land they had subdued. It would, however, fill a volume to treat these subjects in the manner their importance merits; and it is, perhaps, impossible at this distance of time to anticipate the changes in Europe or in India that may influence the question. It will suffice therefore, for the present, to offer some general observations on the more prominent points which have been brought under notice.

No government has ever evinced a greater dis-

position towards a just and humane rule than that of the East India Company. It has been as prompt to correct abuses as zealous and liberal in the support of all acts of the local authorities that promised benefit to the natives of its vast territories. An anxious desire to improve the finances has, at times, given a direction to the zeal of its servants not favourable to the increasing prosperity of the country, from many parts of which too large a revenue has been exacted; but this desire has never led to the countenance of any violence or injustice. The same principle has given the authorities in England a strong but salutary prejudice against all those contests with native princes into which the governments abroad have been compelled to enter. This has had a happy operation; for though neither their instructions nor orders could prevent our attainment of that power which our condition in India forced upon us as a law of existence, the known disposition of the directors and the legislature certainly impeded the progress of conquest, and, by doing so, has, in all probability, given our dominion more solidity than it would have had if its conquest had been effected, as it might have been, in half the period.

The court of directors are in a great degree independent of the favours of the ministers of the crown, who find it difficult to bend them to any purposes which they deem injurious to their reputation, or to the rights or privileges of those whom

they consider as immediately under their protection. This renders them an invaluable shield, to guard from attack and encroachment the rights of the service abroad; but it is a remarkable fact that those whose interests, as a body, they are so prompt to defend, are not so sensible, as might be expected, of the safety they derive from this intermediate authority. The causes of this are obvious: the highest and most distinguished of these public officers, whose opinions and actions have a great influence over the rest, are too often discontented at their condition, and hostile to this branch of the Indian administration. The supposed disposition of the court to look chiefly to expenditure *, occasions every reduction either to be ascribed to them, or to a desire of conciliating their favour; while all acts of grace or liberality are referred either to the representations of local superiors in India, or to the interference of his majesty's government. These conclusions are often unjust, but they are always made; and they operate to prevent

* There is no service in which pay is so good, and the means of retirement so liberally provided for, as that of the Company. The nature of this service requires that it should be so. Money long constituted the only reward to which those who went to India could look; and it still constitutes the leading object of the great majority. The desire of attaining this object produces many ungrounded accusations against the court of directors, all of whose economical measures are invariably ascribed to narrowness of commercial feeling, from their being a commercial body.

those feelings of respect and attachment which it is so desirable men should entertain for that authority under which they are placed: those feelings, however, never can be maintained in large classes by a system that employs no means but those of circumscribed rules and cold, inanimate justice. There must be parts of the community kindled into warmer sentiments than such means can ever inspire, or a government will never acquire the popularity which it is essential for it to possess. This ingredient of rule is singularly wanting in the Company's government. It has few if any zealous and active advocates, to meet those attacks with which it is continually assailed; and the consequence is, that, though serious reflection should teach the great body of those who are in its service that no change is likely to be for their advantage, all that they are in the daily habit of hearing and reading is calculated to make a different impression upon their minds.

The manner in which the directors exercise their great patronage has satisfied the public that it could not be in safer or more honourable hands; but it is to be regretted that this patronage should form the principal object in seeking the direction, and the chief reward after having attained it. The first circumstance induces some to become candidates for the office of director whose views are limited to the attainment of a provision for their families, relations, and friends; and the second deprives this government of one of the greatest means

which all other governments possess, that of encouraging, rewarding, and attaching those by whom they are served, by admitting, to a certain extent, the claims of sons and near connexions of persons who have been distinguished in the public service. These are not only rejected by the directors in their corporate capacity, but their advancement is considered as an infringement of their most valued privilege. This is the fault of the system, not of the directors; they are paid in patronage, and a deduction from its amount would operate as a deduction from the wages of their labour. This fact clears them of all blame, but it does not render the evil less. It may, perhaps, be asserted that the interest and connexions of men in the service, combined with the humanity and consideration of individual directors, palliates, if it does not remedy, this defect of the system; but this is a mistake, for the very mode in which such favour is bestowed, though it may raise the reputation of him who confers it, lowers that of the body to which he belongs: besides, it is not seemly to see the sons of those who have stood the highest in the civil service of the Company, or of officers who have fallen in some memorable engagement, enter the list of common soliciters, or carrying their petitions from door to door of those who preside for the season over the interests of that empire, the prosperity of which the parents of the supplicants have laboured with distinction, or died with glory, to promote.

The court of directors are often very generous to the widows and families of deceased officers of distinction left in distress, and they have always given a most liberal support to the funds instituted for their relief: but this liberality imparts little if any of that feeling which would be spread throughout the service by the son* receiving such notice and protection on account of the services of his father. To estimate the value of this principle, we have only to look to its effects in the navy or army of England. Notwithstanding that eagerness for patronage which pervades these services, hereditary claims are seldom neglected or rejected, and the attention known to be given to them stimulates the highest minds to action in a degree beyond all other motives.

There is no part of the conduct of the directors in which they merit more praise than the attention paid of late years to the education of youth for the different branches of the service abroad. Different opinions may exist as to the modes they have taken of promoting that important object, but all are agreed in commending the spirit of liberality in which it has been pursued.

The court of proprietors is necessarily a popular body, and will always consist principally of that class which are termed the monied interest; but

* If any part of the patronage of India is ever allotted to this purpose, care must be taken to make arrangements that would secure the greatest possible benefit from its exercise.

with this advantage, that almost all who return from India with fortunes purchase India stock, from the interest they take in the affairs of that country; and we may always look to this class as favourable to the pretensions of candidates for the direction whose claims are grounded on acknowledged talents and high reputation in the public service. The privilege possessed by the court of proprietors of investigating every act of the court of directors, or of those they employ abroad, which may in any way affect the prosperity of the corporation, gives a wide and useful range to their debates. Their confirmation being necessary to all pecuniary grants, above a small amount, renders their opinion of importance on all such measures; and there is a decided benefit in the publicity which the proceedings of the proprietors give to such questions. The utility of this body, as a check upon the abuse of power, should be calculated, like other parts of our free constitution, less with reference to what they do, than to what they prevent others from doing. A great majority of the proprietors stands alike independent of ministers and the court of directors, and this position gives them much value as a branch of Indian legislature.

Many objections have been taken to the composition and form of the court of proprietors, and some of them are no doubt well-grounded. Every question is discussed in open court, and

decided by the majority of those present; but the minority may call for a ballot*, at which all proprietors, whatever be their sex or condition, are entitled to vote.

Sufficient has been said to enable us to judge, first, whether the government of the Company, as at present established, is competent to its increasing civil and political duties; and, secondly, if it is not, how far its form and constitution will admit of improvements which will better fit it for its sovereign functions. If it be determined, as it probably will be, that some alterations are indispensable, we may assume that the changes which have lately occurred, and those which are to be anticipated in its character, are most favourable to the making of any reforms that may be deemed expedient, either in the mode of election, the necessary qualification of candidates, or in the allotment of their duties after being nominated directors. Suffice it to say, that any plan for effecting such reforms will be incomplete, that does not unite the objects of improving the direction without taking from it that distinctive character which gives it a particular value, as part of our Indian legislature.

* The usage of secret ballot, which is that resorted to on such occasions, is not limited to the court of proprietors. It continues to be practised by the directors whenever they are divided in opinion, and must tend to diminish in that body the personal responsibility which it is desirable to impose upon every man having such public duties to perform.

It is presumed that increase of knowledge, and more competence to the particular duties allotted to the different members of this body, would give them more weight and consequence, not only with all under their authority but with the public, than they enjoy at present; and it is believed this might be effected without any changes of a violent nature. Many motives which at present lead men to desire a seat in the direction might be lost, but others would be created, more suited to the altered condition of the Company and the Indian empire. Nor is there any part of such a reform that would materially affect the principles of the actual government, though it would gradually introduce a considerable change in the duties of those by whom it was administered.

However we may be disposed to think that the Indian government in England, as now constituted, is not adequate to its increasing duties, we should not hurry to the extreme of its abolition, without calmly considering whether it is not capable of reform; but the consequence of preserving it under an improved system will be best established by a view of the most prominent of those evils which must inevitably result from its destruction.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the character and composition of any intermediate body that might be established in its place. The ingenuity of our ablest statesmen has been exhausted to devise plans for such an authority, and we should no

doubt have a repetition of such expedients: but no rational being can doubt that the ministers who could desire the annihilation of the Company, and had strength to carry that measure into effect, would take care, in whatever manner they might mould their departments for the rule of India, to make the whole subservient to their own power. It is therefore necessary at present to offer some observations upon the probable consequences that would result from our vast eastern territories coming under the direct authority or influence of the crown.

The first inevitable change on such an event would be in the different view taken of the Indian empire by the authority under which it was then placed. With the Company's government it has always been, and must remain, a primary consideration; with his majesty's government it must be a secondary one. This has been too often shown, in cases where the latter had a right to interfere, to leave a doubt of the fact; and who can calculate the injury that would arise in India, when every measure which regarded that empire should be considered with reference to other and more immediate questions of expediency?

The urgent desire of satisfying friends, and of disarming opponents, of conciliating the public, or of avoiding parliamentary discussions, would often outweigh all interests connected with our remote possessions in the minds of the wisest and strongest

ministers; and at a period of weakness, the most serious evils might justly be apprehended from this source: nor could we look to the House of Commons as that check which they form upon other occasions to any abuse or unwise exercise of power. Questions of a magnitude to excite the attention of that body would seldom be brought forward; and when they were, they would be so enveloped in details, that few would understand them; for a general and familiar acquaintance with the affairs of India can never be anticipated.

Under such circumstances, that great country might be treated as a colony, without having those defences against misgovernment which colonies, in general, possess. The West Indies, for instance, besides their local colonial assemblies, have an embodied interest, which is strong in parliament, and can advocate their rights whenever these are assailed; but we can look to no period when there can be any representation of the nations of India. On the contrary, we may look for associated interests against them, particularly when a system is adopted that will make every question connected with that country secondary to numerous other considerations.

The alarm taken by the public at the transfer of the patronage now enjoyed by the directors to the ministers of the crown, has hitherto contributed, more than all the other reasons, to the preservation of the Company; and this is a rational and constitu-

tional ground of fear, both as to its probable effects in India and England. The general view that has been taken of this subject, is, however, very limited. The actual patronage of the Company has been taken as that which, in the event of the abolition of the corporation, would fall to the crown; but those who have computed in this manner, have forgotten the weakness of one party, and the strength of the other. It would not be difficult to arrange, without much increase of the influence of the crown, for the disposal of the appointments of writers and cadets, nor is it of much consequence by whom, or how, these are selected, provided means are taken to ensure their possessing the requisite qualifications: but who will pretend to find a sufficient guard against the encroachments of the ministers on the rights and interests of the service abroad; and who, that understands this subject, but must be satisfied that the very existence of the empire depends upon every branch of that service being sufficiently protected? It will be asserted, that if India was under the direct authority of the crown, men of superior talent, who distinguished themselves in the country, would be brought much more forward, both at home and abroad, than they are at present, and that such a change would remedy this prominent defect in the actual system. This might be true; but though it is not meant to deny that his majesty's ministers, as enlightened statesmen, would seek through such instruments to

promote the good administration of our Eastern empire, can there be a doubt that they would also use this mean in aid of those efforts which their condition must compel them to make in order to extend their patronage?

The Indian government, when transferred entirely to the ministers of the crown, would, even in England, present a much greater number of places than is at present imagined; and supposing, as no doubt would be the case, the departments abroad were defended by regulations and acts of parliament, numerous inroads nevertheless might, and would be, made upon them. There are many appointments, civil and military, which can hardly be said to belong to any particular branch of the service; these are dependant upon events, and the exigencies of the moment, and must be left, in a great degree, to the discretion of the local authorities. The latter, supposing such motives to exist at the fountain-head as those under which ministers are likely to act, might be multiplied to almost any extent; sinecures, now unknown, might be gradually introduced, and pensions multiplied. It may be asked, why all these abuses do not now take place: the reason is obvious; the local governments are checked in the exercise of every power that tends to the creation of such patronage by the directors, who, in their turn, are controlled by the India board, over which they watch with a vigilance that has in it almost a spirit of retaliation.

Besides these checks, the ablest servants of the Company are forward to take alarm at the slightest acts of the local governments, or the authorities in England, which trench, in the most remote degree, upon what are deemed the exclusive rights of the different branches of the India service. This forms a chain of defence against the increase or abuse of patronage that cannot be broken; but there is no doubt that the Company is the most important link in this chain. If that intermediate body did not exist, there would not be the smallest difficulty in reconciling those who filled the highest stations abroad to give their cordial aid to advance a system, in the benefits of which they would participate, and which would be favourable to their views of wealth and ambition; nor would this aid be limited to persons appointed from England. The price of distinction and high employment to men who had risen in the service in India, might often be the sanction of their names, and efforts to promote measures calculated to depress and injure that body to which they belonged, but from which their personal interests were separated.

With such aids to protect their patronage in a distant and ill-understood scene, who can believe that parliamentary interference would constitute an efficient check upon the proceedings of the ministers of the day, to defend which they had gained those who possessed the best talent and the most authentic sources of information.

It will not seem unfair to draw a conclusion of what would happen to our territories in India, if transferred to the crown, from the history of those colonies which have been, and are, under its direct authority. It is believed that an investigation as to the mode in which patronage has been exercised in those distant possessions would not be favourable to the arguments of persons who advocate this change in our Indian government.

If we desire that our rule over India should be permanent, we must take care that its constitution shall suit that of England; and we must view the operation of the latter, not at any moment when extraordinary causes produce extraordinary effects, but as it is in ordinary times. We cannot, for instance, calculate upon ministers remaining so long in office, and being so strongly supported by public opinion, as the present are. These circumstances may render them less dependent on patronage than any of their predecessors have been, or any of their successors are likely to be; but suppose opposing parties nearly balanced, will the successful party hesitate at any means within their power to maintain themselves? and when their adversaries prevail, what changes might we not anticipate? Such changes habit has rendered not merely familiar, but beneficial to England; but if they extended to India, their frequent occurrence would sap the very foundations of our power; for it is not too much to add, that our hopes of pre-

serving that empire must rest chiefly on our being able to keep its administration free from the certain injury consequent to its being subject to the influence of the politics in England.

The foregoing arguments are meant to show the evil effects which we may anticipate to India, and eventually to England, from the abolishing of the East India Company as a medium for the government of India; but the danger to be apprehended is not so much from the amount of patronage that would fall into the hands of the ministers of the crown, as the manner in which the latter, from their obligations, and the frequent changes to which they are subject, would be likely to exercise it. The patronage of the crown has, of late years, apparently greatly increased; but the strength gained by this part of our constitution has been more than counterbalanced by the increased influence of public opinion on every measure of the state. We have seen, however, that the salutary check which this constitutes neither does nor can apply in any efficient degree to the administration of India, that country being too remote, and its interests too imperfectly understood, to admit a hope of advantage from such influence. On the contrary, there is cause to fear that the action of public opinion at home might give rise to measures which, while they brought partial and doubtful benefit to Great Britain, would be productive of serious injury to India.

CHAPTER X.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

Power of Governor-general.—Proposed Change in his Duties.—Nomination of Lieutenant-governors to distant parts of our Possessions.—Considerations on the System of Judicature, of Police, and Revenue.—Civil and Military Establishments.

The next object of attention is the construction of our government in India. Mr. Pitt's bill, however defective in other points, remedied a serious defect of the local administration of our eastern territories, by giving ample powers to the Governor-general in council of Bengal over the other presidencies. It has been ascertained from the fullest experience, that the internal tranquillity of our possessions in India, as well as their security against external attack, has been very greatly promoted by the measure of placing one head over our wide territories in that quarter, which has put an end to contentions with subordinate authorities, and given combination to the resources of our empire.

Since this bill was passed, many circumstances have occurred to increase the duties of the Governor-general in an extraordinary degree. They are,

at present, more than almost any individual can perform. From this and other causes it would appear a very desirable improvement of the present system, to relieve this high public officer from details connected with the internal administration of the government of Bengal. His emancipation from those limited and local proceedings, in which much of his time is now consumed, would, in every way, be productive of public benefit, leaving him more at liberty than he now can be to attend to duties of higher importance, and to visit the distant parts of the empire he governs. The numerous occasions, during the last thirty years, in which the internal administration of Bengal has devolved upon a vice-president, has proved from experience that, as far as its internal rule is concerned, the interests of the Company would not suffer by such a change; indeed, a governor, who was confined to that duty alone, might be expected to fulfil it better than one whose attention is continually demanded by objects of more importance to the empire at large.

The clause* in the Act of Parliament which vests in the Governor-general the power of acting upon his own responsibility, without the concurrence, or contrary to the opinion of his council, "in cases of high importance, and essentially affecting the public interest and welfare," had a particular

* Vide Geo. III. cap. 3, sec. 47; by the same clause a similar power is vested in the governor of Madras and Bombay.

reference to political measures which he may deem it his duty to adopt. It would, therefore, be neither contrary to the principle nor to the usage of the present local government of India to devolve upon the Governor-general, personally, its complete political administration. In all measures of internal administration, he would act, with respect to Bengal, as he now does in the cases reported or referred for his approbation or decision from Madras and Bombay; and he would, consequently, as far as these were concerned, be more limited * in the personal exercise of power than he is at present. With regard to political affairs, he certainly would be less restrained; but then his direct responsibility to his superiors in England would be greater.

By such arrangement, the Governor-general would lose the benefit he derives from the information and experience of his present counsellors; but that deficiency would be well supplied by an arrangement that should give him the aid of the best talents the public service produced, to fill the highest situations in his establishment. That of political and foreign secretary, instead of being a station to which persons rise (as has been the usage) from labours in an office at Calcutta, should

* It would, for instance, be a much more responsible exercise of the power committed to him, to disapprove an act of a governor and council of Bengal, than it is at present to exercise his prerogative of adopting a measure from which his council dissent.

be placed upon a footing, both as to pay and rank, that would render it an office of ambition to the first officers in the political department. The same should be the case regarding the secretaries in the public, judicial, revenue, and military departments. If this plan were adopted, those high officers, and all who aid them, should be selected from the whole service, and not from any particular presidency. The benefit of this part of the arrangement would be incalculable. It would excite and reward talent, diffuse the best information of every part of India, elevate the services of Madras and Bombay (as far as pretension to these high employments went) to an equality with Bengal, remove jealousies, and make impressions favourable to the supreme authority. Its tendency would be to enlarge men's minds, and to carry them beyond the local, to a consideration of the general, interests of the empire; and, in this view, its effects would infallibly be productive of great good. There is no disposition to detract from the merits of those* who have filled, or continue to fill, the high executive offices at Calcutta, some of whom have been distinguished men; but the constant residence of a great majority of this class on one spot, their feelings towards the particular services to which they belong, their

* High and respected names might be here adduced of persons who have filled these offices; but men like those could never suffer from the field of competition being enlarged.

natural attachment to institutions and establishments, to promote the success of which the best efforts of their lives have been devoted, must give them a bias which cannot but in some degree narrow the judgment on points that relate to the general administration of India. No objections could be offered to such a measure, on the ground of the public functionaries attached to the Governor-general not having the local knowledge of particular parts of India. That knowledge would be possessed by those who held similar offices under the subordinate governments, to whom would belong all the details. The secretaries of the departments, with the Governor-general, would be selected from their high ability and general acquaintance with the various interests and systems of the whole empire.

There is no cause produces such bad effects in our government in India as the continued efforts to apply* the same general rules, principles, and institutions, to every part of our extended and diversified empire; and no remedy could be ap-

* This is perceptible not only in the measures of government; it is to be found in almost all the writings published from observation of particular provinces, but rendered general in their application, either by the ignorance or the vanity of the authors. This spreads to England, where we have printed accounts of the habits, manners, customs, religious usages, and character of the inhabitants of India, specifically true, but which, if taken generaliy, are as remote from truth as a description of Europe would be if drawn from an account of France or Spain.

plied so likely to obviate this evil as the arrangement now suggested: but it never could be adopted, unless the Governor-general's duties were separated from those that belong to the internal affairs of the presidency at which he resides.

There would be a further advantage in separating the duties of a Governor-general* from those of the local government of Bengal, in its withdrawing his high name from those minor acts which must always agitate a community composed like that of Calcutta. This separation would in no material degree diminish his power, but it would prevent the necessity of its daily exercise, in any manner that could lessen or injure those general impressions of respect which are so essential to the success of his administration. But, in forming this and other parts of the plan, great care must be taken that no diminution be made of the Governor-general's influence and patronage. These are necessary for the performance of his large duties, inasmuch as they increase that consideration and power which it is essential the person filling this high station should enjoy.

* The expense necessary to form what would be viewed by many as a new establishment would not be great. It would include but little beyond the pay of a governor or vice-president of Bengal, equal probably to that of the other presidencies. With regard to other parts of the arrangements, as the same duties would only have to be done in a different mode, it would be little more than a transfer of offices, with some increase of pay to those at the head of each department.

Under the present system, the Governor-general, when at Madras or Bombay, has the right of presiding at the council-board; and the objects proposed in Bengal might be effected without any material change of system, by the nomination of a permanent vice-president, to whom the details of the presidency would belong; leaving, however, the Governor-general the option of presiding on all occasions on which he might deem his doing so of importance. This arrangement would prevent the collision which, under other circumstances, might, perhaps, be apprehended from the constant or frequent residence of the Governor-general at Calcutta.

Recent events have carried our direct or controlling power to the remotest parts of India, and a change is imperiously called for in the form of the administration of these distant possessions. This subject has been very fully treated in another work *, in which the appointment of a Lieutenant-governor for Malwa, and the adjoining countries, is strongly recommended; suffice it here to say, that, in the actual state of our empire, it appears not only expedient to introduce a new system of local government into Central India, but into other † parts of our vast possessions. Such a measure

* Vide Central India, vol. I. page 271.

† A similar plan to that proposed for Central India, might be introduced with good effect into the Deckan, inclusive of

would tend, in a very great degree, to inspire confidence in our subjects, promote tranquillity, and suppress danger when it arose. It may be added to these great advantages, that it would enable us to effect, with much more facility than we can at present, such improvements in our internal system as are recommended by experience, and are required by the difference of character and condition in the inhabitants of the countries we have to govern from those of the provinces for whose benefit our established institutions were framed. Nor is it unimportant to state, that this scheme of rule, while it gave strength to our power, would ultimately be attended with economy; for, through it, we might expect to diminish our most expensive establishments, by arrangements which would be favourable, not only to the preservation of whatever of rank or high feeling still remains among the natives of India subject to our power and control, but to the desirable object of employing them in our internal government. Many persons who profess a great desire to enlighten and improve the natives of India, exclaim against plans which are calculated to confer upon these natives high and confidential employment, on the ground of their being, as a people, ignorant, corrupt, and immoral. Allowing for a

the Nagpore territories, and north-western parts of Hindustan Proper. Mr. James Stuart, in a very able paper on the police, (vide Fifth Report, page 586) suggests a subordinate government for the latter country.

moment this melancholy picture to be correct, can it enter into the mind of any man who has the slightest knowledge of human nature or of human communities, that mere instruction, whether moral or religious, will ever advance men in civilization while they are excluded * from all that stimulates the mind to good and great actions? We may teach them to understand, better than they now do, their own depressed and degraded condition; but if we wish that, as they acquire knowledge, they should maintain their allegiance and attachment to those by whom it is imparted, we must grant them confidence and respect; and if we succeed in giving them consequence in their own estimation, they will soon attain it in that of others.

* Mr. James Stuart, in the report before alluded to, treats this part of the subject with great ability. "Are the natives of Hindustan (he asks) a different order of beings, that they are to be stinted into honesty, and degraded into principle?"—Report V. page 581. The same able public officer, after remarking on the importance of gradations in society amongst the natives, and the necessity, if we mean improvement, for building our plans on the existing basis of their ancient institutions, and to adopt them to their habits and manners,—comments upon the probable result of the existing system, and forcibly observes, "As we proceed, these provinces will soon present the singular spectacle of a great empire, the government of which rigidly excludes its subjects from every object of fair ambition which in the pursuit could stimulate men to cultivate their faculties, or, in the possession, enlarge their understanding, and elevate their minds."—Fifth Report, page 584.

It is not to be expected that we can ever completely succeed in establishing any cordial or social union with the natives of India. We are, as foreigners differing in manners, language, religion, and feelings, too much opposed to them to admit of our ever realizing such hopes; but our efforts should nevertheless be continually directed to the object of reconciling them to their condition. Nothing can tend so much to this as their employment. The character of our government debars us from intrusting them with military or political power; but this is the strongest of all reasons for bringing them forward in every manner that is unattended with danger. The acquisition of knowledge, under a system which almost excludes the higher classes of our native subjects from any participation in the government of their own country, must either rouse them to efforts against our authority, or sink them into a state of abject submission, and leave them with few objects in life beyond indolence and sensual indulgence.

The great evil of our Indian administration, throughout all its branches, arises out of the endeavour to simplify, through the means of uniform systems, the whole scheme of our government over the natives. This, by rendering a knowledge of its details apparently easy, gives to those employed at the seat of government a confidence in their competency to minute superintendence, which

renders them adverse to all deviations and changes from prescribed rules, however such may be recommended by local circumstances. It is to this feeling, and a natural love of power, that we must ascribe the dislike evinced to any delegation of authority which lessens their consequence, by investing an individual with that rank and station which gives him a latitude of action beyond their daily check and control. The period, however, is arrived when all minor considerations must give way to the great object of securing the peace and promoting the prosperity of our extended territories; and full experience leads us to a conclusion, that no one measure would contribute more to these ends than that which has been here suggested.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

What has been said naturally leads to observations upon the system of judicature, which was first established in Bengal, and afterwards extended to Madras and Bombay. A minute examination of the merits of this system would occupy a volume. It is here meant to limit inquiry to one important point, which is, not whether the existing courts of judicature within our former possessions should undergo a change or reform, but whether they should be extended to our newly-acquired territories.

The parliament of Great Britain decreed that the natives of India should be governed by their own laws and customs. The supreme government of Bengal established the existing system, on the ground, no doubt, of its being best suited to the country of Bengal, where Mahomedan rule had been for a long time established. They were probably induced to give the Mahomedan code*, with all its defects, the preference over that of the Hindus, from the latter having nothing that can be well termed a defined and comprehensive system of jurisprudence upon which any courts of justice under our authority could act. But the situation of Bengal, in which this measure was first adopted, was widely different from other parts of India, which, it cannot be too often repeated, consist not of one but many nations, and has not one but many systems of rule and of law. Almost every province has different established customs, or, in other words, laws, from that next to it. These were not written, it is true; but observance of them from time immemorial has given them all the sanction and authority of laws, and their very forms are associated with the most ancient and revered of the Hindu usages and institutions. The Mahomedan conquest of India

* This refers to the criminal law: the civil law has regard to the religion and usages of all classes of our native subjects; the forms and habits of our courts are borrowed from those of the Mahomedan rulers of India.

was never complete. The Hindu princes and chiefs, though tributary, maintained the internal management of a great proportion of India; and even in other parts of the empire, Hindu usages were seldom interfered with, except for purposes of extortion or oppression. It may, therefore, be assumed, that, notwithstanding that spirit of domination, and that contempt for infidels, which marked the Mahomedan rulers, their law was never more than formally introduced* among their Hindu subjects, who continued, inalmost all cases, to be governed by their own usages.

Subsequent to the introduction of the judicial system, the original law has been almost buried under volumes of regulations and ordinances, rendered necessary to adapt it to our principles of rule. The best talents of the civil service of the Company have been devoted to the judicial department; but it may be remarked that, although the courts of justice have been supported by the most liberal expenditure, and although those who preside in them are, generally speaking, as remarkable for their laborious application and abilities, as for their integrity, the establishment has never become popular among that people, in conformity to whose real or supposed prejudices it was constituted.

* There was, it is true, a Mahomedan cauzee in almost every town and village, but where the Hindu population prevailed, his duties were limited to his own tribe. This, on investigation, appears to have been the general rule; the exceptions to it were cases of oppression.

What has been stated will sufficiently account for this impression amongst the Hindus*; and we may affirm of the Mahomedans, that the numerous changes necessarily made both in the civil and criminal code, and the circumstance of a Christian judge presiding in the court, must have effaced much of that respect and awe which he may be conceived to have for a system of law founded on the Koran. Concluding such to be the general feeling of all classes, we cannot, considering the condition of society in which we found them, be surprised that a considerable proportion of the higher ranks of our native subjects, both Hindu and Mahomedan, should have felt dissatisfied at the introduction of a system which, in seeking the ends of rigid and impartial justice, give more attention to general principles and strict forms than to persons and prejudices.

* A Bengal civil servant of experience and reputation, remarking on the code of criminal law we have adopted from the Mahomedans, observes, "As to the Hindus, not one in a thousand of their pundits (domestic teachers, or learned men) can read Persian, much less Arabic; and, added to this, when these persons would consider it a defilement to peruse the books wherein alone the law can be found, it is easy to credit the fact, that the whole Hindu race has been, and ever will continue, ignorant of those rules which determine their liberty and existence."—Letter from Mr. Fortescue, officiating judge at Benares, to Chief Secretary Bayley, dated Juonpore, 17th Feb. 1816.

The nature of the present work will not admit of entering at any length upon a subject on which the opinions of able men are so divided as that of our judicial establishments. It is a much easier task to detect the errors of a system than to point out a remedy by establishing the superiority of one that is untried. There are some defects, however, of our judicature, on which almost all appear agreed.

The delays and expenses attendant upon the courts we have instituted form a very constant subject of complaint; and, while the purity of the English judges is recognised by all, there is an universal impression of the insolence and venality of their subordinate native officers, whose exercise of the authority in which they are clothed has been rendered more unpopular from their being often taken from persons in the lowest ranks of society.

The prejudices which exist against our courts of judicature in the country of Rohilcund, where a great proportion of the inhabitants are Mahomedans, have been already noticed*. The opinion of the commissioners and of several of the judges in that country was given in very strong and decided language; and many other names of the best-informed and ablest civil servants in Bengal might be brought forward to establish the fact, that, in the countries under that government,

* Vol. I., p. 586.

where alone the system has had a full trial, there has been considerable disappointment; and that, notwithstanding the improvements which have been introduced, much remains to be done before our judicial institutions can be made to fulfil the objects contemplated by their benevolent founder. It is not meant to state that great good has not resulted from the institution of our courts of justice: with such principles as government has acted upon; with such industry and talent as have been applied to promote this system; and with the blessing of undisturbed tranquillity for forty years in the provinces of Bengal and Bahar, it was impossible that any system of judicature administered during so long a period should not have been productive of good. It is also admitted that our present subjects in the countries mentioned must now be more reconciled to this system than they were at first, and that to introduce any change subversive of an institution so long established, would on every ground be most unwise and impolitic; but on the other hand, all must agree that it is our duty to continue our unwearied efforts to remedy its defects*.

* The alleged defects of our present system are, that it excites a spirit of litigation; that its delays are great; that the expense attending suits is considerable; that the laws, from their original narrow basis, and from being framed more as expedients to meet particular cases than on general principles, have become so voluminous and complicated that a

The furnishing* of native law officers with the best means of instruction; the obliging of them to possess certain qualifications and respectability of character; and the increased employment and more extended jurisdiction of the courts of native commissioners† and Punchayets‡, will be found the

complete knowledge of them is hardly attainable; that they are, consequently, understood by few; and that among the natives who study them, many have no object but to take advantage of their complexity to screen guilt, or as the means of involving or defrauding others with impunity.

* The native law officers should be educated at public institutions, founded and supported on principles calculated not merely for the professional, but general improvement; and no individual should receive a license to practise, who did not add good character to the necessary acquirements. We should also create some objects of profit and distinction, to which men of talent and integrity might aspire: the natives, who devoted themselves to this branch, would, from their efforts to obtain such honourable rewards, rise in the estimation of their countrymen; and, from such a change, we might expect great benefit to such a system of judicature.

† In 1821, the jurisdiction of the native commissioners was extended to suits of 500 rupees. The success of this experiment will probably cause a greater extension of their power, and we may, perhaps, anticipate a period when the English zillah judge will have few causes but those of appeal from the native courts.

‡ It is often stated by those that are adverse to the extension of the judicature of Punchayet, that the records of the government of India prove that they are not a popular court, because they are not so much resorted to by the natives as the courts of Adawlut. The cause of this has been elsewhere

best mode of diminishing delays and expense: but the most essential of all measures would be, a complete revision of the whole of the laws and regulations, and the formation of an almost new code. To the accomplishment of such a task the very highest talents in the service should be directed; and it would not so much require superiority of

stated. "Under a native prince, when complaints were made or accusations brought forward, and he, instead of a despotic award, directed, in a spirit of justice or moderation, that a punchayet should assemble to investigate them, can any man, acquainted with the principles upon which such states acted, and the feelings of those subject to their authority, believe that the defendant or complainant (though each had the privilege of a fair challenge) deemed himself at liberty, whatever nominal forms might exist, to refuse to submit his case to the tribunal ordered to investigate it? He could not but know that such conduct would be deemed contumacy, and subject him to all the hazard of a summary and violent proceeding. Under the British government men can have no such apprehension, and, unless the rule is made absolute for trial of certain cases in these courts, it would not be in one out of a hundred that the two parties would assent. Both the plaintiff and defendant would calculate whether they had the best chance of gaining their suit by applying to a punchayet or zillah; and whenever they did not agree, the latter court, in which the forms are compulsory, would be that in which the case was at last tried. But this result must not be brought forward as a decided proof of its superior popularity. Before such a fact can be admitted, it must be established whether the preference to it is given by the honest men or the rogues." —Vide Central India, vol. ii. p. 296.

legal skill in those employed * upon it, as that they should be endowed with minds unfettered by prejudice for or against any particular system, and be disposed to take the fullest advantage of the facts and experience which late years have accumulated. No expense would be too great to incur for the completion of such an object; but it is not likely this general code could be very large, for unless we continue a desire to impose, at all hazards, the same rules and regulations upon the whole of India, each division of our empire should have a subsidiary code of its own, framed with attention to the particular character and usage of its inhabitants.

It is here to be remarked, that we cannot be too careful how we extend our judicial system. Bengal Proper, from the character of its submissive inhabitants, was the safest part of our dominion upon which we could make such an experiment. Its introduction into Hindustan became more dangerous; and the Hindu inhabitants of Malwa and Rajpootana, whose habits and customs have never undergone any great changes, even under the Mahomedan government, would ill receive such an intended benefit: but this subject has been treated elsewhere, and a plan has been suggested † for administering justice, which is believed to be better suited to the actual condition of those countries.

* Such a commission would, of course, be aided by the information and opinions of the ablest natives from the different parts of our dominions.

† Vide "Central India," vol. ii. page 246.

We cannot better illustrate the principles of this plan, than by quoting the work to which we have alluded.

"Supposing," the author observes, "a local government established over Central India every way efficient for its permanent administration, the manner in which it should exercise its functions ought (as far as general principles are concerned) to be settled. The first question would be, the mode in which it should administer justice, both in cases occurring in its own territories, and in those referred to its arbitration and decision by dependent states. It will however, before we treat this part of the subject, be useful to offer some general observations that have particular application to countries in the situation of Central India.

"The most serious part of this question, and one which lies at the very threshold, is, whether we are, in the shape and substance of our administration of justice, to pay most attention to our own rules, principles, and prejudices, or to those of the nation, or rather nations, we have to govern? We may lay it down as a first principle, that no system can be good that is not thoroughly understood and appreciated by those for whose benefit it is intended. The minds of men can never be tranquillized, much less attached, until they are at repose regarding the intentions of the authority under which they live, which they never can be till all classes see and comprehend its principles of government. If our system is

in advance of the community, if it is founded on principles not comprehended by them, and has forms and usages adverse to their habits and feelings, we shall experience no adequate return of confidence and allegiance. To secure these results, we must associate ourselves with our subjects. We could never have conquered India without the assistance of the natives of that country, and by them alone can we preserve it. Our actual condition makes this necessity more imperative. We are not called upon to lower ourselves to their standard, but we must descend so far from the real or supposed eminence on which we stand as to induce them to accompany us in the work of improvement. Great and beneficial alterations in society, to be complete, must be produced within the society itself; they cannot be the mere fabrication of its superiors, or of a few who deem themselves enlightened. Every chord of the instrument must be in tune, or there will be no good harmony. This compels men, who desire real reforms in large communities, to dread what is often termed reason, because the majority, whom it is desired to benefit, are not rational, in the abstract and refined acceptation of the word; and because no projected benefit can be operative till it is understood and recognised as such by those for whose good it is intended. This reasoning applies to all the legislative measures that we have adopted,

or may hereafter adopt, in our eastern empire; but it is meant in this place to limit the deductions from it to those which appear expedient for Central India. The great majority of the inhabitants of that country are Hindus:—to introduce therefore, a jurisdiction grounded, even in its forms, on the imperfect code of the Mahomedans, who do not bear a proportion * to the whole population of five to the hundred, would be an innovation almost as great as the introduction of the English law, and one, from causes which have already been stated, much more repugnant to the feelings of the inhabitants. If we desire to conciliate the latter, or to benefit by their aid, we must adopt a system that is familiar and intelligible to them; and, as the groundwork of that, we must preserve and restore the courts of Punchayet."

POLICE.

The passive character and quiet domestic habits of a great proportion of our Indian subjects, leads them to place as much, if not more, value than any other nation upon an efficient police, to secure them in the enjoyment of that peaceful routine of life which they so generally prefer. Their respect for

* The proportion of the Mahomedans to the Hindus, in Central India, has been computed as one to twenty-one and a half. Vide p. 225. It is still less in the neighbouring country of Rajpootana.

the government under which they live is measured more by the success with which it protects them from the thief, the plunderer, and the murderer, than by any other of its acts. The arrangements for the duties of police, introduced in Bengal at the period of the permanent settlement, were far from successful. At one period, indeed, the failure of this system was quite alarming: opinions were divided whether this proceeded from the inactivity or inefficiency of those intrusted with its execution, or the radical defects of the system; but one point was clear, that while we prided ourselves in the liberal and just general principles upon which our judicial and revenue systems were grounded, the district all around Calcutta became infested with robbers and murderers in a degree that rendered, for many years, life and property more insecure than they were in the most barbarous * countries. Efficient measures

* Lord Minto, in a despatch dated in May, 1810, states that the evidences lately adduced, exclusive of a multiplicity of other proofs, establishes, beyond a question, the commission of robberies, murders, and the most deliberate cruelties; in a word, an aggregate of the most atrocious crimes: nor let it be supposed, he adds, that these offences were of rare occurrence, or confined to particular districts; they were committed, with few exceptions, and with slight modifications of atrocity, in every part of Bengal.

Mr. Dowdeswell, chief secretary to government, in an able report on the police, observes, "Were I to enumerate only a thousandth part of the atrocities of the decoits, and of the unjust sufferings of the people; and were I to soften that recital in every mode which language would permit, I should

were adopted to correct this great evil, and the subject of police has since received much attention, both from the government at home and abroad.

A question has been long agitated, whether we should employ the collector of the revenue as a magistrate or not. The objections to our doing so have their foundation on general reasoning, drawn from analogy of the practice of other states, and in that jealousy of the misapplication of power which belongs to the constitution of England, and which it is good to preserve in our administration of India,

still despair of obtaining credit, solely on my own authority, for the accuracy of the narrative. * * * * * Volumes might be filled with the atrocities of the decoits, every line of which would make the blood run cold with horror."

Mr. Edward Strachey, judge of circuit, whose opportunities of observing the extent of this evil were ample, gives his opinion on this subject very fully in a letter, under date 13th of June, 1808, to Mr. Bayley, register of the Nizamut Adawlut. "That decoity," he observes, "is very prevalent in Rajeshahye has been often stated; but if its vast extent were known,—if the scenes of horror, the murders, the burnings, the excessive cruelties, which are continually perpetrated here, were properly represented to government, I am confident that some measures would be adopted to remedy the evil: certainly there is not an individual belonging to the government who does not anxiously wish to save the people from robbery and massacre; yet the situation of the people is not sufficiently attended to. It cannot be denied that, in point of fact, there is no protection for persons or property; and that the present wretched, mechanical, inefficient, system of police is a mere mockery."—Vide Fifth Report, and Collection of Revenue Papers.

as far as we can without injury to our means for its efficient government. It is on the latter ground that the advocates for employing the collector rest their chief arguments. They assert that the duties of the collector must lead to an intercourse with the inhabitants of his district, which will give him the means of preventing crime, and of seizing criminals, beyond what any other can possess. Without denying that the influence and power which he possesses as magistrate may be sometimes abused, they argue, that no evil is likely to arise from such occasional misconduct which can in any way balance the benefit to be derived from his agency in the efficient administration of police.

The above arguments have certainly more of Asiatic than of English principles, but they are not on that account less worthy of attention; for, after all, the question is not, what is most consonant to our own views and feelings, but what will be productive of the greatest good, and tend most to the happiness and security of our eastern subjects.

The employment of a civil servant having no other functions, as a magistrate, has this strong objection; that if his talents render him capable of efficiently fulfilling the important duties attached to that office, he must be early promoted to other stations, and there is no line in which experience is of so much consequence as in the department of police. The best recommendation of this plan is, that it forms a good education for a person

who is to rise to the office of judge, but such instruction is only necessary when the judicial and revenue lines are kept distinct. Where the contrary is the case, there is no such school for judicial duties as the office of a collector. It has been justly observed* by a distinguished civil officer, "that the assistant of the collector comes in daily colloquial intercourse with the cultivators and proprietors of the soil. In every ministerial act, he gains an insight into their domestic habits, their social dependance, and their more public concerns. He discovers the origin of their individual influence, of their mutual necessities, of their reciprocal dependance, and of their ultimate connexion with the government. He thus acquires a notice of the springs and motives which actuate them, and, by the nature of his duty, is engaged rather in conciliating and arbitrating, than in dictating and enforcing his opinions.

"But how widely different," he adds, "is the situation of an assistant to the magistrate, who instantly begins by being a judge in every case, before he has an opportunity of forming even any very general ideas on the nature of the affairs he must daily determine. After a course of practice, he may establish rules for his guidance, founded on the uniformity of his own decisions, or by other means; but, at starting, he can have had no ele-

* Vide Letter from Mr. Fortescue to Mr. Secretary Bailey, 18th February, 1816.

ments to regulate their principles; every thing is necessarily new and strange to him, from a want of any previous familiarity with the propensities and peculiarities of the people. To begin, then, by first deciding, and afterwards learning the matter, is surely preposterous.

"The revenue assistant," he concludes, "commences his course by placing himself among the people in an easy and unreserved manner; the judicial, by elevating himself above them with a distant and commanding air. The former is first employed in learning, from its springs and ties, the rudiments of a novel species of policy; the latter, without any lights, in determining its rights and usages."

What has been quoted from this long and able despatch is merely to establish that, even if a regard for general principles, and alarm at the possible abuse of power, may prevent our blending magisterial duties with those of the collector, we may rest satisfied that the former will, when intrusted to youth, be best performed by those who have been schooled in the revenue department. It is in its minute details that a true knowledge of the art of Indian administration can alone be learnt; and whenever this branch of the government is thoroughly well-administered, and those to whom the police is committed are every way efficient to their duties, a great burden will be taken from the higher branches of the judicial department,

and our subjects will become more satisfied with our rule when the effects of our system are to repress, not to produce litigation; and to prevent crimes by decreasing the hope of escaping detection and punishment.

The introduction of a new system of police in Bengal was contemporaneous with the permanent settlement of the revenue, and was framed, in a great degree, to meet the changes which that measure made in the community. The fluctuating state of the revenue of the provinces which it was desired to settle; the great abuses which prevailed among all clothed in authority, from the highest Zemindar to the lowest officer of a village, suggested the complete abolition of their power, as the most effectual remedy of the evils which resulted from the tyranny and oppression of this host of petty authorities. The motives that led to this sweeping act can never be doubted: it was dictated by a pure spirit of benevolence and justice; but a better and more minute knowledge of the interior of the frame of Hindu communities would have prevented our casting away such means of preserving the internal peace of the country. It would have led to an effort to reform those, whose place in the society in which they were born would have rendered them, if we had succeeded, as efficient instruments of good as, under a different system, they had been of bad order; but no such effort was made, and a police establishment was given to

each magistrate of persons taken indiscriminately from the population of the country.

The failure of the system in the province of Bengal has led to great efforts at improving the police in that part of India; and, to a certain extent, they have been successful. In Cattack, where the village establishments have been reformed and renovated, and every power, consistent with the principles of our rule, delegated to the principal natives, the effects have been most happy to the peace of the country*.

An improved and more effective system of police has been introduced into several of our recently-acquired possessions. We may, however, lay it down as a maxim, that our success in this, as in other branches of our rule, will chiefly depend on our preserving those institutions and gradations of society which we found established, and on our giving to the most respectable of our native subjects local employment of a description that will raise instead of lower them in the community to which they belong; nor are we to expect any health or efficiency in our internal system, till it thus encourages this class of our subjects to the most active personal exertions for the preservation of the public peace of their native districts.

It has often been proposed† to employ a propor-

* Vide Letter from Bengal, dated 11th January, 1822.

† The court of directors, in a letter to Bengal, dated the 8th November, 1818, desire government to take into "early consi-

tion of the native officers and men of our army in the duties of the police, and no plan could be more calculated to encourage and reward a class of men on whose fidelity and valour the duration of our empire must depend. This subject, however, will be noticed hereafter; suffice it here to state, that we must not allow ourselves to be deterred from the adoption of the measure (which is much more important in a political than a financial view) by any arguments that do not prove it to be an injustice to our other subjects, or pregnant with danger instead of security to the internal peace of the country and the general interests of the empire.

deration the best mode of employing a certain number of the native commissioned and non-commissioned officers and privates in the Bengal police establishments, to be taken either from the invalid or pension lists, or such as government might think proper to allow to be withdrawn from the regular service for that particular purpose." The court trusted that "a considerable saving might be made by the employment of native officers and soldiers in the discharge of police duties; as, notwithstanding a considerable inducement ought to be held out to the native police officer and soldier to stimulate him to exertion in such situations, some deduction might be made, say one-third, for the allowance he would continue to derive from his military service."

The court did not enter into any specification of the particular posts in the police establishments to which they wished to see deserving native officers and soldiers appointed; but they observed, that they "confidently trusted that no minor objections or particularities would be allowed to frustrate or obstruct so great a political object as the proposed arrangement had in view."

European officers are employed at the Tannah * establishment of Bengal, and would be required wherever similar institutions are made; but an important question would arise, how far their services might be essential in the event of a change of system, that should improve the whole police establishment of India, and convert it into means of encouraging and rewarding the native soldiery. There is one fact connected with this question which must not be omitted. The feelings and principles imbibed by military habits are distinct from all others, and it may be asserted that it very rarely happens that a person educated and employed in civil life understands how to treat soldiers. This particularly applies in India, where the change produced on the natives from entering our army is very considerable. The nature of the duty devolved on native soldiers employed in the police, would require their being kept under strict order; and, perhaps, the best mode of securing the success of such an arrangement would be to select from the army well-qualified officers †, of a certain standing, as superintendents of police, or as magistrates. This would not be depriving the civil service of employments that are or ever can be objects of profit

* This is an establishment for providing for old soldiers by grants of land.

† Several military officers have been employed in this line, and particularly at Madras, where the success that has attended this limited experiment warrants the most sanguine anticipations of its success on a more extended scale.

or ambition; and they would soon discover the advantage of relief from a mass of petty and vexatious duties, which, if sedulously attended to, must interfere with other and higher labours, and which, on the other hand, cannot be neglected, even for a moment, without danger to the property and, perhaps, the life of some member of the community.

Many objections may be made to this plan. It will be urged that the very rapidity of execution, which forms the excellence of military officers in the field, would be a serious fault when they were acting as civil officers; that from habit they would be prone in peace to a vigour beyond the law; and that a clashing with the civil authorities might be apprehended. It may, perhaps, be added, that in the event of the European officers of the army ever forgetting their duty to government, they would find aid instead of obstruction from those to whom, by this plan, the charge of the public peace would be confided.

In this question, as in every other of any magnitude connected with the government of India, measures must be decided by the balance of the advantages against their defects. It is always a choice of difficulties. If, from a consideration of the public safety, it is indispensable to employ any part of the native soldiery in the police, and if it is expedient to have this description of persons commanded by those who are accustomed to them, means must be adopted to render the system as

little hurtful as possible to the other parts of the administration, and to obviate all apprehension of its ever being attended with danger to the state. To effect this, a complete separation perhaps of those who entered the police department from the army might be necessary; in such case, they might be selected for the lower situations of this new line as soon as qualified for them, and rise by merit and exertion to the higher gradations of the department. The army would in fact become an ordeal of character, while to a certain extent it formed the habits of men who would constitute, what is much required, a second class of civil officers, limited to specific and subordinate duties. It would perhaps be better to commence by trying this plan on a limited scale, and if it succeeded, it could easily be extended.

REVENUE.

The limits of this work will admit only a few general observations on the collection of the revenue of our Indian empire. This question, which is of primary consequence to our prosperity in a financial view, acquires still more importance from its intimate connexion with the subjects that have been previously treated; for it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that, as we succeed or fail in our revenue settlements, we shall increase or decrease litigation and crime. The real fact is, that from the character and construction of Indian communities, the happiness and comfort of nine-

tenths of the population depends more upon our fiscal than our judicial or political arrangements.

From time immemorial the inhabitants of India have been an agricultural people; thence that extraordinary and minute division of land, and of all the claims and rights which are connected with it, from the share of the sovereign of the country, and the dues of his officers, down to the smaller portions which belong by hereditary right to the lowest among those who form part of the village community, or who cultivate the soil. The period of such division of the land cannot be exactly traced, but it probably existed for many centuries before the Mahomedan invasion. These conquerors, if they could spread their power, appear to have been content, with few exceptions, not only to leave the Hindu institutions undisturbed, but to incorporate them in their own government. It was not however to be expected, amid the wars and revolutions with which India has so often been afflicted, that her provinces would continue under an uniform system, even if they ever had one. The change in population of some, the complete desolation of others, could not but alter the forms as well as the principles of the most ancient and revered institutions; but still, from the extremity of Cape Comorin to the north-western limits of India, a striking similarity of general features may be found in all that regards the culture of the soil and the rights attached to it.

Where the sword of the conqueror has not violated the rights of the proprietor or the cultivator, he claims the land of his fathers, (subject to the land tax, or government share) as well as all that belongs to his condition in his native district, as his indefeasible inheritance; and where violence and usurpation have destroyed these rights, they have generally been re-created by the tendency of the inhabitants to return to the ways of their progenitors, or by the policy of their rulers, who saw in those institutions aids to their own government.

The new head of the village, where such was the case, and all under him, had claims or rights conferred upon them, more or less, as circumstances dictated, resembling their former shape; and the mere fact that his ancestors had, for two or three generations, tilled certain fields, established the right of the cultivator in the soil he cultivated, which nothing but injustice and tyranny could violate. The local differences in the value and extent of such rights were numerous; but everywhere they existed, and were so well understood and sanctioned by usage, that they not only formed the foundation of every revenue arrangement, but preserved, amid wars and changes, amid rapine and plunder, ties and principles which had an effect in restoring order and prosperity that could hardly be credited, except by those by whom it has been witnessed*.

* The rights of the native hereditary officers of a village are much respected in Central India; and never did a country

The first great and decisive step of the English government towards establishing a fixed revenue

afford such proofs of the imperishable nature of this admirable institution. After the Pindarie war, every encouragement was held out for the inhabitants to return to their desolate homes. In several districts, particularly those near the Nerbudda, many of the villages had been waste for more than thirty years. The inhabitants, who had been scattered, followed all occupations: many poteils, who had been obliged to leave their lands, had become plunderers, and remained at or near their ruined villages; some of their relations and friends followed their example; others cultivated grounds at a distance of several hundred miles from their homes; while a great majority went to the large towns, were they found a temporary asylum, and obtained subsistence by labouring in gardens or fields. But there is no people in whose hearts the love of the spot where they were born seems more deeply implanted than the Hindus; and those of Central India, under all their miseries and dispersion, appear never for a moment to have given up the hope of being restored to their homes. The families of each village, though remote from each other, maintained a constant communication; inter-marriages were made, and the links that bound them together were only strengthened by adversity. When convinced that tranquillity was established, they flocked to their roofless houses. Infant poteils (the second and third in descent from the emigrator) were in many cases carried at the head of these parties. When they reached their villages, every wall of a house, every field, was taken possession of by the owner or cultivator, without dispute or litigation amongst themselves, or with government; and in a few days everything was in progress, as if it had never been disturbed. There was seldom any difficulty from the claims of other occupants; for local authorities, which appeared to hesitate at no means that promised profit, rejected the most advantageous offers from new settlers, while a hope remained that an hereditary officer or cultivator, who had claims to the

system in India, was the permanent settlement made of the territories of Bengal, in 1789. This measure, the merits of which have given rise to great discussion*, is now admitted, by its warmest advocates, to have been too much hurried, and to have been adopted with very incomplete information, both as to the extent and resources of the countries settled, and to the various claims, rights, and relations of its inhabitants.

It is not meant to enter upon this large question further than is necessary to determine, how far, and in what mode, it may be expedient to extend the permanent settlement to more recently-acquired territories.

The fundamental principles of this measure are, to facilitate the collection of the revenue, to put an

management or cultivation of its lands, was likely to return. The worst of these rulers are not insensible to the necessity of preserving from injury this admirable and well-constructed foundation of their civil government and revenue system.—*Central India*, Vol. II., p. 20.

* Colonel Wilks, the able historian of the South of India, has devoted a chapter to the examination of the nature of landed property in India; his opinions, confirmed and illustrated as they are by the labour of his research, and the soundness of his judgment, are entitled to the greatest attention: his work (*a*) was the first which treated this subject in a manner worthy of its importance, and none of the facts it contains, or the general principles it has laid down, have ever been successfully controverted. We are also indebted to the same intelligent author for the first full and clear account of village institutions, and courts of Punchayet.

(*a*) Vide vol. i. c. v.

end to all fluctuations in our receipts from the land, and to encourage improvements, by giving the benefit of them to those by whom they are made. It was assumed by Lord Cornwallis, when he introduced this system, that, supposing the right of the zemindar * to the soil not to be the best, (which he believed it to be) it was expedient, for many reasons connected with the improvement of the country, to vest it in him, or some other person: "it being (to use his own words) immaterial to government what individual possesses the land, provided he cultivates it, protects the ryut, and pays the revenue."

* The term zemindar, literally landholder, is sometimes used in the provinces of India to describe a person holding a small property in land, but oftener as the head or representative of the agricultural class in a district. Such persons were in general employed by the Mogul governors of provinces as collectors of the revenue; and as such, established fees, and nankar zumeen, or land for their support, was assigned to them. Of this assigned land, which was proportioned in extent to their duties, they had only the government share. These officers become, according to Hindu usage, hereditary; and in the decline of the Mahomedan empire, they usurped on its weakness, and many of them used the force allowed them for the purpose of maintaining the police, to defend their zemindaries, now converted into principalities, from the authority they or their ancestors had served. But even when their usurpation succeeded, they had only the right to the government share of the soil, unless, perhaps, to some small lands of which their family were original possessors. For the particulars of the rights and occupations of zemindars, vide "Central India," vol. II., page 7.

The above is sufficient to show the character of that fundamental general principle upon which Lord Cornwallis acted. Experience, and more intimate acquaintance with the usages, the feelings, and the institutions of the natives of India, led his colleague, Sir John Shore *, to make every effort to obtain delay in a measure of which he foresaw the evils; but the ardent desire of Lord Cornwallis to confer what he believed would prove a blessing to our subjects, and a benefit to government, made him overrule every objection to the immediate accomplishment of his favourite plan.

This great measure was confessedly adopted without a minute or correct notion of the actual state of property, and the rights of the various classes of the inhabitants, particularly those of the lower orders. It seems to have been expected that certain broad general principles which simplified the revenue system, and combined the interests of great landholders with the prosperity of the country, would produce such good as to make amends for all the minor evils that were anticipated. How far these expectations have been confirmed will be judged by those who attentively peruse the volumes of official documents which have been published on this important subject.

The zemindars, whom it was the desire of this system to elevate, became its earliest victims. Ill suited, from their habits and character, to fulfil

* Now Lord Teignmouth.

the duties which their new condition required, they abused the power it conferred upon them, to oppress the minor proprietors and cultivators. The latter were loud in their complaints, and pleaded prescriptive usages. Their plea was listened to. Regulation upon regulation was brought forth to defend them. Presuming upon this support, they fortified themselves with volumes of law, and, in their turn, resisted the zemindar, who could only recover by suits, which incurred great delay and expense, that rent, which, according to his tenure, he must pay, or, in default of payment, expose his land to be sold. The government vested itself with a power it had denied him, to proceed by a summary process, and without expense. It is hardly necessary to add, that, in consequence of this regulation, and their general character and habits, almost the whole of the zemindars of Bengal who had been confirmed in their real or supposed rights were swept away, and their estates purchased by another class; who possessed wealth, but had seldom any previous connexion with the cultivators of the soil. This unhappy result was chiefly referrible to the precipitance with which the permanent settlement was introduced, and to a want of that intimate knowledge of the constitution and rights of the different classes of the society which should have preceded a change, which, affecting as it did all the rights of landed property, was, perhaps, the

greatest ever made in any country by a mere act of legislation.

The principal motive to the permanent settlement was, to put an end to a very great evil, the constant fluctuation of our former plans for collecting the revenue. But, in examining the merits of this system, we must be careful to distinguish between the object and the means adopted for its accomplishment. The establishment of a regulated and moderate assessment is one beyond all others in wisdom and justice; but that might as easily have been applied to those who had real property and right in the soil as to the zemindars or landholders whom we found or created. It is pleasing to see a rich landlord expending his wealth in improvements; but the sacrifices made by government to promote the general prosperity will not be rewarded, unless the frugal and industrious of the cultivating class have the path open to obtain property, as well as to preserve what they already possess. A government which precludes itself from any increase of territorial assessment must look to the general diffusion of wealth for the future improvement of its resources; and though a long period may elapse before it can venture to subject to direct taxation any of the possessors of that affluence which its liberal policy has created, it may expect to receive an early and constantly-increasing return, through the enlarged demand for the necessary commodities and luxuries of life required for a population advancing

in numbers and comfort, and the consequent progressive improvement of duties and customs.

The experience derived from the errors committed in the permanent settlement of Bengal, were useful as lessons in the introduction of a settlement over part of our territories of Madras and Bombay; but serious doubts* soon arose as to the policy of a further extension of this revenue system, and its progress was arrested. The objections urged were more to the mode than the principle of it: no one could deny the benefits that must result both to the state and to its subjects, from the demands of the former and the payments of the latter being regulated as early as complete knowledge would admit of this being done with justice to all parties. The importance of moderate assessments was also universally acknowledged as the foundation of all improvement. The wisdom of recognising long-established zemindary rights was not denied; but it was urged, that, by the creation of landholders, and the sale

* Lord William Bentinck, governor of Madras, in consequence of those doubts, prepared and circulated a set of queries, for the purpose of obtaining further information for his guidance in the settlement of the districts not yet alienated. The result of this investigation, afterwards recorded on the proceedings of the government, strengthened the opinions which he had previously formed, and induced his lordship to make a journey to Calcutta, for the express purpose of obtaining the sanction of the Governor-general for suspending the further operation of the zemindary system.—Vide "Wilks's South of India," vol. i. p. 176.

of lands to the highest bidder, we must either diminish our receipts by the admission of the purchaser to a part of the government share of the produce, or vest him with a right of exacting more than is accordant with usage from minor proprietors and hereditary cultivators, classes of men who, it was argued, had the best title to benefit from any remission we could afford to make in our demands from the soil. Many of these arguments were grounded upon local differences, both as to the tenure of the lands and the character of the people; and, with reference to this difference, it was represented to be as incompatible with our interests and policy as it was inconsistent with humanity and good sense to insist, for the sake of uniformity, in our own institutions and establishments, upon tribes and nations so various as those under our dominion in India being all subject to the same mode of realizing the revenue: and upon this point it may be observed, that though we cannot retract the past, nor withdraw the pledges we have given, we should not deny ourselves the benefit of experience to regulate our conduct for the future. If we have found, on minute investigation, that the inhabitants of one province have been for generations adverse to the usages of another; that their rights vary; that they have been accustomed to a different mode of collecting the revenue, and of adjusting their disputes; it comes to the plain

question, whether we are to accommodate our rule to the various prejudices, habits, and opinions of the natives under our sway, or to study our own convenience by forcing them all into one system.

If it is deemed politic (as no doubt it is) to make a sacrifice of any part of the revenue to which we are entitled, for the object of raising a superior class of natives, from whose rank and respectability we may look for aid in the internal rule of the country, we should elevate in his native district the military officer who has served with distinction in our army; the meritorious and honest native law officer, or judge; the respected Mokh, or president of a court of Punchayet; the most industrious and deserving of the heads of districts or villages: we may imitate with advantage the native governments, which grant certain portions of waste lands to him who constructs a well, or any other work beneficial to the community; like them, we may shape our system to admit the rise of the frugal and industrious cultivator: all these are legitimate modes by which we may reward service, stimulate to exertion, and strengthen our internal government. They form indeed our only means of effecting this object; and we should not improvidently waste them by admitting, on the mere ground of their ability to advance a small sum, a set of men without personal respectability or local ties to occupy this vacant but important niche in the community.

In districts that are in the immediate vicinity of capitals, or large commercial towns in different parts of our eastern empire, the influx of wealth will always produce changes in society and in property. The waste will become a field, the field a garden; the cultivator will either part with his hereditary or prescriptive rights, or, partaking of the desire of gain that pervades the community in which he lives, will carry his labour to market, and be satisfied with changes arising out of circumstances which, through the allurements of profit and luxury, gradually wean him from the ways of his forefathers. But the measures necessary to facilitate this progressive alteration of the condition and relations of such a society must be limited and local. They are quite unadapted to a great proportion of our extended territories, and the attempt to introduce them in some of these must have consequences directly opposite to what we desire. They will outrage those whom we wish to conciliate; they will disturb where our object is to settle; and, from not being understood, and from being at variance with cherished feelings and usages, they will have the effect of rendering unpopular a government whose great objects are peace, humanity, and justice.

Opposite systems of collecting the revenue have been pursued by the native governments in different parts of India. They have at times employed Zemindars, and at others, resorted to the Mo-

zuarree, or village, and the Ryut-warree* settlement. To the latter, which has been lately introduced into some countries under the Madras government, many objections have been made. It has been urged that it enters too much into detail; that it requires more application and talent in a collector than can generally be found; and that from its raising rent in proportion to industry, it is calculated to depress the cultivators, and, in short, to make a population of paupers. It has also been urged as a strong general ground of objection to this system, that it necessarily requires that the revenue officers should be vested with an authority which they must be prone to abuse, because their interests and their duties will be in opposition. To the first of these objections it is answered, that it is better for the cultivator that the details of his settlement should be arranged with the European collector than through a middle man, like the Zemindar. To the second it is stated, that an efficient revenue officer, when once acquainted with the details of his district, will find his labours easy, and the minuteness of his investigations, and the effects of his constant intercourse with the inhabitants, will

* The Kulwar or Ryut-warree settlement is one made by government immediately with the Ryuts individually, under which the government receives its dues in the form of a money-rent fixed on the land itself in cultivation, and not being a pecuniary commutation for its share of the produce, varying as the extent of the produce may vary in each year.

in a great degree save the labour of the judge. In reply to the third objection, it is denied that rent is raised on industry, though it rises with produce: and with regard to the objections grounded on mistrust of the integrity, and jealousy of the power, of the revenue officers, it is answered, that such principles, however just, are more adapted to the government of England than of India, and that, in our administration of the latter, we are too often misled by our theories on such points to aim at an abstract excellence of rule, which is at equal variance with the habits of our subjects and the character of our government.

Such is a brief view of the arguments for and against a system of revenue which has been introduced, or rather continued, in several of our provinces with eminent success. It would, perhaps, be as remote from wisdom to extend it over all India as the permanent settlement. There are many territories in our possession so situated that nothing but the liberal efforts of government can restore them to prosperity and maintain them in it. To fix their revenues would be a security against nothing but the possibility of our deriving benefit from their improvement. Riches must flow into countries through other sources than agriculture, before government can be secured against losses from bad seasons, famine, and war; and until it has such security, it seems reasonable that it should have a share of the advantage resulting from in-

creased produce. This principle is quite congenial to the habits and sentiments of the cultivators. They require no more than a just and moderate assessment upon their receipts; generally speaking, they do not understand our more enlarged views of fiscal administration, and, consequently, cannot appreciate them. The governments in India which preceded ours never made a permanent settlement of revenue; yet experience proves that where the rulers were just, their system of collecting the revenues was quite compatible with the improvement of the country, the diffusion of wealth, and the creation of landed property*. The agricultural classes of our subjects are more than any other attached to their usages; all changes, even when intended for their benefit, alarm them. This arises from their having no power of resistance. They know the extent of the burden they have been accustomed to bear, but from ignorance dread that for which it may be exchanged. From these causes, it is as unwise to adopt any general system over our various possessions as it is fallacious to argue that our subjects may not be as happy and as prosperous,

* That will arise, though more gradually, under a ryutwarree system, whenever the assessment is moderate, and fixed upon principles that are understood, and deemed subject to no variation. But it is the principles upon which the collection is made that require to be understood and fixed, more than the land-tax or government share which it regulates.

under systems to which they are accustomed, as under those we would introduce to meet our own convenience, and our ideas of amelioration.

The improvement in the appearance of the country from extended cultivation is hardly to be deemed a test of any system. That may, in all cases, be referred chiefly to the increase of the portion of the population whose pursuits are exclusively agricultural, consequent to exemption from war. This last conclusion appears to be proved by the condition of every part of India that has for many years enjoyed that exemption; and it is certain that many provinces, under the most arbitrary rule of native governments, are, from the operation of this cause, as flourishing as any lands in the possession of the Company.

Many have taken alarm at that spirit of minute investigation* which has lately prevailed, consi-

* The province of Guzerat has been surveyed with as much minuteness as a gentleman's estate; but it never has been asserted that this has led to any vexatious or oppressive conduct towards the inhabitants; on the contrary, there is no part of our dominions where they are more content or prosperous. The measurement of the land was, with some exceptions, general throughout India, under the Mogul government. Almost every village had a record of its measurement, and where that is lost, our reviving this usage is more likely to be considered by the mass of the cultivators as a proof of our disposition to be just than to become extortionate. It creates discontent and alarm amongst zemindars and others, who manage or rent lands, from which they extort to the last rupee, but of

dering that it would prove injurious to our subjects in its operations and results; but the more perfect the knowledge which is possessed by those who govern the country, the less exposed its inhabitants must be to misrule and imposition, unless we suppose a case where such information be sought as the means of extortion and oppression. It may be, and has been, urged that, in some parts of India where this system has been introduced, we have used the information we acquired, for no purpose but to bear harder upon the cultivators, and that our desire of increase of revenue has deprived them of every hope of benefit that could stimulate men to industry and exertion. Allowing, in order to try the question, that such an assertion is correct, it would prove no more than that we have made a bad use of our knowledge, not that the knowledge was unnecessary. We may, indeed, assume, that without it we must continue in many material points to rule and legislate in the dark, and that our desire to promote the general prosperity of our subjects by a moderate assessment, regulated by just principles, will never be essentially done till the fullest and most detailed information enables us to effect the object with

the precise value of which they desire we should remain in ignorance. The measurement of the lands should not be enforced in countries where it never has been an usage, unless with consent of the cultivators. The right of resisting it was claimed and admitted upon this ground by the inhabitants of some districts in Central India.

a clear understanding of what is consonant to the usages, appropriate to the condition, and accordant with the true interests of every class of the various inhabitants of our territories. Much has recently been done by an active spirit of minute inquiry into revenue, and other matters connected with the good government of India; but our knowledge has yet gone little beyond a discovery* of our ignorance, and a long period must still elapse before we have accumulated facts and experience on which we can venture to establish permanent and unalterable arrangements. But this period, though comparatively long in the life of man, is but a short space in that of an empire.

These general observations upon the judicial, police, and revenue administration of our Indian territories are the result of much study of the details of those branches of our government. The most important of the lessons we can derive from past experience is to be slow and cautious in every procedure which has a tendency to collision with the habits and prejudices of our native subjects. We may be compelled by the character of our government to frame some institutions different

* For the truth of this assertion, let the reader refer to the voluminous collections of judicial and revenue papers recently published. He will find that as inquiries proceed, new and important facts are daily discovered, affecting, from their relation to usages and rights, every question connected with claims to property in the soil.

from those we found established, but we should adopt all we can of the latter into our system. The progress of our power has been favourable to the commercial community, and to some of the poorest and most defenceless of our subjects; but it has been the reverse to the higher orders of the natives, and to the military classes. On the remedying of these defects, the duration of our dominion will in a great degree depend. From the success of our arms in extending it, we have lost the great advantage that we before had in the contrast of the misrule and oppression of former governments. This loss can be repaired only by that security which we may obtain through the wisdom of our internal government; but that should be administered on a principle of humility, not of pride. We must divest our minds of all arrogant pretensions arising from the presumed superiority of our own knowledge, and seek the accomplishment of the great ends we have in view by the means which are best suited to the peculiar nature of the objects. By following another course, we may gratify self love; we may receive the praise of each other; we may be applauded in England for the introduction of plans and institutions which Englishmen understand and appreciate; but neither the abstract excellence of our systems, nor the industry, purity, and talent of those employed in carrying them into execution, will avert the evils which must result from every measure that is in opposition to prejudices so fixed, and habits so rooted, as those of the natives of India. That time

may gradually effect a change, there is no doubt; but the period is as yet far distant when that can be expected: and come when it will, to be safe or beneficial, it must be, as these pages inculcate, the work of the society itself. All that the government can do is, by maintaining the internal peace of the country, and by adapting its principles to the various feelings, habits, and character of its inhabitants, to give time for the slow and silent operation of the desired improvement, with a constant impression that every attempt to accelerate this end will be attended with the danger of its defeat.

CIVIL SERVICE.

These observations upon the various branches of the internal government of our Indian territories lead to a consideration of the character of that body of public officers by whom it is administered.

The civil service of the Company has undergone many changes, but it has, at all periods, and under every system, produced men of eminence and distinction.

The prudence of those who governed India in the earlier stages of our power did not precipitately depart from institutions which they found established for the administration of the territories of which they had gained possession. The natives were continued for a period, associated with the Europeans, both in fiscal and judicial duties. As long as this was the case, the European civil servant, who presided over a district or department, was

often ignorant of the languages of India*, and little versed in the details of his office. These were intrusted to some of the higher classes of the natives, who, according to their station, shared in the emoluments, which continued the same as had been customary in the same offices under the Indian governments. This system had its advantages and defects; a more abrupt change would, probably, have raised serious obstacles to the advance of our power, which was most essentially promoted by the rank and influence of the natives employed in association with the European servants; but who, as the latter acquired practice in the duties of detail, lost the consideration and emolument which they had previously enjoyed. This change making many of them retire from employment, their place was supplied by persons of lower rank and more subservient character, who were less scrupulous as to the means of enriching themselves, and possessed little or none of that weight with the inhabitants of the country which gave value to the services of their predecessors. This new class, by still grasping at profits which had been declared illicit, and by efforts to maintain undue influence and power, brought obloquy, not only on themselves, but on all those by whom they were trusted and employed.

* This remark, as far as relates to a knowledge of the native languages, applies more to Madras and Bombay than Bengal, in which, from the earliest time, many civil servants were conversant in the dialect of the country, and some were accomplished Persian scholars.

It is a subject of congratulation, that a change has taken place by which the civil servants of the Company have become personally better qualified for the performance of their duties; but we must not hasten to a conclusion that the former system had no advantages, and the present no defects. The severe reflections so frequently made against the former state of the civil service are far from being just. This body of functionaries, it has been admitted, had neither such general acquaintance with the languages of India, nor with the details of their several stations, as they now possess. It is true also, that recompense for their services was derived from sources more undefined, and more liable to abuse than those at present established; but a knowledge of the native languages, though a most important aid to the personal transaction of business, was, from the nature of our first rule, and the manner in which that was exercised, of comparatively small consequence. Under the reformed and more exact system of the administration of our territories, it very properly enters into the education of youth, and is made an indispensable qualification for office; but in the estimate of character, it should have no more than its just weight, and should rank subordinate to industry, strict principle, general knowledge, and sound judgment, which must combine to form the able public servant. As an auxiliary to the developement and useful action of these qualities, an acquaintance with the languages of India is most desirable; but unassociated

with them, it is nothing, and injury has sometimes resulted to the public from a too exclusive consideration being given to this attainment.

Though the former civil servants of the Company did not discharge the minuter duties of their stations as they do at present, the records of the state fully show that this proceeded from no inferiority of general knowledge, or of individual character, but was the mere result of the difference of the mode of government. The same cause produced a difference in the sources from which they derived the remuneration of their services. In receiving, instead of a regulated salary, the fees and profits which had been enjoyed by the natives to whose offices they succeeded in newly-acquired territories, they only followed the usage of the country; and they were sanctioned in it by their own government. It suited the character of the Indian administration in England, and was altogether adapted to that of our first rule in India. That it was loose, undefined, and liable to great abuse, is admitted. The evils of such a system became manifest, and were remedied; but assuredly, while it continued, the civil servant who drew his emoluments from open and recognised sources was no more blamable than some of the first men in England who hold offices that continue to be paid by fees, or fines, in the manner established by our ancestors.

There are some considerations connected with the actual state of the civil service of the Company which demand very serious attention. From the

days of Lord Clive to the present, there have been the same complaints regarding this class. They have been represented as being prone to extravagance on their first arrival in India; as very generally involving themselves deeply in debt, and thereby contracting habits and obligations adverse to their own happiness and respectability, as well as to the interests and good of the public service. The general fact is admitted, but the remedy has not yet been found. An increased liberality of allowances has tended only to augment that propensity to thoughtless extravagance, natural to their age and prospects in life. Youth is ever sanguine, and its calculations of the means it will obtain of overcoming difficulties are too commonly fallacious. Yet we observe that, in other walks of life, motives have been discovered of sufficient power over young minds to check such dispositions, and to inculcate habits of economy grounded on a generous desire of independence, and altogether free from any mean or sordid spirit of saving. Such effects, which we observe around us in young men of the best prospects, while trained to their assigned duties in houses of commerce, in the law, and in public offices, should satisfy us that the end we seek is attainable even amid scenes of temptation; for it will not be denied that the capital of England holds forth more allurements to extravagance than that of India.

It is important to consider whether there is anything in the education and the duties of the young

civil servant of the Company which can account for this striking difference. It has been objected to the former, that it proceeds more upon the principle of forming the future man for the important stations to which, from the nature of the India service, he is liable to be hereafter called, than to make an unpretending assistant to a collector or judge, who is gradually, through the means of industry and information, to advance to higher employment. It is admitted to be indispensable that young men should attain the acquirements suited to their destinations in life; but it is contended, and with truth, that all that education can effect, is forming the youth by discipline and by habits, in a manner that will give him the power of increasing his knowledge from facts and experience; and that knowledge, to be useful, must grow with the man, go hand in hand with the habits and occupations of his life, and wait upon the gradual developement of his character.

The young civil servant of the Company knows that he cannot fail to be employed in some branch of the service; his want of acquirements may obstruct his advance, but irregular habits and being in debt (which in some cases must lead to deterioration of feeling and of principle) is no impediment. How different is the situation of the young men in England, with whom any comparison may be drawn! However liberal their education, their attention is constantly fixed upon the first step of the ladder: they know that dissipation and debt will at any

stage arrest their career; and the examples they see around them operate as a most salutary check, to keep them regular and steady in their efforts to ascend to the head of the line in which they are placed.

No part of this question has undergone more discussion than that which relates to the colleges established for the education of the youth of the Indian civil service. Those of Calcutta * and Haileybury have, like other institutions, their advantages and defects. The former certainly redeemed youths from some bad habits consequent to their being sent too early to sequestered stations in the country. It diffused † more general competence to their duties among the civil servants; and, from the opportunity of becoming acquainted with their

* The college at Madras is upon a principle wholly different from that at Calcutta. It educates and supplies native instructors, and the young civilians who study at their homes are subject to an annual examination. At Bombay, they must qualify themselves, and pass certain examinations in the languages, before they can receive any increase of allowance or employment.

† The college of Fort William is only mentioned here, as a place for the instruction of civil servants on their arrival in India. This excellent institution has other and high claims to distinction, from the numerous works which the combined labours of the learned Europeans and natives attached to it have given to the public. This college should always be considered by government as much, if not more, a seat of learning, founded and liberally endowed for the purposes of diffusing useful knowledge over an empire, as a school for youth.

character, enabled government to allot them to the various departments of the service for which they were best qualified. A spirit of emulation was also excited, and young men, studying under the immediate observation of those by whom they were to be employed, made efforts to distinguish themselves beyond what they would probably have otherwise done. These were great advantages: the chief evil was the congregating of so large a body of youth in a luxurious capital, where it was difficult, if not impossible, to check extravagance, to which they had every imaginable temptation both as to objects of expense and facility of attaining them. In such a scene, a more rigid discipline than has hitherto been deemed compatible with the age and condition of these young men was necessary to a complete or efficient check over their conduct.

The college in England is upon the most liberal scale, and the students have every advantage that the tuition of able and enlightened men can afford them.

It is not meant to enter upon an examination of the various arguments which have been recently brought forward for and against this institution. One part of the subject, however, upon which opinions are divided, demands particular attention; it is the age at which young men should be sent to India. Those who have minutely watched the progress of youth in all branches of the public ser-

vice, will probably be of opinion that, taking the balance of good and evil to be found in different systems, there is more hope of good from a regulation which would send the well-instructed youth of seventeen, or at farthest eighteen, to that country, than at a later age. He might, it is true, gain much learning by staying a year or two more, and some students might eventually rise to greater fame in consequence of having the advantage of more mature instruction; but the object is to form, not eminent individuals, (these will always form themselves,) but a class of men competent to certain duties; and it is of great consequence that they should be of an age when the mind will easily adapt itself to the condition in which they are first placed. A very humble sense of their own deficiencies will be of more benefit, on their entering upon their subordinate duties in India, than all the knowledge they can attain, if accompanied by that pride and self-sufficiency which in youth are too often its concomitants. The general argument in favour of their remaining to a more mature age is, that besides their education being more complete, their good principles will be more fixed, and they will be imbued with a love and knowledge of their own country. Nothing can be more desirable than such results, if they were certain; but though there may be many exceptions, speaking generally, we must assume that, from the age of seventeen to twenty, the habits and principles are oftener

injured and unsettled than improved and fixed; particularly when youth are exposed to the increased hazards that will arise from their numbers in the best-regulated establishment, and that at a period when they are likely to receive more than common indulgence from parents and relatives on the point of losing them for a long term of years, if not for ever: moreover, a taste for the pleasures of their own country, which is generally acquired in the first years of manhood, is not a happy preparation for the life to which they are destined. They are too often disposed, when so advanced in age, either to turn with disgust from scenes amid which they must pass the greater part of their lives, or to seek, in a course of thoughtless extravagance, some solace for what they conceive they have abandoned.

That there are dangers, and some of magnitude, to the youth who commences his Indian career at an early age, is not to be denied; but there is a better prospect for him of being contented and useful throughout the different stages of the service, than for one who enters upon the same career at a later period.

There are certain qualifications, and, above all, testimonies of good conduct, without which no youth ought to be allowed to proceed to India in the civil service; but if in that country regulations were rigorously enforced, making their increase of salary, as well as their promotion, to depend on their attain-

ments, and rendering the incurring * of debts and habits of extravagance a serious obstruction, if not an absolute bar to advancement, we might expect to create a reform in the greatest defects of the present system; but to do this effectually many changes are required. The civil servant is, at present, compelled to attain certain acquirements before he can be employed, and when in office he must give a great portion of his time to his public duties; but, unless in extreme cases, improper habits of life, or large debts, are deemed no disqualification for office, though these (according to the opinion of every statesman who has treated the subject) are not only likely to deaden his best feelings and to endanger his principles, but to place him under an influence which may be exercised in a manner alike injurious to his reputation and the interests of the state.

The example we have in the conduct of youth in other departments of life, shows that the object in view is quite attainable, and points out the only mode by which an efficient remedy can be applied to this evil; but care should be taken that this is

* This regulation has repeatedly been made, but never rigorously enforced: the causes of which are obvious. There is nothing so adverse to the feelings of an English government as any measure that wears the appearance of inquisition into the private conduct or concerns of a public servant; but the performance of this duty must not be evaded, when called for by considerations associated with the reputation and interests of our country.

effected in a manner that will elevate, instead of depress the service. While consideration for the young men who enter it, for their relatives, and the public, compels us to establish stricter discipline than has hitherto existed in India, the education of youth should be more exclusively directed than it has hitherto been to qualification for the first duties they will have to perform; and from these they should not be kept one instant, after they have attained the necessary qualifications, and evinced sufficient steadiness of conduct to enable them to aid the superiors under whom they will have to act.

The reports made by the latter of the progress and conduct of those under them should regulate promotion; and if any young men neglected to qualify themselves for employment, or continued idle and irregular, after a limited number of years, they should be sent to England. This might appear harsh; but if known to be the inevitable consequence which attended incompetence or misconduct, the penalty would be rarely incurred. Parents would not desire such a trial* for sons of

* It has often been stated as matter of complaint, that in the college of Haileybury, a student of sixteen, if indisposed to go to India, has it in his power to cast away all his prospects in life by an act of boyish mischief, which commits an offence against its institutions; and it is admitted that there may be some reason why a government, that is compelled to be so strict regarding those whom it admits into its service, should relax from its rules, in consideration of extreme youth: but this lenity should not extend to the man who is confirmed in habits of

whose conduct and abilities they had doubts; and every man of feeling and principle would be checked in his career of folly, extravagance, or guilt, by the dread of the shame and misery he would bring upon himself and others. But, supposing that it should sometimes happen otherwise, the merited punishment of a few would be most salutary examples; and, looking to the virtue and talent of the civil service for the present as well as the future good government of India, who will recommend that indulgence to youth, or consideration to their connexions, should interfere with the adoption or rigid execution of any plan expedient for that great object?

Many minor arrangements might aid the success of the measure suggested; but we may be assured, from the moment those strong steps were decidedly taken, examples of idleness and extravagance would become rare. Not only the feelings of the individuals and their friends would be roused against them, but the sources of supply would fail; credit*

idleness or dissipation. The objection, that some would seek that mode of effecting their return to England, supposes a depraved mind in a maturer age, precluding every hope of amendment.

* All lesser expedients than those recommended have been tried, and have failed. A regulation has been often suggested, rendering debts incurred by young men, under a certain age and circumstances, not recoverable by law; but while such debts are no bar to employment, other pledges and securities would be proffered and accepted. The premium on advances would,

would no longer be given to men whose prodigal career was certain to deprive them of the means of repayment.

To carry any plan of this nature into effect, it would be necessary to increase the number of young men in India, that the local government, even at the commencement of their service, might have the power of selection; and this principle should, within the prescribed limits as to periods of service, continue to regulate every future promotion. Any other system must be unfavourable to the development of those various and superior powers of mind which it is essential should be possessed by all who fill, or aspire to fill, the high offices in the Indian empire.

A seat in council is now the chief object to which a civilian aspires; and the change that occurs every five years has a happy effect in keeping alive that portion of the ambition of the service which is directed to this object. There appears no good reason why others who fill the high offices of presidents of the board of trade, and revenue, and of the court of Sudder Duwanee*, should not also be periodically changed†. The local govern-

no doubt, be increased; but this would be no obstacle to unreflecting youth, whose embarrassments would only be augmented by such insufficient efforts to prevent them.

* The chief civil court of justice, held at the seat of government.

† If such a change was ever made, it would be but justice to

ments, with whom the nomination* to these stations should rest, might re-appoint where very extraordinary ability demanded an exception from a practice which would animate the system, by exciting an active spirit of emulation.

The objection that will be offered to such a measure is, that the salary of a counsellor, if enjoyed for five years, affords the means of independence, which not being the case with the other situations in question, it would, therefore, be hard upon individuals who had attained such offices to be compelled to vacate them in five years: but it may be answered, that one of the most essential principles in a government like that of India is, to combine reward to individuals with the promotion of the public interests, and that, upon this principle, it is better to increase the pay attached to those situations than to lose the advantages which the arrangement promises to the state. This, and every other practicable measure, should be adopted, that can have the effect of directing the views of the ablest civil servants to objects of distinction and high employment, both in India and in England. The prospect of accumulating great wealth,

allow to persons now filling these stations the full term of five years, if they chose to remain.

* To the objections which may be made from the probable abuse of this patronage, there cannot be a better answer than reference to the list of civil servants who have been recommended by the local governments to seats in council.

which once stimulated the civil service of India, no longer exists: the means of living comfortably, and the attainment of a moderate competence at rather an advanced stage of life, is all that they can now expect. The state cannot afford to give them higher allowances* than they now enjoy; and it is not desirable that this class, particularly those who fill the first stations, should have a money-making disposition, which, even when remote from corruption, is adverse to the high tone so essential for them to preserve and to impart, by shewing an example of perfect freedom from such propensity; nor would this by any means preclude attention to just economy, which is alike essential to independence of mind, and of action.

Notwithstanding any arrangements that can be made, or any order that can be given, the success of every plan for the maintenance or improvement of this branch of the public service will chiefly depend on the character and talent of those at the head of the local governments. On their knowledge, impartiality, and unbending firmness of action, will rest this as well as all other points con-

* There is one point which merits special consideration, connected with the condition of this and other classes of public servants in India—the serious loss on remittance to England: this, if it continues, may have results, both as to the education of their children and their own retirement, which are unfavourable to the fundamental principle of binding public servants by every means to their native country.

nected with the good administration of India. We can regulate and reduce to a system every other part of our government in a manner that renders us, to a certain degree, independent of extraordinary ability; but we cannot escape from the necessity of having a succession of enlightened and able men to preside over the councils of a state, which, from its singular construction, is almost as much affected by the personal characters of its rulers as if it were a despotic monarchy.

INDIAN ARMY.

However much the success of our internal government may depend upon the civil administration of our eastern empire, our efforts to improve that might be given in vain, unless we maintain a commanding military power; and this consideration gives the utmost importance to every question connected with our military establishment in that country, as being the only means by which we can preserve India, and as too likely, if mismanaged, to prove our ruin. This latter position has been so fully proved by the evidence of past events, that any argument in support of it must be superfluous. As his majesty's troops employed in India are composed solely of Europeans, and differ in no respect from the British army, of which they are a detachment, remarks upon the constitution of that part of the force there will not be necessary. We shall, therefore, proceed to examine the orga-

nization and principles of the Company's army, which now consists of nearly two hundred and fifty thousand men*. We shall commence by taking a glance at the plans which have been formerly suggested to remedy the defects of the general system, and then consider the changes which circumstances would now appear to render expedient.

Lord Cornwallis was requested by Mr. Dundas, his majesty's minister for India, to give a plan by which the transfer of the Indian army to the king should be effected; the chief grounds for which measure are stated to have been†, "To give safety and security to our Indian empire, and to prevent the continuance or revival of those discontents or jealousies which have so often manifested themselves between the King's and Company's troops, as well as the Company's troops belonging to the different presidencies in that part of the world." From his lordship's reply, it appears to have been his deliberate conviction, that no system could be devised of permanent utility and satisfaction to the individuals of both services, and for the public good, unless there was a preliminary measure, by which the whole force, native as well as European, in India, should be "transferred to his majesty's service; and, with a few modifications, be regulated

* The natives alone of the Company's army are now 232,366 rank and file.

† Vide letters from Lord Cornwallis to Mr. Dundas, dated November 7th, 1794.

and conducted, in future, according to the rules which have long operated in the king's army." Lord Cornwallis stated his opinion, that although the army were transferred to the king, it should remain perfectly subordinate to the Company; and that those intrusted with the local government should have the full power of suspending and sending to England any officer, from the highest to the lowest rank, it remaining with the king to examine into the conduct of the officer so sent home; but the local government being alone responsible to the court of directors for such peremptory exercise of power. Lord Cornwallis, in the letter alluded to, strongly inculcates as a principle, that measures should be taken to induce Europeans of all classes, particularly military officers, to return to England. He recommends leave and retirement on full pay for officers of each rank, after a certain period of service*. While he proposes a continuance of rise by seniority, he is the advocate of the sale of commissions under certain restrictions†; he suggests an entire separation between the European and native branches of the army, and is unfriendly to future interchanges betwixt them, lest it should

* Lieutenant colonels twenty-six years; majors twenty-three; captains eighteen; and cornets and ensigns six.

† The commander-in-chief he recommends to have the power, should he think fit to exercise it, of permitting an officer, not in the regiment in which the vacancy occurs, to purchase; but this power not to authorise him to introduce any officer who is not senior to the person in the class who is ready to purchase.

open a door for abuse of patronage, and the introduction of inefficient officers into the native corps. He expresses himself very strongly as to the necessity of protecting the latter. "Officers," he observes, "whose services are so unalterably fixed in so distant a quarter of the globe, ought to be protected by established regulations against the hazard of suffering by the abuse of patronage in any commander-in-chief."

In 1811, when the Company petitioned for a renewal of their exclusive privileges, the subject of the transfer of the army was again brought forward. Those by whom it was advocated rested their chief argument on the same basis, the indispensable necessity of putting an end to the jealousies and divisions which existed between the officers of the King's and Company's armies in India. But the principles of the transfer now proposed differed in some essential points from those proposed by Lord Cornwallis. A greater latitude of power as to promotion, particularly in the higher ranks, was proposed to be given to the commander-in-chief. As an incitement and reward to the native local service, it was suggested that, on reaching the rank of colonel, they should be eligible to employment in any quarter of the globe; and such a measure, it was anticipated, would not only be an encouragement to this branch, but render the experience of men of talent and acquirements available to the general service of

the country. It was proposed that exchanges should take place between the two branches of the army, restricted only by such regulations as were indispensable to preserve the efficiency of the local service, which required in those that entered it a knowledge of the language, and a certain period of residence in India. It was not intended to admit the officers of the native branches of the army to sell their commissions, but they were to have the right they now enjoy of retirement on full pay, after a certain period of service. It was proposed that, upon this change being made, the armies of the different presidencies should be consolidated into one. This was strongly recommended, on the ground of that leading principle which has been the foundation of every large and liberal plan suggested for the reform of the Indian army, that of putting an end to feelings of jealousy and irritation, which arise out of distinctions as to allowances and promotion between the armies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay.

Strong arguments were brought forward against any transfer. The peculiar constitution of the native army, and the education necessary for the European officers attached to it, were strenuously urged; and it was assumed, that recent measures had given a strength and efficiency to this branch of the service which did not belong to it when Lord Cornwallis suggested that transfer; and it was added, that the principal objects that noble-

man had in view were attained by the regulations of 1796, which, by giving equal rank and consideration to the officers of the Company's army, had approximated them as much to those of his majesty's service as it was expedient or politic to do with an army so situated and so constituted.

The danger to the character and efficiency of the local army of India, from being under the same authority with that of England, was forcibly dwelt upon; and it was assumed that, if a transfer took place, no merit or pretensions of the former, and no sense of the wisdom of general rules for their protection, could be expected to resist the tide of influence and interest which would always be in favour of the latter. The certain consequences must be, that the local army, when transferred to the king, would gradually become inferior and secondary, a result which, there was every reason to fear, would be fatal to the existence of our Indian empire.

The constitutional objection, so often urged, of transferring to the crown such a great portion of patronage, as the command of an army of such magnitude, was repeated; but the strength of all the arguments brought forward on this occasion by the chairmen of the directors rested on political grounds. Their reasons cannot be better given than in their own words. "The Company's government," they observe, "has hitherto been respected, both by its own subjects and foreign

powers, because it possessed a great military force; organizing this force, enlarging or reducing it at pleasure, appointing its officers, rewarding merit, punishing the unworthy, providing for the comfortable retirement of the veteran officer and soldier, and, in short, exercising all the functions of a governing power over a very numerous body of men of high military spirit, it has possessed all the respectability and the benefit of their attachment and fidelity. Looking upon the members of civil government, and the body of civil servants, as belonging to the same masters with themselves, and as the first order in the state, they have paid a willing obedience to their authority, and have thereby upheld their internal administration, and their consequence abroad. The introduction of certain king's regiments has been understood, as it was intended, to be merely in support of the public interest under the existing system; but if the Company were to be divested of the whole of their military force and power, if they were to be no longer masters of a single regiment, no longer capable of entertaining any soldiers, nor of giving one subaltern's commission; if the immense body of men who have so long looked up to them were to be transferred from them, the people must consider their power as fallen, and drawing rapidly to a close. Continuing still to their government a general control over the employment of the army, and to their

civil servants the internal administration of their officers, would give the people no assurance to the contrary. Those servants, in the discharge of their different functions, of judges, magistrates, collectors, could not expect the same respect and support, either from public opinion or the attachment of the native troops, as when all looked to the same head for protection, patronage, and reward. Indeed to make so wide a separation of the military from the civil power, to take away the organization, the interior regulation, and with these the patronage of the army, from the local government, to place all these powers in the hands of the commander-in-chief, subject only, in the exercise of them, to an authority at the distance of half the globe, would throw the means and temptations of a dangerous ascendancy into the scale of the military department, which, constituted by his majesty, might easily be led to slight the civil servants of a meaner master, and their chance of distant redress. Among the natives of India, it has been usual to consider the military power and those possessing it as pre-eminent; and they see, in some examples of the present day, that power, under the idea of assisting the civil and political administration, actually controlling it. The Company's government, in short, lowered and overshadowed in this way, would not, in the opinion of the court, continue to possess the authority necessary for the proper ad-

ministration of the affairs of that great empire; and it might then be conceived that a further change only could supply what is defective *."

These arguments were deemed of sufficient weight to prevent the transfer; and as they may probably meet with attention when the subject is again brought under discussion, it becomes of importance to examine how far the defects of the actual system can be remedied, and the interests of the different branches of the military service of our common country be placed upon a permanent footing, that, by adding to their efficiency, will give strength to the state.

The opinion of all wise statesmen and able military commanders has been invariably the same with regard to the indispensable necessity of putting an end to the jealousies † and divisions which have so often arisen between the officers of the king's army and those of the Company's, and between

* Vide Negotiation for the Renewal of the Company's privileges, page 37.

† There is no part of their duty that requires such constant attention from officers high in command as the employment of the different branches of the service under their orders in a manner that shall at once promote their union and add to their efficiency. The separate employment of King's and Company's troops, or the corps of the different establishments, when on the same service, should ever be avoided; it is pregnant with evil, exciting jealousy and bad temper; while emulation and harmony are certain to be the result of men sharing the same hardships and dangers, and being alike associated in failure and success.

the different military establishments of the latter. Some narrow-minded men have whispered their belief that there was safety to the state in the existence of such differences: but such persons have forgot that the very alarming events which form the grounds of their dread have been, in almost every case, the result of those jealousies and divisions which are deprecated. They are ignorant also that it is much more easy to create and maintain a bad spirit amongst a limited body of men, who are affected by the same local circumstances, than it is to spread such a spirit throughout more extended numbers, and a wider sphere. But these considerations hardly merit mention, for we may safely assume that, if ever it is a principle of our policy to rule by keeping divided the European officers, to whom we must chiefly trust for the safety of our empire in India, that empire will soon verge to its decline. The competency, the spirit, and the loyalty of this class, constitute our strength, and it will be increased by their union, but will be decreased by all causes which tend to perpetuate or create jealousies, distractions, or divisions amongst men, who, though placed in different branches to meet peculiar circumstances, serve one common country, their attachment to which can have none of those motives to shake it which exist where men colonize, and are almost naturalized, in a distant land. The truth and force of this fact has never been so

strongly illustrated as in the course of those temporary aberrations from duty which have occurred in different parts of the Indian army since the first establishment of our power in that country.

The supporting and elevating of the Company's army is a point not more necessary than difficult. It cannot be done without the cordial co-operation (arising out of a sense of its necessity) of the crown. It must enjoy an equal share of the favour and consideration of the sovereign as that which bears his name: in commands, in honours, in every distinction, it must be upon a par; and every measure must be adopted that can counteract the depressing influence of the circumstances in which it is placed. If kept, from political reasons, distinct in name, it should be associated in feeling and interests, and every arrangement formed that could bring the two services nearer to each other.

To effect these objects, some concessions, both on the part of his majesty's government and of the Company, will be necessary. The boon of employment on general service to officers of high rank in the Company's army might be granted. It would elevate the local service of India; it might eventually be of benefit to the country, and could never inflict the slightest injury on his majesty's service. Exchanges*, under strict regulations, might be

* Such exchanges would require, in the officer entering the native branch, a competence in knowledge of the languages and a period of service in India proportionate to his rank.

permitted between officers in the King's and Company's army. These, however seldom they occurred, would be very beneficial, and tend more than any measure to raise the feeling of the latter, and to unite the two branches of the service*.

It has been a constant theme of complaint with the officers of his majesty's service in India, that they are debarred by usage from many situations of honour and emolument which are exclusively filled by Company's officers. This complaint appears just, or otherwise, exactly as it is considered with reference to individuals or the whole service. That there always have been some few of his majesty's officers in India qualified for such employments is certain; and that many have served in that country a period which fully entitled them to such situations, is equally so; but general questions that affect the interests of large bodies of men must be decided on general principles. Placed in the condition in which the Company's officers have hitherto been, they have viewed, with a reasonable jealousy and apprehension, any approach to interference with those advantages to which usage had given them, what they deemed, a prescriptive right. They had little dread of the few officers of

* Officers with whom the climate of India disagreed, or who had acquired or succeeded to fortune, but desired to remain in the army, would exchange into king's corps, and their places would be supplied by men willing and able to pass their life on foreign service.

the king's army who were competent, and the justice of whose claims to participation in staff employments was not deniable; but they feared, and with justice, that if the path were opened, another class, with less pretensions as to local qualifications, but with better interest, would step between them and these hopes, on the fulfilment of which every prospect of revisiting their native country was grounded.

Should exchanges between the two services be established, the door would be opened through which qualified officers of his majesty's service might enter and participate in those stations from which they are now excluded. No other expedient can be adopted to accomplish this object, that will not be liable to abuse, and calculated to affect most seriously the temper and interests of the Indian army.

The proposition for consolidating the forces of the three presidencies into one army was recommended, fifteen years ago, as a measure of expediency. The events which have since taken place have rendered it one of necessity. The territories of our different governments are no longer divided by seas and continents. Though we do not actually possess the whole of India, we have military occupation of every province of that extensive country; and constantly maintain from twenty to thirty thousand men in stations, which, as far as the position of forces is concerned, experience has proved to be alike convenient to Bengal, Madras,

or Bombay. Besides this fact, no internal rebellion, much less foreign war, can occur, without the troops of the different presidencies being called upon to co-operate. Yet such continues to be their distinct organization, with regard to the pay and establishments both of fighting men and followers, that they can never be brought together without danger of serious discontents, if not mutiny. It would be superfluous to expatiate on causes and effects, the nature and consequences of which must be obvious to the most superficial observer. Those whose experience has enabled them to form a better judgment upon the question must see, not merely serious inconvenience, but danger in continuing to leave it unsettled. The remedies are easy, and the application can be opposed only by men whose minds are fettered by local prejudices, or who desire to foster distinctions and divisions amongst those whose harmony constitutes the true safeguard of the state.

From the character of the native army, and the similarity of habits and language of a great proportion of these military classes, of whom it is composed, no inconvenience or embarrassment could result from making the three armies of India three divisions of one army. Each division would remain as at present; cadets would be nominated to it, and be appointed as vacancies occurred to its regiments. On such an organization taking place, it would be better that officers should rise regi-

mentally to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, instead of that of major, as they now do; as such an alteration in the actual system would prevent their removal from distant parts of India, except when an increase was made to the army. On such an occasion, the senior officer of each rank would be promoted, not those of any division. The above plan would disturb nothing that is established; the staff would continue as at present, unless it were deemed expedient to select the generals * employed upon it from the whole army, instead of the division where the vacancy occurred. The off-reckonings to commandants of regiments are at present consolidated in one general list; and officers would succeed, if this plan were adopted, to be colonels of corps by seniority in the Indian army, not in the division to which they had as regimental officers belonged. The pay and allowances of all ranks, from the general who commanded to the lowest public follower, would, on this change taking place, be regulated by clear and understood principles of equality and justice, so as to leave no ground of complaint of any one part of the army, from the comparison of its condition with that of another part employed on the same service and the same duty.

That there might be petty difficulties in carrying into execution some of these changes in the constitution of our Indian army, cannot be denied. The

* This discretionary power might safey be intrusted with the commander-in-chief of India.

chief objections will occur to the minds of men who have not served in that army during the last ten or twelve years; and such will be least sensible of the necessity of making them. Those who know the military stations we now occupy, and who have had opportunities of observing the recent intermixed employment of the troops of the different presidencies, will well understand the absolute necessity of putting an end to distinctions which have embarrassed, and will, if not altered, continue to embarrass the public service. The feelings and prejudices of individuals may lead them to suggest doubts as to the wisdom of a plan which proposes, in some cases, to transfer officers from one division to another. They may bring forward the difference of character of the sepoys, and the different treatment they require; and it may be also alleged, that the removal of an officer from one extreme of India to another will be a hardship. To the first of these arguments it may be said, that whatever was formerly the case, there is at present no essential difference either in language, habits, or character of the native troops of our establishments, and that, whatever may be their usages, they all require to be treated in the same manner. With respect to the European officer, it is desirable, on every ground, that he should never be local. The more he is exposed to the vicissitudes of the service, and to be employed in different parts of the empire, the more his experience and knowledge will be enlarged; and

those qualities, with whatever of inconvenience or hardship their attainment is attended, must ultimately prove as beneficial to the individual as to the government.

Many and essential benefits would result from consolidating the local armies of India into one: there would then be an end to those discontents which have so often arisen concerning a difference in pay and allowances, and from an increase of one establishment to the real or supposed injury of another. This was not felt formerly in the manner it must be at this period, when the third of our military stations can be occupied with equal facility by the troops of any one of the presidencies. Wherever an increase of corps is required, it becomes a question of judgment with the Governor-general to which army it shall be given; and a slight previous change in the disposition of the forces will make it easy to transfer the apparent expediency of an increase from one presidency to another. Whatever may be the talent, the justice, or the impartiality of the Governor-general, he can never hold the balance in a manner that will prevent discontent. Bodies of men will always have their feelings agitated by measures which so seriously concern their future prospects in life, when these are so liable to be affected by the decision of an individual in power; and if that decision is unfavourable to them, they will impute to him, however insufficient the grounds, motives of partiality, or weak

submission to the influence of those by whom he is surrounded. The nature and effect of the feelings to which the present system must give rise will be perfectly understood by all acquainted with the temper and constitution of armies. The remedy of this evil should not be deferred. If there is a dislike to direct the immediate adoption of an arrangement, making the benefit of increase of corps general; at any rate, all regiments raised in future might be equally distributed between Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, commencing with that of which the officers are most backward in promotion. What has been before stated will show that not the slightest difficulty could occur on the ground of the increase being more wanted at one presidency than at another, as that would be obviated by the transfer of the duties of a station, which, from its position, was equally convenient to the presidency receiving the benefit of the augmentation.

A second advantage from amalgamating the local armies of India would result from the first. When the nomination of European officers from a general list to newly-raised corps was adopted, it would be a matter of indifference to those where the men were recruited, or where employed. The consequence would be, that the whole native army would be more disposable than it is at present to serve in any quarter of our dominions. Occasions have occurred, and are more likely than ever

to occur, when our safety may depend on our power to employ the natives of Bengal in the territories of Madras or Bombay, or those of the latter in Bengal or Hindustan. Looking to those internal commotions from which we cannot expect exemption, there is no principle of policy likely to be more conducive to the security of the empire: but we must in a great degree be deprived of the advantage it offers, till a plan is adopted which shall put an end to the separation of interests now existing among the European officers.

The third advantage of the plan proposed is of consequence for the same object, that of rendering our native army more available in every part of India, and of enabling us to employ them together, without creating a spirit of discontent which has often approached to mutiny. This can be done only by assimilating, on the principles suggested, the pay and allowances of the native soldiery and public followers. These should be fixed with reference to certain general principles, and not be dependant on the establishment to which this or that soldier of the same government belonged. The military equipments and departments* of the forces of the different presidencies should be

* This particularly applies to that most important of all military departments, the Commissariat. The difference of principle in that of Bengal, and those of Madras and Bombay, is such, that it becomes almost impossible to employ the troops together during any long period of operations.

constituted on the same general principles, and be as little different in practice as local circumstances would permit; otherwise we shall never have our Indian armies possessed of that efficiency and strength which they should have for united operations.

The rise of European officers in the native army of India must continue to be by seniority; but every measure consistent with their interests, and with those of the public, should be taken, to accelerate the attainment of rank and command for those who have gained experience in this branch of the service. The frequent stagnations of promotion which have occurred have been hitherto relieved by expedients that gave an impulse for the moment, but were followed by a re-action that often left men in a worse situation than they were before. We must not judge of the effects of such stagnation of promotion in the local army in India by what we observe from the same cause in England. There is hardly any analogy: the power of exchanging into other corps; of purchasing and selling their commissions; that of living with their relations and friends; the connexions they form, and the different walks of life open to men in their native country, place them in a situation totally different from those who are in a manner banished to a foreign land, where they may almost be considered aliens from all family ties and connexions, with their prospects

limited to their profession, to which they are in fact bound, from the day they enter it, as the only means they have of subsistence. The officers of his majesty's service, if disappointed or discontented, have generally the means of escape, and if, in effecting that, their condition becomes worse, their complaints are not heard; they produce no effect on others; young and more sanguine candidates fill the niche they occupied: nor does the state suffer by the change; for the constitution of the army to which they belong, requires in its inferior officers no qualifications that may not be easily acquired. But how different is the situation of those who enter the Company's service! Their youth must be devoted to the attainment of acquirements, without which they are unfit even for the subaltern duties of a native corps; they have no escape from their lot in life; discontent and disappointment in it not only corrode their own minds, but spread a baneful influence over the minds of others: their place, after they are in any degree advanced, cannot be easily supplied, for certain qualifications, which time and study alone can give, are requisite to those who succeed them. All these circumstances (and many more might be adduced) show that the question of the improvement of the Indian army should be considered on its own grounds, and not with the reference which is too often made to the comparative condition and pretensions of an army from which its constitution is altogether different.

To give opportunity of acquiring distinction to the officers of the local army of India, (without which no military body can ever attain and support a character, and least of all a body that is in constant comparison with troops of the same nation, regulated on other principles) high rank ought to be conferred by local commissions, while the individuals to whom it is granted are yet efficient for the duties to which it may call them. The privilege of nominating general officers to the staff must soon become as useless to any objects of ambition in the Indian army as of service to the state, under the slow progress of brevet rank in England, consequent to peace in Europe. Every general belonging to the Indian service must be superannuated before he can be employed. There would appear no objection to grant local brevets to colonels of the Indian service to serve on the staff of that country, as the same can be extended to his majesty's service. The adoption of such a measure would, of course, prevent officers being permitted to proceed with regiments to India, whose rank was above that of officers within the limits of selection for the general staff; but this would be attended with no injury to the service, and would be a slight sacrifice to obtain a great benefit.

The sale of commissions and exchanges between the English and local branches of the army employed in India, under regulations which guarded the efficiency of the local branch, would be most

beneficial, both from introducing good and effective officers, and accelerating promotion in the local army; but there is no measure so requisite for the latter as the formation of a staff corps, which would furnish the means of supplying vacancies in regiments occasioned by the removal of their officers to other duties.

The native corps in India were, perhaps, in as efficient a state as they have ever since been, when they had only two or three European officers; but, at that period of the service, their commandant was their chief, and they were his followers. The ties and the feelings from which both acted were altogether different from those which now subsist; and, under the present system, the deficiency of European officers is felt, particularly on service, as a great evil. This evil must continue till the regular staff of the army, and those necessary for distinct departments, are separated from that list which it is essential to keep complete for regimental duties. If this measure is determined upon, the formation of a plan* for carrying it into effect will not be

* Various modes have been proposed to effect this object. The most practicable appears, the formation of corps of officers without men, from whom vacancies caused by appointments to the staff could be filled; who might be employed on the staff; and who could join corps with whom their services might be required; who should, in short, be disposable in any way, but should rise in unattached corps. There are fewer objections to this plan than any other, for it could, in no degree, disturb the regular rise of other corps, or produce those inequalities of

difficult; but great care must be taken that it combines a due regard for the interests of individuals with those of the public.

Should the same reasons which prevented the transfer of the Indian army to the crown, when the exclusive privileges of the Company were last renewed, continue to operate, this will be no reason why the measures which have been suggested for the improvement of the condition of the European officers of the Indian army should not take place. There is nothing required to give them full effect, but a cordial and liberal spirit of co-operation in the different authorities in England. But this large question must be viewed as one of national policy, and not as the settlement of the comparative pretensions of individuals. We must continue dependent on the fidelity and efficiency of our native army for the preservation of India. The European officers are the links by which we must preserve its attachment, and maintain its reputation. Their peculiar condition requires favour and support; and it is not too much to affirm, that any means which have a tendency to depress this body of men, or to introduce any claims but those of Indian service, and complete competence, into a competition for those objects of reward which this

promotion that must result from filling the vacancies made by nominations to the staff from the regiments to which they belonged. These unattached corps would be formed, in the first instance, as an augmentation.

branch has hitherto exclusively enjoyed, will be fatal to our best hopes of preserving our eastern empire. The constitutional jealousy that will be called into action, whenever this important subject is agitated, must not be lulled by a consideration of the character and influence of the present commander-in-chief of the British forces, which, as long as that illustrious personage may hold the office, would, no doubt, afford to the local branch of the army of India every security for liberal and just treatment.

NATIVE TROOPS.

Among the many political considerations likely to affect the future prosperity and security of the British empire in India, there appears hardly one of more magnitude than the attachment of the natives of our army.

The great proportion of the inhabitants of India are devoted to peaceful occupations, and are consequently, to a certain degree, unable, if they were willing, to defend that government, to which a sense of benefit may have rendered them well affected. The object of our laws and institutions is to repress if not destroy those habits which distinguish the military tribes subject to our rule: but such changes, to be safe, must be gradual; we cannot otherwise expect to escape the dangers and convulsions with which they are likely to be attended. As long

however, as we can repose on the fidelity of our native army, we are safe from internal danger; but every disquietude must assume an alarming appearance, when associated with disaffection in that army; nor can we obtain relief by an accession of European force, for the very means which would give us security for the moment, would aggravate the evil, (from causes which will be noticed hereafter,) as they would tend to lessen the efficiency, and weaken the attachment of those native troops, by whose courage and fidelity alone we can preserve India. As the truth of these observations will hardly admit of dispute, we can contemplate no measures of more importance than those which are calculated to incite and confirm the obedience and allegiance of the native corps employed in our service. The rigid principles of economy, and the precise forms of our civil rule, should both yield to the establishment of this corner-stone of our strength; as, without it, the vast fabric which has been raised with such pains must totter to its base at every tempest with which it is assailed.

The native army has undergone many changes from its origin * to the present day.

When the British government first established itself in India, military tactics in Europe were in a less advanced state than at present, and the caution

* A correct general view of the rise and progress of the native armies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay will be found in the "Quarterly Review," vol. xviii., p. 385.

with which a few Europeans, endeavouring to conciliate the natives of India to fight their battles on a foreign shore, were obliged to act, prevented the introduction of any part of those tactics which could in the least interfere with their prejudices, habits, or religion. A jacket of English broad cloth, made up in the shape of his own dress, the knowledge of his manual exercise, and a few military evolutions, constituted the original sepoy; and with this qualification, and his English firearms, he was found to possess an incalculable superiority over the other natives of India, who, ignorant of the first principles of discipline (which enable men to act in a body), were easily defeated, however great their numbers, by a small corps of their brothers, armed, disciplined, and directed, by the art, intelligence, and energy of European leaders.

It was natural that the early sepoy should share in that feeling of pride which his superiority in discipline obtained him over his countrymen; and the native officers in the employment of the Company were gratified not only by the opportunities which they had of acquiring military distinction, but of improving their fortunes. There were but few European officers in the first sepoy battalions. A captain, an adjutant, with a serjeant to each company, was the original establishment. Commands frequently fell to soubahdars and jemadars; and the comparative laxity of discipline, as well as the

general corruption of the times, enabled the whole of the native army, from the soubahdar to the sepoy, to derive pecuniary benefit from the nature of the services* on which they were occasionally employed. To this advantage, which rendered the service of the Company desirable, and often lucrative, was added a still more powerful attraction in the kind treatment which they generally received from their European officers, the number of whom, to every battalion, was so small, that from necessity, if not from inclination, they acted as much upon principles of conciliation as coercion, and their authority in their corps rested more on affection than fear. They were most particular in their conduct to the native officers, towards whom they behaved with regard and respect proportionate to the responsibility of their situations. One of those native officers, who held the rank of native commandant, often possessed an influence in the corps nearly equal to the European commander. As a strong and convincing proof of this, it may be mentioned, that many of the oldest battalions of the native army of Madras are respectively known to this day by the name of some former native commandant.

This system, which had, undoubtedly, many defects, had also much to recommend it: for though

* They were frequently detached in small parties into different parts of the country, from the inhabitants of which they obtained money on various pretexts.

the European commanding officer, who acted without check in the exercise of a great trust, generally made his corps a source of pecuniary advantage, in which he was aided by the native commandant, who shared in this indirect emolument; yet both had a strong interest in the character and conduct of the corps, to the men of which they were almost always kind and generous.

An increase of their European officers, a great alteration in their dress, and an improvement in their discipline, made material changes in the constitution of the native corps, and these took place through several causes. The native princes had trained sepoys in European tactics; and to maintain a superiority over them it became necessary that the native army of the Company's government should make further advances in the military art, which they were enabled to do, not only from the great improvements which had taken place in that science in Europe, and from the example furnished by some of the king's regiments sent to India, but from the number of officers of liberal education and respectable character, whom a prospect of advantage had at this period drawn to the service of the Company. According to the opinion of many able officers, it was under this system that the men became most attached to their officers, and the native army attained as great a degree of efficiency as it has ever known.

Captains were selected to the command of corps *, which was an object of sufficient emolument and trust to limit the views of officers of that rank (then one of the highest in the service) to its attainment. These officers were almost invariably chosen from their reputation as sepoy officers; that is, officers who united to all the military qualifications of a soldier a particular knowledge of the prejudices, habits, and characters of the men whom they were appointed to command. It was observed under this system, that though many of the corps were brought to a great perfection of dress and discipline, there was hardly an instance in which this was done at the expense of the temper of the men; on the contrary, those corps which were the most remarkable for their discipline were almost uniformly most attached to their commanding officers, whom they found as liberal to their wants, and attentive to their prejudices, as they were anxious for that superiority and excellence in their appearance, discipline, and attachment, upon which they grounded all their

* These selections were made from the captains in the regiments of Europeans in the service of the Company; and it often happened that officers who had neglected to acquire the languages of the country, and who, from violence of temper, were judged unfit to command natives, remained subordinate in an European corps, till they reached the rank of field officers. Ten subaltern officers were attached to every battalion under this system.

hopes of reputation and preferment in the service to which they belonged.

The native officers continued under this system to enjoy great respect and regard. This circumstance was chiefly owing to the European commanding officer, who, from his station, and the emoluments attached * to it, enjoyed a consideration and consequence which enabled him not only to confer distinction by his personal favour and regard, but to keep in complete check and control the younger officers of the service, and to direct their minds to a moderate and indulgent conduct towards all the natives; but particularly to those who, from their gallantry or long services, were entitled to respect and attention, and which it was proper to show them on every ground of policy as well as of generosity.

The native service underwent another great change in the year 1796, when new regulations were introduced, which a train of events, connected with the comparative rank of the Company's officers with those of his majesty serving in India, had rendered indispensably necessary. By these regulations, two battalions of native infantry were formed into one regiment; to which the same number of officers were allowed as to a regiment in the king's service. Regimental rise to the rank of major was, at the same time, introduced;

* He had the off-reckonings of his corps, and, in general, the command of a station, with further emoluments.

and this, it was hoped, by attaching the officers to corps, would confirm and strengthen reciprocal confidence and connexion between the European officers and the Sepoys, which had ever been deemed the most essential principle in the constitution of the native army. It was also expected that the increased number of European officers would greatly add to the efficiency of the native corps, as the smallest parties that could be detached would be commanded by an European officer, and have the advantage of his knowledge and experience.

The most unhappy effect of these regulations was the alteration they produced in the condition of the commanding officers, whose situation, under the operation of them, was attended with little of either advantage or distinction. It was, in fact, no longer an object of ambition, as it had been formerly. It had become a station of trouble, without influence and consideration: and every officer of interest or reputation in the service exerted himself to avoid it, and to obtain a government command, or a situation on the general staff. The bad consequences of this part of the constitution of a native corps have been felt and acknowledged; a partial remedy has been applied; but none will be complete, or give efficiency to this important branch of our military establishment, that does not make it an object of more value, both in point of profit and reputation, for an officer of rank and character to

command a native regiment, than to fill any station on the staff except the heads of a department.

The condition of the native officers of our sepoy corps has often been the subject of the most serious attention of government; but though their allowances have been a little increased, no measures * have yet been taken which we can consider as adequate to the object of creating and maintaining motives for their continued fidelity and attachment. In an army of nearly † two hundred and forty thousand natives, the highest pay which a soubahdar of infantry can attain is 174 rupees per month ‡, and after attaining that rank, he enjoys no consideration which can save him from the harshness of an European officer, a boy, perhaps, who has just joined that corps to which he, the native officer, has perhaps belonged for thirty or forty years. He has in barracks, and in camp, no other accommodation than that provided for the sepoys; and although on his retiring to the invalid list, his pay is continued, that is become, from habit, necessary for his support, so that he can make no provision for his children; and as pride in his own condition, or alarm at their being subject to corporeal punish-

* The most beneficial measure of this nature recently adopted, is the appointment of a soubahdar major to each corps.

† The last returns of the native army made that amount to 232,366, rank and file.

‡ This is the pay of a soubahdar of cavalry at Madras. A soubahdar of cavalry at Bengal has 105 rupees per mensem.

ment, prevents in most cases his bringing them up in the army, they are generally a burden on him while he lives; and when he dies they are left poor and discontented.

There are, no doubt, a few instances in the army, where a small pension has been given to a native officer, and part of it, in some very rare cases, has been continued to his family; but such instances have seldom occurred, except when the person to whom the reward was granted had an opportunity of distinguishing himself beyond all the common chances of the service; and even then, to obtain this notice has required the exertion of all the interest and influence of those under whom that fortunate native officer acted. It cannot be expected that the few rewards, so obtained, should have any general effect as an encouragement to the efforts of this class of our native army. Under such a complete limitation of their views, can it be a subject of surprise that in cases of severe trial, particularly of mutiny, the native officers have seldom displayed a spirit of activity and zeal? They have in such cases been almost always objects of suspicion, and have often evinced a sullen indifference of conduct*,

* The conduct of the native officers at Vellore, in 1806, and of those in the recent mutiny at Barrackpore, was nearly similar: they acted in both cases like men who, while desirous of not forfeiting what they possessed, were without adequate motives to make them perform with spirit a difficult and dangerous duty.

which appeared to be produced by the absence of those motives of action which were necessary to support men in their situation. Placed between officers they were bound to obey, and offenders with whom they had kindred and national ties, they had a difficult and dangerous task to perform; if they have failed, we must blame the system, not them: but when we can infuse life into that system, and elevate their minds to further objects of ambition, we shall succeed in animating them to continued efforts in our service; until then, they will stop where we do, and be more anxious to enjoy in repose the small objects they may have already attained, than to incur hazards disproportioned to any hopes they have reason to indulge with regard to the future.

If the nature of our power in India requires, as it certainly does, the exclusion of the native officers from the exercise of high military command, and that gate to distinction is barred by policy, others should be opened. In the strictest conformity to those principles upon which the native army is formed, we might lead the minds of these troops to expect comfort and distinction in civil life, as the reward of approved military service; and by directing their ambition to the natural and seductive object of acquiring importance in their own tribe, and enjoying some privileges, however trivial, which, under certain regulations, might descend to their children, we should not only discover a motive suffi-

ciently powerful to supply the place of that which a jealous but wise policy obliges us to withhold, but place their fidelity beyond the power of corruption. If such measures were adopted, the native service would become popular and respected; it would be embraced with eagerness by men of the first families in the country; and in the course of years we might expect the attachment of our subjects to be greatly improved by a spirit of active allegiance, which would be generally diffused by veterans and their descendants, whose claim to their rank or land was founded in the gratitude of a state whom they had served with fidelity and distinction.

The men who form the native army of the Company are almost all sober, and of good conduct in private life. Drunkenness, as a general vice, is, indeed, unknown; and notorious immorality is rare. But their virtues are more of a passive than an active nature. They consist more in forbearance, from fear of offending against their civil institutions and the rigid tenets of their religion, than from any sense of the beauty of virtue, or the deformity of vice. These men appear, in many cases, hardly to consider themselves as free moral agents; they often blindly resign their judgment to the law of usage, the dictates of their priest, or the influence of their superiors in cast or station; and, under such influence, they change, in an instant, their mild, inoffensive, and pliant character, for that of the most determined obstinacy and savage ferocity.

All the natives of India, but particularly those of military classes, are fond of show and of high titles; and they often seem to prize the semblance, almost as much as the reality of power. It is indeed surprising to see the consequence which they attach to every mark of outward respect, especially when bestowed by their superiors: and, partaking of the character of his countryman, the native soldier of the Company, intelligent and quick in his conception, full of vanity and a love of pre-eminence, if not of glory, is of all men the most sensible to attention or neglect. Though the climate disposes him to inertness, and his frame is seldom very robust *, he may be flattered and encouraged to make the most extraordinary exertions; while harshness or cruelty serves only to subdue his spirit, and sink him into apathy, if it does not rouse him to resentment.

It may be stated as the result of the fullest experience, that the native troops of India depend more than any in the world upon the officers who command them: when treated by these with notice and kindness, and when marked consideration is shewn to their usages, they become attached, and evince, on all occasions, a zeal and valour that can hardly be surpassed; but when they have not confidence in those who command them, when they are made secondary, or treated in any manner indicating a want of reliance on them; much more

* The Bengal native soldier is an exception.

when any act of their commanders betrays ignorance or contempt of their prejudices or religion, they become spiritless or discontented. This is the natural consequence of their condition, as mercenaries of a nation with whom they have no ties beyond those that compel them to a cold performance of their duty, and such as they form with their immediate officers; but able leaders, who understand how to infuse their own spirit into those they command, find no difficulty in making what impressions they desire on the minds of men, whose education and sentiments predispose them to participate in every feeling associated with military fame and distinction.

An army so constituted, and formed of men of such tempers, may appear very susceptible of being corrupted, and made instrumental to the destruction of that power which it is employed to protect; but of this there is no danger, unless in the improbable case of our becoming too presumptuous in what we may deem our intrinsic strength, confiding too exclusively in our European troops, and undervaluing our native army. From the day of that fatal error, (should we ever commit it,) we may date the downfal of our eastern empire. Its finances would not only sink under the expense of a greatly-increased European force, but the natives of India in our ranks would lose the opinion which they entertain of their own consequence to the government they serve, and their whole tone as an

army would be lowered in a degree that would impair our strength far beyond any addition it could receive from the superior efficiency and energy of a few more English regiments.

The employment of native troops associated with Europeans, is a point that merits the most serious attention. The ablest of those commanders who have led them to victory, however impressed with a just sense of the superior courage and energy of a British soldier, have carefully abstained from every act that could show the least want of confidence in the native part of their force, or convey to the latter an impression that they were viewed in a secondary light. By mixing them in every operation with English troops, they have succeeded * not only in

* Amongst those who have been most happy in exciting such feelings in the minds of our native troops may be enumerated the names of Lord Clive, Sir Eyre Coote, Lord Cornwallis, General Meadows, Lord Lake, and the Duke of Wellington. In the article of the Review (vol. xviii. p. 392), to which we have before alluded, we find a just compliment to that excellent officer, the late General Sir John Floyd, which very fully illustrates the effects of attention to this point. "The distinguished commander," the reviewer observes, "of that gallant regiment (the 19th dragoons) had, from the day of its arrival in India, laboured to establish the ties of mutual and cordial regard between the European and the native soldiers. His success was complete; his own fame, while he remained in India, was promoted by their combined efforts; and the friendship which he established, and which had continued for many years, was, after his departure, consummated upon the plains of Assaye. At the most critical moment of a battle, which ranks

exciting an emulation and pride in the minds of the native soldiers, which greatly added to their efficiency, but diffused a spirit of cordiality and good feeling, not more calculated to promote the success of their immediate operations than the general interests of the empire.

These observations will help to show the peculiar character of the native army, and the consequence of all arrangements that relate to the European officers of every rank who are to command and lead them, and upon whose disposition, knowledge, and ability, the fidelity and efficiency of this branch of our strength must depend.

Viewing the subject in this light, it appears most important to provide at an early period a remedy for the defects of the existing system. This should be done by measures grounded on sound principles of liberal policy, suited to the character, composition, and actual condition of the men of

amongst the hardest fought of those that have been gained by the illustrious Wellington, the British dragoons, when making their extremest efforts, saw their Asiatic fellow-soldiers, 'keep pace for pace, and blow for every blow.' A more arduous task awaited the latter, when the battalions of native infantry which formed the garrison of Vellore were led, by the infatuation of the moment, to rise upon and murder the Europeans of that garrison. The fidelity of the native cavalry did not shrink from this severe trial; and after the gates of the fortress were blown open, their sabres were as deeply stained as those of the English dragoons with the blood of their misguided and guilty countrymen."

our native army. There is every reason to apprehend that, if these measures are long neglected, our local governments may be forced upon expedients which may remove partial or local evils, but which will lay the seeds of more general discontent and danger. The difference between a wise foresight, which prevents demand, and that weakness, which meets it with concession, is immense: the former is the characteristic of a rising, the latter of a falling government.

It would occupy too much space to enter into a fuller detail of the plan best calculated to animate the zeal and confirm the fidelity of our native troops; but if the importance of these objects is acknowledged, there will be no difficulty in devising the means for their accomplishment.

Whatever measures we adopt must provide rewards suited to their condition for a certain number of the most deserving native officers; and these rewards should be of a character not only to give life to this class, but to raise the hopes of all who shall be striving to obtain similar rank and consideration. We have been compelled to cast down much in India, and almost all whom we found raised above others in the community have perished under our levelling rule. The necessity of creating and maintaining a superior class amongst the natives is recommended by every consideration of wise and generous policy; and assuredly there is no measure more calculated to aid in obtaining

this end than that of conferring on the veteran, who has gained reputation in the army, rank and consideration in his native district, so as to render him an object of respect to his countrymen, who will see in his services to the state a legitimate claim to favour and distinction, whatever may have been his former condition. This mode of reward is quite accordant with the usage of all Asiatic states, and its adoption by us would be congenial to the habits and feelings of the whole population.

The consideration given to distinguished native officers should, in a greater or less degree, according to their claims, be extended to their descendants; and their sons might be permitted to pass through the grades of our army with a trivial addition of pay, and exemption from corporal punishment. The constitution of the army will never admit of our introducing volunteers, or native cadets. Every man who enters it must work his way, by his own efforts, from the station of a private to that of a soubahdar; but nothing could be more popular with the sepoys than to see the sons of their officers mingled in their ranks, yet enjoying a notice and respect that added to the value of that station in life to which they all aspired.

Native commissioned officers, when employed on the staff, as they frequently are, should receive a fixed allowance, and not be left, as they have hitherto been, to look to a future reward, depend-

ing as much on the influence of the officer under whom they acted as the services they performed. The value of their efforts, if judiciously directed in this line of duty, is very great, and cannot, in some cases, be supplied by those of any European officer. They are also frequently required for specific charge or command, and this employment should come under the head of staff duty. The selection for such stations, when pay was attached to them, would constitute both reward and encouragement to the class to which they belonged.

The above measures would be very beneficial, and not attended with any large expenditure; but their operation would be limited to the higher ranks; and however much the favour and notice extended to them might influence others, more is required to cement the union of the interests of the state with that of the general body of the troops by whom it is defended. To do this effectually, the sepoy should be taught to look to meritorious services in the army as the road to employment under the civil administration of his native province. A certain period of service in the regular army should be an indispensable qualification in all candidates for situations suited to persons of military habits; and there is no doubt that all the duties of police, which are distinct from the hereditary village establishment, would be as well performed by men who had passed through the army, as by any other class, if not better. The sepoys employed in

police duties might have a privilege of getting part of their pay commuted, if they wished it, for grants of waste land, provided they possessed the means of bringing it into cultivation.

The general introduction of such a plan would be attended with great and manifold advantages. If well organized, it would encourage recruits and reward service, and would promote internal order and prosperity; nor is it a slight recommendation that, while it gave the best hold upon the continued attachment of our native army, by multiplying our means of rewarding meritorious individuals, it would be attended with a saving instead of an increase of expense. The only difficulty that could impede its successful accomplishment has been before noticed, and the necessity of the measure may be adduced as another argument in favour of selecting the magistrates and superintendants of police from a class of men who are accustomed to command soldiers.

Sudden changes in any system of administration are unwise, and it would be sufficient, if this plan were approved, to make its gradual introduction imperative. The details would be adapted to local circumstances, but no deviation should be allowed as to the fundamental principles on which it is grounded. These are political, and connected with our very existence in India. Our government of that country is essentially military, and our means of preserving and improving our possessions through

the operation of our civil institutions depend on our wise and politic exercise of that military power on which the whole fabric rests. This is a recognised fact; but, unless a conviction of its truth is continually impressed on the minds of those placed at the head of the Indian administration, it will be in vain to attempt plans which will meet with every obstacle that partial and local views, a desire of personal * influence and power, or attachment to established system, can devise or create to impede and defeat their execution.

* The nomination of natives to situations in the police department appears to be a patronage on which the judge or magistrate, from the absence of all ties with those who fill them, can place little value; but these appointments are great objects to men under such functionaries, and all their influence with their superiors will be exerted to prevent any change in the system.

CHAPTER XI.

Observations on the British Community in India:—Half Castes, or Anglo-Indians:—Propagation of Christianity:—State of the Press.

BRITISH COMMUNITY.

This work would be incomplete without some notice of that part of the British community in India living under the protection of the Company's government, but not in their service. This body has of late years greatly increased*, and is likely to become much more numerous; and the questions which relate to its privileges and pretensions will require very particular attention.

His majesty's courts of justice, established at the capitals of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, are a legal defence, to all English subjects within the limits of their jurisdiction, against any arbitrary acts of the local government, unless in certain cases

* The total numbers of English in India, not in the public service, has been computed at three thousand, of which two thousand are given to Bengal, five hundred to Madras, and five hundred to Bombay. This calculation is probably beyond the actual numbers, including even those in the shipping of the country.

where the legislature has given to the latter the power* of sending to England any individual who may be residing in India without licence, or other lawful authority.

When the judges of the crown were first nominated to Bengal, their power was extended over all the provinces subject to the Company; but a very short trial of this system shewed that it could not be maintained; and experience has since proved that, even within the confined limits to which their jurisdiction is circumscribed, it is liable to come into such violent collision with the local authorities, that we can only hope to avert the evils flowing from this internal source of division and weakness by a most careful selection of individuals to offices which require in those who fill them not only perfect acquaintance with the law, of which they are the organs, but calm temper, enlarged judgment, and a competent knowledge of the peculiar scene in which they have to act. Unless men with such qualities are nominated to the high stations of judges in India, we must anticipate, under the growing numbers of the population of our Indian capitals, very serious embarrassment in the future operation of this the most delicate of all parts of the frame of our eastern administration.

The jurisdiction of the supreme courts of law is limited to a few miles beyond the capitals where they

* Vide Act 53 Geo. III. Cap. 155. Sec. 104.

are established, and a long period must elapse, and great changes take place, before it can be in any degree extended *. Those whom it protects are essentially distinct from the great body of our Indian subjects. The mixed population of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, made up of European Half Castes, or Anglo-Indians †, and that part of the natives who are associated by their ties, their interests, and their occupations with English laws and usages, and a great proportion of whom have been born and educated under the influence and

* The idea has often been suggested of extending the jurisdiction of his majesty's courts in India; but it is difficult to believe that any man of enlarged mind, who understands the history and present state of English law, and who surveys any eastern or foreign country, would recommend a transfer of the one to the other. What all Englishmen adore is the principle of English law, the freedom and security to person and property on which it is bottomed. But the forms of English law, or its proceedings, are not a necessary part of this principle; on the contrary, except in England, where they have grown up accidentally and from peculiar circumstances, they would only be an evil and an embarrassment; and in an Indian community they would come into collision with its most ancient usages.

† There has been much discussion regarding the name by which this race ought to be distinguished, and latterly some amongst them have thought that of Half Caste, by which they have been long known, is opprobrious. It certainly is not so, any more than Creole, or men of colour, when applied to persons of mixed race in the West Indies; amongst names chosen by themselves, that of Anglo-Indians appears to be the most descriptive and unexceptionable.

operation of these laws, form a community as separate in habits and sentiments from that which exists in a town or village at the distance of twenty miles from these capitals, as if they belonged to different nations. There are no people so abhorrent of change as the inhabitants of India; and if its progress has been so slow that it has not as yet travelled beyond the walls of our chief settlements, we may judge of the period which must elapse before we can expect to see complete success crown our efforts for the improvement of our subjects in what we deem the blessings of civilization, but which are viewed by those whom we desire to adopt them as innovations on their cherished habits, and the religion of their forefathers.

The difference between our capitals and their surrounding districts, is not greater than that which exists between the countries that have been long in our possession and those we have recently acquired. The various provinces which form our wide empire may not unaptly be compared, as far as relates to their knowledge of the principles of our rule, our character, and our institutions, to a family of children, from the mature man to the infant. What long acquaintance has made familiar to the one, scares the other; the diet that nourishes the adult may poison the child. These considerations should make us proceed with great caution, otherwise we shall plunge into difficulties from which there is no retreat.

An arbitrary government can make experiments with comparative safety. It can retract a boon which does not promise advantage. It can abrogate to-day the rights which it granted yesterday; but this is not the case with the British government of India. Its favours and concessions to its subjects, on any points connected with their rights and privileges, cannot be recalled without a real or apparent outrage to the free spirit of the constitution of England, and without impairing the confidence of the natives in its good faith, which is the basis on which it rests all prospect of permanent improvement. This consideration renders it essential that no measures should be adopted creative of such rights and privileges, unless we have the clearest conviction that they can be permanently maintained, without injury or danger to our native subjects, and to the general interests of our empire in India.

The first question regarding the English community in India is, how far it is wise and safe to allow the settlement of Englishmen in India, and to open to their energy of character the paths of agricultural as well as commercial improvement? This branch of the subject has the more importance, as it is evident that no extensive colonization can take place unless men are admitted to have property in the soil as well as in its produce.

The grounds upon which the impolicy and danger of admitting Englishmen to follow agricultural pursuits in India rest, are, in a great degree, referrible

to the peculiar nature of our eastern possessions, which (it cannot be too often repeated) must never be viewed as a colony, but as a subject empire, to the inhabitants of which we have guaranteed, by every pledge that rulers can give to their subjects, the enjoyment of their property, of their laws, of their usages, and of their religion. We may and ought to impart such improvement as will promote their happiness, and the general prosperity of the country; but we are bound, by every obligation of faith (and it would be a principle of imperative policy, even if we had given no pledge,) not to associate with our improvement any measures of which the operation is likely to interfere with their interests, to offend their prejudices, or to outrage their cherished habits and sentiments.

That colonization on any extended scale would have this effect no man can doubt, who is acquainted with the nature of the property in the soil, and the character of the population. The different rights which are involved in every field of cultivated land in India have been particularly noticed, and those who have studied that subject will be satisfied that in many of our provinces there is no room for the English proprietor. Such might, no doubt, purchase land where our regulations have made that saleable, and they might settle in the vicinity of great cities, where, from causes already stated, landed property has, in a certain degree, changed its character.

There are throughout our territories many waste tracts, but almost all the lands capable of being occupied have claimants, who can produce strong title to the eventual occupation of them. This extends even to jungles and wilds, in which the right of pasture, and of cutting wood and grass, usually belongs to the villages in their vicinity. Besides, as has been before stated, when peace and prosperity augment the agricultural population, those that want employment, compelled as they are by their usages to follow the occupation of their fathers, must spread over waste lands, to a share in the produce of which they assert an hereditary claim. The government, which makes advances to enable them to settle in such reclaimed lands, is early repaid by increase of revenue; and when, from any considerations, it is disposed to resign the whole or part of its proprietary rights in order to benefit individuals, there are, as has been elsewhere shewn*, classes amongst its native subjects who have the first claim to benefit by such grants of the contingent rights that may have devolved upon it.

If the facts here stated are correct, English colonists could only be partially admitted into India, without an interference with the property in actual possession or just expectation of our native subjects of the cultivating class, or those of the higher orders; and whatever might be our intention, we could not adopt the measures for

* Vide vol. II., p. 165.

raising these colonists to that consideration which would be requisite to render them an useful and contented part of the community, without a corresponding depression of the native part of the population.

The danger of offence to the prejudices, usages, or religion of the native, from the settlement of British agricultural colonists, would be great; and this danger, it is to be remarked, would not spring so much from the acts of the latter, as from the apprehensions and the impressions of the former, who would believe any such settlement to be the commencement of a system for the subversion of the existing order of society. They would view the settlers as invaders of their rights, and no benefit they could derive from the introduction of capital, or the example of industry and enterprise, would reconcile any to such a change, except the very lowest of the labouring classes; all others would either shrink from a competition with what they would deem a higher and more favoured class, or be irritated to a spirit of personal hostility, which, in whatever way it might shew itself, would be most injurious to the public interests.

English agricultural colonists in India would, in a very few generations, degenerate both in body and mind. This, in spite of every effort to prevent it, must be the effect of the climate, of the connexion with the ignorant and low females with

whom their circumstances would inevitably lead them to associate, and of those habits and sentiments which they would acquire from being surrounded with a distinct population whom they would look upon as their inferiors. This change, whenever it came to pass, would bring into disrepute that nation to whom they continued to belong in name, and, instead of adding to its power, they would become a source of weakness to it. In the present scale of our Eastern empire, we can never expect to count numbers with the natives, and it is upon their continued impression of the superiority of our character* that our existence must depend. We ought, therefore, to be most cautious as to the adoption of any measure having a tendency to lower the opinion they entertain of their rulers; and that the colonization of some scattered English families over our provinces would have this effect, no one can doubt who knows the country and its inhabitants.

* There is no one regulation of our government that impresses reflecting natives with so high an opinion of our public virtue as the self-denying ordinance which prohibits Europeans from being proprietors of land. Colonel Wilks, in a communication upon this subject, states that Napoleon Buonaparte appeared never to have heard of this regulation, and could scarcely believe the Colonel to be serious when he assured him that it not only existed but was rigidly observed: although sufficiently chary of his admiration of any thing English, Colonel Wilks adds that he did not suppress it on this occasion.

The profits attendant on commerce, and on mechanical science, have carried many of our countrymen to India; and their numbers are likely to increase, from the changes that have occurred and are in operation. Our empire there has already derived, and must continue to derive, the greatest benefit from the enterprise of British merchants, which has diffused wealth, encouraged industry, and promoted the general prosperity of the country, adding by the increase of its resources to the strength of the government. English artisans have also, within a narrower sphere, been most useful; neither of these classes have, in any way, come into collision with our native subjects, by trenching upon their rights and claims: on the contrary, they have been their benefactors; they have given them an example of the benefits that accrue to individuals and nations from large and liberal principles of trade; they have taught them the useful and ornamental arts of life, and it is to them that we must chiefly look, as affording examples for the natives to follow in every improvement of civilized society. The civil and military officers of government are, from their stations and duties, too distant from the population to be copied; but in the merchant with whom he deals, or competes, and the mechanic for whom he labours, or whom he tries to rival, our Indian subjects view classes to which they are near; and notwithstanding the inveteracy of habits, many may unconsciously become

imitators of customs which time may satisfy them are preferable to their own.

These considerations give great importance to the mercantile and mechanical classes of the community; and their growth is desirable, provided it is accompanied with the strict observance of those covenants and legal restrictions under which they are placed. From these, a government so constituted as the English in India cannot relax. Some of its powers, particularly that of deporting any British subject from India to England, is at variance with every principle of our free constitution, and repugnant to the feelings of Englishmen; but it is not at variance with the constitution of our Indian empire, and it is strictly accordant with the covenants into which Englishmen enter before they obtain leave to reside and pursue their several occupations in that empire. We must, nevertheless, expect, from the nature of English society, that on every exercise of absolute power, however necessary, there will be a recurrence of struggle between the government and this part of the population of our Indian capitals; and the sympathy which the latter will meet with in England is such, that it will require all the wisdom and firmness of the authorities at home and abroad to withstand the efforts that will be made to weaken and degrade the local administration.

The number of English merchants and artisans who have been allowed to settle at any distance

from the presidencies * is not considerable: some of them are fixed at the principal stations, civil and military, in the interior; and others, who have established manufactories †, reside in provinces which have been long under our rule. The number of the latter is very small, and many reasons concur to make the increase of it impolitic. At all events, before we venture to do so, we must make some changes in the law to which they are subject. They should be amenable to the local courts of justice in all but offences of the highest description, and both the judges and magistrates must have such an extension of power as is necessary to enable them to check the excesses of Europeans in their district ‡. That power can be made subject

* No British subject is allowed to reside more than ten miles from the presidency, unless leave is given by a certificate signed by the chief secretary of government, which certificate must specify the place at which he is to reside, and the period for which such leave is granted. Vide 53 Geo. III., cap. clv., sec. cviii.

† These manufactories are usually for indigo or sugar.

‡ All Europeans, except British subjects, are amenable to the provincial criminal courts; but British subjects can, at present, only be prosecuted on any criminal charge before the king's court at the presidency, and the same jurisdiction must be referred to before any penalty beyond a fine of five hundred rupees, or, in failure of payment, two months' imprisonment, is awarded. This is often a great hardship upon natives who have to prefer charges against them, but who cannot afford either the time or money necessary for a prosecution at such a distance.

to appeal; but it must be efficient to the object of saving the natives from those inequalities of justice (for so they may be termed) which now exist between them and the English merchant, or artisan, with whom they have litigation or disputes.

The settlement of Europeans, not in the service of government, should be limited to those countries which have been long in our possession, and are familiar with our rule. If unattended with bad consequences, it can be gradually extended. The differences between such provinces and those more recently acquired has been mentioned. In the latter, the ignorance of the inhabitants identifies every European with the government. Many years must elapse before they can comprehend the distinctions which exist in our society; and, until they have attained this knowledge, their peace and good government are liable to be affected, in a degree hardly to be believed, by the words and actions of every individual Englishman who visits or resides amongst them. Better knowledge will, in process of time, correct these delusions and alarms, but until this excited feeling subsides, and our administration and habits are perfectly understood, it is most hazardous to admit any Europeans except those who are under the strict restraints of the civil and military service.

Though a desire to defend their exclusive privileges of trade might, at one period, have led the Company's government to oppose itself to Euro-

peans proceeding to India, nothing can be more groundless than the accusations recently made against the court of directors, of having, from an illiberal and short-sighted policy, endeavoured to prevent, by prohibitions and restraints, the settlement of Englishmen in that country. They have, on the contrary, permitted their settlement as far as was compatible with the welfare of the settlers, the interests of their native subjects, and the peace and prosperity of the empire. The principles upon which they have acted are alike essential for the safety of the state, and of that community of whom many, from a confined view of their own condition, adopt erroneous opinions on this important subject; and it is to be hoped that the specious representations and popular clamours to which those opinions give birth may never prevail so far as to make us lose sight of that caution which has hitherto been our guide and safeguard. The advantages expected from the concessions called for by speculative men would, in all probability, be found visionary. Their tendency would be to create divisions in the English community in India, and, by injudiciously yielding to them, we might inflict irreparable injury on our native subjects, without conferring a benefit on our own country, that could in any way compensate for the evil consequences of such a measure.

ANGLO-INDIANS.

The descendants of Europeans by native mothers, usually termed half-castes, or Anglo-Indians, if they do not form a part of the English community in India, are closely allied to it. Independent of those relations of blood by which many of them are united to this community, their common language, education, habits, and religion, form ties which must always connect them; but, on the other hand, difference of complexion, and situation in life, separates a great proportion of this race from the English society; and, as they are still more distinct from the native part of the population, they must be considered as forming a class of themselves. This body of our subjects in India has of late years occupied much of the attention of government, both at home and abroad, and there appears an anxiety to adopt every measure which can raise it from its equivocal condition, and render it useful and respectable.

The numbers of this class are not considerable*; and many causes combine to prevent their rapid increase. A great proportion being illegitimate, they seldom possess much property; and this circumstance, with the difficulty they have in providing for their children, prevents their early marriages.

* It is believed that no correct census has ever been taken of this part of the population.

The male part rarely marry with European women, and their connexions with their own class, or with the native females of India, produce a race still darker than themselves, many of whom, when the parents are poor, mix with the lower orders of the native Christian* population, and lose in the next generation all trace of the distinctive body from which they sprang; while, on the other hand, the children of females of this class who have intermarried with Europeans, from being fairer, and belonging to another society, become, in one or two generations, altogether separated from that race of natives from whom they are maternally descended.

With the exception of a few, who have acquired fame and fortune as military adventurers, the superior as well as the most industrious branches of this community are found at the capitals of our different presidencies, and at the principal civil and military stations; and they may be said almost to monopolize the situations of clerks and accountants, in the offices of government as well as in those of public servants and private European merchants. The whole of this class speak English, as well as the provincial dialect of the country in which they were born. With a few distinguished exceptions, however, they have no political influence with the natives. It has not hitherto been their interest to attain such influence, and many obstacles would

* This population consists of the descendants of the Portuguese and native converts.

oppose their success if they made it their object. The respect which the natives of India pay to an Englishman is associated with their allegiance to the government under which they live. This feeling does not exist towards a person whom they view as more approximated to themselves, and yet without any common interest, or any of those claims from superiority of Indian tribe or caste to which they habitually pay deference. The character, conduct, or achievements of an individual of this class may gain and fix their attachment, but we can look to no period when the Anglo-Indians, as a body, are likely to form any dangerous ties with the Mahomedan or Hindu part of the community. The date at which this part of our population can arrive at any numerical strength as a separate body is very remote; but they are almost all well-educated, and have from this a consequence beyond what they derive from their numbers. They are naturally connected with a part of the English society, and politically with the native Christians; and as associated with those branches they may early attain importance. A just and generous government will not however have recourse to that narrow principle which apportions benefits by the power any class of its subjects have of enforcing them, nor will it withhold any reasonable boons, because it is offended by the temper in which they are solicited. Acting on different grounds, it will give to this, as to every other class of its subjects, that

consideration which is due to their condition, and which fulfils their reasonable hopes without a sacrifice of any essential interest of the empire.

Though placed under circumstances of depression and discouragement, this body of men has lost few opportunities of becoming useful and respected in the different walks of life to which their pursuits have been directed. We should continue, therefore, to cultivate their moral and religious principles, and while we institute and encourage seminaries for their instruction, upon an extended scale, we should provide the means of their future employment in the conditions of life best suited to their respective situations and qualifications. If the justice of this proposition is admitted, the means of carrying it into execution will not be difficult, as they require no change in those salutary restraints in which the principles of both the civil and military services in India are now grounded. The execution of it will not impair our present, but lay the foundations of future strength, by the care which we bestow on an increasing class of our population, to render them useful and attached subjects.

The real consequence of the Anglo-Indians, in the eyes of the natives and in their own, arises chiefly from their connexion with Europeans. They cling to an origin which seems to exalt them, and are only driven by the rebuffs of slight or contempt to take measures by themselves as

a detached body, with separate and opposite interests. The very pride they have in placing themselves in the rank of Europeans, while it makes them feel with peculiar sensibility every instance of scornful repulse which, from their anomalous situation, they must often be doomed to experience, affords the means of making them useful allies. In being so, they are in their natural situation: they are adopting the policy most beneficial to themselves; and, on the other hand, in treating them with kindness and consideration, we are only acting the part of wise and benevolent rulers; and the policy of our extending every consideration we can to this class, is greatly increased by their recognised rights of holding lands*, and of sitting upon juries, which latter has

* Strong objections have been taken to the measure of allowing the Anglo-Indians to hold lands. It has been represented as opening an indirect road to colonization, as the fathers would often be the real proprietors of land bought in the name of their illegitimate children; and it has been further stated, that the latter through marriage might become the progenitors of colonists who would be very proximate to Europeans. It has been answered to such arguments, that subjecting this class, as we do, to the same laws as the natives, we could not easily refuse them the right of attaining property in the soil, where that could be purchased by the wealth they inherited, or gained as the fruits of their industry; that, by this boon, we gave them a valuable stake in the general welfare of the empire, and one of all others most likely to attach them to our government; and that, although they might approximate to

been given them recently. These privileges must gradually augment the influence of this class, and, by giving them importance with the English community and themselves, will tend to improve their condition, and confirm their attachment to the state to which they owe allegiance.

PROPAGATION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN INDIA.

There is no subject more intimately connected with the preceding remarks on colonization, and the attention due to the descendants of Europeans, than the question that has been so much agitated, as to the propriety or policy of maintaining and propagating the Christian religion within the limits of our Indian territories. The first is the duty of government; with the latter its name or authority should never be associated. It is our duty, as a Christian nation, and it is politic in us, as rulers of India, to support our church in that country on the most respectable footing. We are bound to give the

their European forefathers in language, manners, and religion, they were, from complexion, from habits, and from being excluded from the civil and military branches of the service, sufficiently distinct to prevent that alarm on the part of the natives of India which would be produced by European colonization; and it has been assumed, from this last circumstance, that they were likely to prove the safest of all mediums through which we might gradually introduce knowledge and improvement into India.

Christian inhabitants of our territories the means of spiritual instruction; and it is of importance, even in a worldly sense, that they should improve in the knowledge and practice of religion. By decorous attention to the exercise of divine worship, and the observance of the pure tenets of our faith, the character of this class of our subjects will be elevated. They will rise in general estimation, and their example will be more likely to effect the conversion of the native population, than any other means that can be adopted. But in every effort we permit beyond this, for the propagation of our faith among a people who are attached to the religions transmitted to them from their forefathers, and which, however false, are rendered venerable in their eyes by their connexion with the great principles of morality and social duty, we should be guided by our experience of the past, and knowledge of the present, and use that caution which is alike recommended by regard for the safety of the state, and for the ultimate accomplishment of our hopes for the enlightening of our Indian subjects.

The Portuguese, who were the first European settlers in India, hastened* their downfal by that bigoted spirit with which they endeavoured to introduce their religion. They surrounded themselves, in their settlements and towns, with native

* The chief cause of the decline of this nation in India was, the fall of their power in Europe; but there is no doubt that it was hastened by their bigotry.

Christians. By so doing, they drew a line of separation between those natives who adhered to them and all others, and rendered themselves an object of dread to all out of the pale of their church. Their advancement in power, therefore, was opposed, not merely on a principle of independence, but of religion.

The French, though not so bigoted and superstitious as the Portuguese, adhered, in some degree, to their imprudent policy in this respect; and the native inhabitants of their settlements, and the servants in whom the principal officers of government reposed trusts, were almost all Christians. It was remarked when their power was at the highest, in the days of Dupleix and Lally, that, instead of scrupulously respecting the prejudices and religious feelings of the Mahomedans and Hindus, they allowed the most sacred usages of both to be frequently violated. On the other hand, from the whole career of the British in India, one would conclude, that in every stage of their progress they had looked for success in avoiding the great errors of their rivals. The government and all its servants have hitherto refused public support and countenance to efforts for converting the natives of India. The consequences of the impressions made by such conduct will never be appreciated, perhaps, till the charm which upholds this great empire is broken.

By the introduction of a judicial system, founded upon their own laws, which are completely incor-

porated with their religious * usages and superstitions, we have given a tacit, but most solemn pledge to withhold all interposition of authority or influence in their conversion. Should the dictates of a conscientious, but overheated zeal, ever lead to a breach of this pledge, the alarm will be great; the consequences may be fatal to our power; and a good Christian would regret to see an effort made to propagate his religion, by means so unsuited to its character and divine origin. In the pursuit of that object, he would deprecate the exercise of an influence which has been obtained by a confidence studiously inspired of its never being so employed.

We have recently placed our church-establishment in India on a high and respectable footing. Let us continue to give it every proper attention; let the clergymen sent thither be men of exemplary conduct and character, and their number be sufficient to secure to the European part of the community the best means of learning and practising the duties of their religion; but let the clergymen in the employ of government, whether as ministers of religion, or professors of colleges, be prohibited from using their endeavours to make converts. This task might be left, as it has hitherto been, to

* The laws both of the Mahomedans and Hindus are completely incorporated with their faith. The Cazee and Pundit are at once the expounders of their religion and law, both of which are deemed of divine origin.

the labours of the humble missionary, whose habits and zeal give him more prospect of success, and whose unnoticed efforts will excite less alarm, when wholly unassociated * with the aid and support of government.

The jealousy which numbers of the inhabitants of India entertain, touching our designs upon their religion, has naturally increased with our growing power. The local government, aware of the progress of this feeling, has taken every opportunity to counteract it, and to give their native subjects a continued confidence in the principle which they have acted upon, by abstaining from all proceedings that could, in the remotest degree, be construed into an intention of interfering themselves, or countenancing those under their authority in interfering, with their faith and usages.

* The example of the celebrated Swartz has been adduced as a proof of efforts at conversion being aided, and the confidence of the natives being increased, by the notice and support which a missionary received from government; but the character of that pious and able man was as extraordinary as the circumstances under which he was placed; his influence with the natives, from princes to peasants, was established by his personal conduct, and Swartz may be said to have given more aid to government than he ever received from it. Besides, the condition of our power in India, at the period he lived, was so very different from what it is at present that, supposing the unlikely occurrence of a man of as rare talents and virtue entering upon the same field of action, we should have no right to anticipate the same results from his efforts in such altered circumstances.

In 1804, the subject proposed for a public disputation at the annual examination in the college at Fort William, was, "The advantages which the natives of this country might derive from translations, in the vernacular tongue, of the books containing the principles of their respective religions, and those of the Christian faith." The belief that this discussion would involve topics offensive to the religious prejudices of the Mahomedans led a number of the most respectable and learned of that faith to address a memorial to the Governor-general, Lord Wellesley, remonstrating against this supposed infringement of the unequivocal toleration which they gratefully acknowledged the government had till then afforded to the unmolested exercise of the religions of its subjects. In reply, a declaration was addressed to the memorialists, in the name and by the authority of the Governor-general, in which, after adverting, as a fundamental principle of the British government, to the solicitude with which it abstained from all interference with the religions of its Mahomedan and Hindu subjects, the memorialists were assured, that the discussion of any subject connected with religion, or which was degrading to the religions of India, was quite foreign to the principles of the institution of the college; and the Governor-general stated that, although he saw no objection of the nature alleged in the proposed thesis, yet, in order to remove every doubt as to that unlimited toleration which the

British government had always observed, he had positively prohibited the disputation, the moment he learned its subject. Copies of this declaration were circulated to all the principal stations, and to every foreign court in India.

Nothing can better illustrate than the above incident the slight cause which will produce alarm upon any point touching the religion of our native subjects; and the pains taken by a wise and vigilant government to diffuse its principles and sentiments upon an occasion apparently so trifling, shews the opinion it entertained of the danger of allowing the least erroneous impression to go forth on such a subject.

The mutiny and massacre at Vellore, though owing to a combination of causes, were distinctly proved to have been occasioned in a great measure by the success of discontented and designing men in persuading the mass of their ignorant fellow-soldiers that a serious design was entertained by government of changing their religion. The grounds on which they founded their assertion were slight and fallacious; but they well knew that such an impression alone could work upon the minds of men like the sepoys, in such a manner as to make them unite to murder their officers, to whom they were attached, and rebel against the government by which they were maintained. The spirit * which

* The following remarks were made in a despatch from the Governor-general in council to the Secret Committee, dated 7th December, 1807:—

led to these horrid acts spread to other stations; but its further progress was arrested by the judicious measures of government, which issued a proclamation containing the most solemn disavowal of the intention maliciously ascribed to it by evil men, and disclaiming every thought of interference

"The practical effect of this sanguinary spirit of bigotry, as exemplified in the mutiny of Vellore, and in the events which succeeded it, can hardly escape observation. For, although Mr. Buchannan, on the ground of his personal communications with some of the natives on the coast, is of opinion that the insurrection at Vellore had no connexion with the Christian religion, directly or indirectly, immediately or remotely, we are compelled to form a different judgment, from the mass of authentic evidence and information on that unhappy event recorded in the public proceedings of government; and we are satisfied that a persuasion (a most erroneous one, indeed, but a firm and sincere persuasion) in the breasts of a great proportion of the sepoys who were thus betrayed into the execution of the massacre of Vellore, and of those who subsequently manifested a spirit of insurrection, that a design existed on the part of the British government to operate a general conversion of the inhabitants of India to Christianity, was one of the most efficient causes of that horrible disaster."

These opinions of the supreme government were in concurrence with all whose public duty obliged them to investigate the causes of that catastrophe. Those who instigated the sepoys to mutiny, and to murder their officers, could never have found in the lesser causes which combined to produce this result, sufficient motives to excite these hitherto faithful men to such atrocity. They succeeded in persuading them that their religion was in danger; and they brought forward the removal of marks of caste and slight alterations of dress as evidence to the truth of those general and false assertions, which were circulated at this period throughout the coast army.

with their customs or religion. The court of directors, on hearing of these proceedings, declared their sentiments on the subject in the following paragraphs of a letter* to Fort St. George. "In the whole course of our administration of the Indian territories, it has been our known and declared principle to maintain a perfect toleration of the various religious systems which prevailed in it, to protect the followers of each in the undisturbed enjoyment of their respective opinions and usages, and neither to interfere with them ourselves, nor to suffer them to be molested by others.

"When we afforded our countenance and sanction to missionaries who have from time to time proceeded to India for the purpose of propagating the Christian religion, it was far from being in our contemplation to add the influence of our authority to any attempts they might make; for, on the contrary, we were perfectly aware that the progress of real conversion will be slow and gradual, arising more from a conviction of the principles of our religion itself, and from the pious example of its teachers, than from any undue influence, or from the exertions of authority, which are never to be resorted to in such cases."

About this period the attention of the Governor-general† in council was called to the public preaching of the missionaries, and the issue from the press (which had been recently established at

* May 29th, 1807. † Lord Minto.

Serampore) of works in the vernacular language of the country, the contents* of which were highly offensive to the religious feelings of the natives.

The supreme government, in consequence of the latter proceeding, ordered the press at Serampore to be removed to Calcutta. This press, though established at a Danish settlement, was recognised both by the missionaries and the Danish governor to be virtually under English authority†. The order for its removal was afterwards revoked on the respectful application of the Rev. Mr. Carey, who expressed his willingness, and that of the other missionaries, to submit, for the future, to the inspection of the officers of government all works intended for circulation in the British territories.

The Governor-general in council reported this

* According to the statements of the missionaries, the most violent passages, and those which had given most offence, were inserted by the zeal of a new convert who had been employed to translate a tract from the Bengalee into the Persian language; which translation was stated to have been printed without examination.

† The press of the Baptist missionaries was only placed at Serampore for their convenience. There was no employment for it at that small town, though it was useful, as the Danish governor stated, in publishing advertisements of public and private sales. All the books it printed were for distribution in the English territories. The pious and respectable missionaries were English subjects. Mr. Carey, the chief member of the society, held the situation of Sanscrit and Bengalee professor in the college of Fort William, and the press was chiefly supported by the aid of the college.

proceeding to the secret committee of the court of directors, and, when alluding to the memorial* received from the missionaries at Serampore, observed, "We have great satisfaction in acknowledging the temperate and respectful spirit of that memorial, and in expressing our entire conviction of the correctness of the statement which it contains relative to the motives and objects of the zeal of the missionaries for the propagation of the sacred doctrines of Christianity; and our duty as the guardians of the public welfare, and even a consentaneous solicitude for the diffusion of the blessings of Christianity, merely require us to restrain the effects of that commendable zeal within those limits, the transgression of which would, in our decided judgment, expose to hazard the public safety and tranquillity, without promoting its intended object, and would be incompatible with a just adherence to the obligations of political interest, and of public faith, in the degree in which both are involved in the unequivocal toleration of every religious sect among the inhabitants of these dominions.

"The missionaries have related the progress and result of labours similar to their own during a long course of years, and from the negative fact that the zeal of the propagandeses has not, on any occasion, produced the dangers which we apprehend, have inferred that neither the publication of the works which have attracted our attention, nor the practice

* Vide Lord Minto's Letter, 2nd Nov. 1807.

of public preaching, is calculated to produce them; but two material circumstances, which have escaped the observation of the missionaries, appear to invalidate the force of this conclusion.

"While the British government in India continued to be a subordinate power, the efforts of the missionaries in the work of conversion were not likely to excite among the natives of India any apprehension either of the disposition or the power of the British government to impair the stability of the prevailing systems of religion. Possessing, from the general system, and even under the specific laws of the British administration, every degree of security for the free and undisturbed exercise of their religious ceremonies and devotions, they had no cause to connect the proceedings of the missionaries with the acts of the government; and, deprived of that connexion, the mere personal labours of the former on the work of conversion were inadequate to produce a general sentiment of religious jealousy and alarm, more especially because the efforts of the missionaries were almost exclusively directed towards the class of Hindus, who are free from that spirit of bigotry and fanaticism which distinguishes the class of Mahomedans.

"In the present ascendency of the British power in India, however, the natives may naturally be led to apprehend that the augmented efforts of the missionaries, exercised under the immediate protection of the government, are supported and en-

couraged by its authority; they may be induced to imagine that the possession of unrivalled power, in a dominion extending over a great proportion of the continent of Hindustan, and of an ascendant influence or control over all the primary states of India, may suggest the accomplishment of an object which the comparative inferiority of our power and influence had hitherto excluded from the contemplation of government, the gradual substitution of its religion for the actual religion of its subjects. Under these circumstances, therefore, the labours of the missionaries are calculated in a far greater degree to excite alarm among our native subjects than they were at any former period of time.

"We shall conclude this discussion," the supreme government says, in another part of this able letter, "by observing, that it has never been in the contemplation either of the present or preceding administrations of this government to control or impede the pious labours of the missionaries, while conducted in the manner which prudence dictates, and which the orders of the honourable Court have distinctly described; but when the mistaken zeal of the missionaries exceeded those limits which consideration to the public safety, and even a solicitude for the propagation of Christian knowledge among the misguided natives of these countries, have wisely imposed; when publications and public preachings calculated, not to conciliate, but to irritate the minds of the people, were brought to the notice of government, the interposition of the

ruling power became necessary, to preclude the apprehended effects of these dangerous and unprofitable proceedings."

This transaction has been dwelt upon not only as giving facts that elucidate the subject, but as it exhibits the calm yet firm proceedings which an administration characterized by temper and moderation felt itself compelled to adopt under circumstances of much delicacy and embarrassment. The lesson it conveys is important; nor can we reject it without renouncing those generous and liberal principles of toleration which have hitherto guided the conduct of the British government in India, and introducing the doctrine that, in our conduct to our native subjects, we may allow ourselves to indulge in arbitrary exertion of our power over them, for the purpose of forcing upon their minds opinions which (however recommended by truth) are most hostile to all their prejudices, manners, and feelings.

The great increase of our territory within the last eight years has added force to the just reasoning of Lord Minto upon the change which the feelings of our subjects have undergone from this cause. They see us without a rival in power; and, if once persuaded that we have formed the design of altering their religion and usages, their minds are too contracted to believe that any pledges we have given, or any restraining principles we may proclaim, will divert us from such an object. The sense of degradation which they must feel as a conquered people is soothed by the uninterrupted

enjoyment of religious tenets and ceremonies handed down from their forefathers. Around these they will rally, on the slightest apprehension of attack; and experience has taught us that this feeling creates an union between Mahomedans and Hindus which no other cause can produce. It places the ignorant of both these classes of our subjects at the mercy of the designing and seditious, in a degree which none can believe whose duties have not led them to a long and minute consideration of the various elements of which the population of our Indian empire is composed.

We have seen the sedition of Bareilly* in 1816, though it originated in causes wholly unconnected with religious feeling, assuming that shape the moment the latent spirit of jealousy and alarm was awakened; and perhaps no occurrence in our history more completely shews the power which our secret enemies possess of arraying our subjects against us. This power can be lessened only by our studiously avoiding all measures that can give them any means of imposing upon the ignorance, the credulity, or bigotry of the great mass of the population.

The provisions in the act of legislature passed in 1812 gave a new impulse to the labours of missionaries in India, where many different societies are now established, connected with those in England with which their peculiar tenets correspond†. The

* Vol. i., page 577.

† Were there no other impediment to the progress of con-

efforts of these societies are variously directed to the object of conversion and education. It appears, however, to be now generally admitted by the most able as well as pious of their members, that no rational hopes can be entertained of success in propagating Christianity until a foundation has been first laid by a more general diffusion of knowledge. This conviction has been acted upon, during the last twelve years, to a very considerable extent; and government, while it has been vigilant in repressing inconsiderate zeal*, has given its liberal aid to measures which it deemed likely to improve and benefit its subjects without exciting jealousy and alarm dangerous to the public tranquillity. On the continuance of such a course will depend, not only

version, the difference in the tenets of the numerous persons now preaching the gospel in India must of itself be a great one.

* See a very full account, by Mr. Charles Lushington, of the institutions for education now existing in Bengal. The principal of these is the Bishop's College, which chiefly owes its foundation to the late Bishop Middleton. Its object is "the "instruction of Christian youth in sacred knowledge and sound "learning, and in the principal languages in India, that they "may be qualified to preach among the heathen." Among the lesser institutions which have the instruction of the natives in view, that founded by the late Rev. Mr. May, at Chinsurah, merits particular attention. Its object is not change, but improvement; and in making the village schools the medium of conveying knowledge, and cautiously abstaining from all mixture of religious subjects with his course of instruction, this pious and sensible man adopted the best and safest course by which the end in view can be obtained.

the safety of the empire, but any hope that can be entertained of ultimate success in the diffusion of knowledge and true religion.

Those who have to govern our eastern empire will often have an unpopular task to perform in opposing their authority to what may appear, to numbers of their countrymen, a clear and direct road to a great and good object; but if the day ever arrives when change of sentiment in the authorities in England, or weakness and mistaken zeal in the local rulers of India, shall lead to the adoption of other principles than those which government has hitherto pursued, the danger will be imminent; and all those fair hopes of gradual improvement which we may now entertain will be lost in the vain and rash attempt to accelerate their accomplishment.

There are only two modes from which any safe progress can be anticipated in our endeavours to convert the natives of India. The first is, by means of unaided and unconnected missionaries:—the second is by education. The first, to give the slightest hope of success, must be attempted by missionaries, who are not only, by their condition, removed from the suspicion of any connexion with government, but who stand alone, and trust solely to their own efforts, and the support of the Almighty. These pious persons should have no worldly ties that could embarrass or impede their efforts. They should cheerfully abandon all the comforts and pleasures of the community to which

they have been accustomed, and submit, with a resigned and humble spirit, to all the privations and dangers to which they may be exposed. They should neither have, nor desire to have, their names pronounced beyond the field in which they labour, and their chance of success would be in exact proportion to the degree in which they were unnoticed and unknown beyond the limits of their ministry. This mode of inculcating religious doctrines is congenial with the sentiments entertained on such subjects by the greater part of the Indian population, who, when they view such instructors as men entirely dependent on them, and from whom they might derive benefit, and could fear no evil, would not connect, as they often now do, their mission with the support of government, nor consider them as persons paid for professional labours by societies and institutions, and as noting down the errors and crimes of those amongst whom they sojourn for publication in a distant land. That these are the sentiments of the people of India towards many who are now endeavouring to convert them, there can be no doubt; and it is equally true that such impressions, whether just or otherwise, are attended with danger to the state, and will seriously obstruct all progress to conversion; but, on the other hand, it must be confessed that the mode proposed as most likely to propagate the Christian faith, through the means of missionaries, appears more suited to the primitive ages of the

church than the present; and that a prospect of success, through such means, may almost be deemed visionary. We must, therefore, advert to the second course,—the maintaining and founding of institutions for the improvement of our Indian subjects, on principles unassociated with any efforts for their conversion, trusting that better knowledge may hereafter dispose their minds to renounce their own errors and superstitions, and to embrace the doctrines of the gospel, when capable of appreciating their real character. That this is the true path to our object there can be no doubt; but we must not deceive ourselves; generations must pass away before it can be accomplished: it will be liable to rude and violent shocks; and, perhaps, the greatest of all dangers will occur when our subjects, taught by us, shall cast off those excellent moral restraints and maxims with which their religion, with all its errors and superstitions, abounds, and yet not adopt that sincerity of faith in the divine precepts which would fill and elevate their minds. This is a danger which we may be compelled to incur; we can only hope to escape the ruin with which it threatens both us and those we desire to improve by the extreme of caution, and being satisfied with a slow and almost imperceptible progress. We must lay it down as a fundamental principle, that it is better for our great purpose to give full knowledge to a few, than superficial knowledge to numbers. We must strictly

confine our first efforts at such improvements to those countries* where our views are least likely to be mistaken, and carefully repress every exuberance of zeal that can hazard our final success. When we have furnished the means of instruction, we must leave to our subjects to seek the benefit. If they desire to drink at the fountain of knowledge, they will repair to it. To scatter abroad its waters, and to force them upon those who do not thirst, is to diminish their value and to injure their reputation.

The chief obstructions we shall meet in the pursuit of the improvement and reform of the natives of India will be caused by our own passions and prejudices. Those who are sanguine in their hopes of rapid progress will endeavour to obtain aid by exaggerating (perhaps unconsciously) the evils it is desired to remedy, and diminishing the obstacles that present themselves. Others, again, will see dangers beyond those which really exist, and deem every difficulty insuperable. These two extremes must produce an angry collision, unfortunate for the cause. Those who are employed in the work of conversion should shun all exaggeration of facts,

* It may be stated generally, that no country in which our government has not been established fifty years is safe for such experiments. Beyond these limits, knowledge will slowly spread itself through channels in which there is no danger; but its progress will be more likely to be obstructed than facilitated by our direct and open efforts to promote it.

which must ever verge upon falsehood. Placed in such situations as they are, it is a crime to speak positively without full knowledge, and it is a greater crime to deceive others by drawing general conclusions of the state of tribes and nations in India, derived from observation of superstitious usages in any one particular district, province, or kingdom. They should seek, not to inflame, but to calm the minds of those with whom they correspond in England, and who have to form their judgment upon trust, at such a distance from the scene. The deep errors of races of men, which arise from their blindly following the ways of their fathers, should be painted in colours calculated to excite pity and commiseration, not horror and detestation. This theme should be approached with humility, not pride, by all who venture to treat it. We may and ought to be grateful that superior knowledge has removed us far from the ignorance and errors of our Hindu subjects, but we should be humbled to think in how many points, in how many duties of life, great classes of this sober, honest, kind, and inoffensive people excel us. That they have some usages revolting to reason and to nature is certain. At the sacrifice of life in the shocking practice of suttee and infanticide, all must shudder, except those whom habit has reconciled to such acts of inhumanity; but while we feel and express abhorrence at them, we must not forget that they are compara-

tively local* and limited, and that one of them, infanticide†, is held in as great horror by all but a few families of Hindus as by us. While all agree in sentiment regarding the sinfulness of the voluntary sacrifice of widows, a great difference of opinion exists as to the mode of terminating the practice. The diffusion of knowledge, the force of example, the mild and conciliating but strong remonstrances of superiors, with the undisguised feelings of shocked humanity, will, we may hope, gradually eradicate a barbarous rite which has already fallen into disusage in many parts of India, from ceasing to excite that sympathy in the people, and, consequently, to meet with that encouragement from their priests and superiors, which it formerly did. But such sympathy and encouragement will be maintained where they still exist, and revived where

* Suttees have decreased, and, indeed, are almost unknown in many of the southern parts of India; and in the countries of the Deckan, Malwa, and Hindustan, they are of rare occurrence. In Bengal Proper this shocking usage is more prevalent than in any part of India. It appears that in 1819, 650 had taken place within the Company's territories in Bengal; of these, 421 were in the Calcutta division. In 1820, the number was 597; those in the Calcutta division, 390.

† For an account of infanticide, see "Central India," vol. ii. p. 203. This cruel practice, which is limited to some Rajpoot families, has been most unjustly attributed to the whole of this race of men, of whom there are about 100,000 in the ranks of our army; and, in the whole of that numerous and gallant body, there cannot be found one example of this horrid usage.

they have ceased, if we are so unwise as to attempt to suppress, by the strong arm of power, this or any other of the superstitious customs of our native subjects. The merit of resisting what they will consider intolerance and persecution will be added to the other motives for such sacrifices; besides, the impression made by such use of our authority would be attended with great hazard: they who argue otherwise, because they perceive no immediate danger result from particular cases where there has been partial interference, cannot have much knowledge of the character of the Hindu population, or of the nature of the means which the secret enemies of our power endeavour to array against us. Every such act of interference is an item in their account, and adds to their hopes of uniting their countrymen in what they would deem a patriotic and pious cause, that of subverting the rule of strangers and usurpers, who, under the plea of humanity and improvement, made an open and violent attack upon usages respected by the most bigoted and tyrannical of their Mahomedan conquerors, and sanctioned by their own practice during thirty centuries*.

These sentiments relative to the propagating

* The following details of a suttee are given by Diodorus Siculus in his History (lib. xix.), and cited by Rollin, vol. ix.

" After the battle between Antigonus and Eumenes, the latter obtained permission from the former to bury his dead.

of the Christian religion and the diffusing of knowledge, which were publicly* expressed by

"During this ceremony a singular dispute occurred. Among the dead was an Indian officer, who had brought with him his two wives; one of whom he had but recently espoused. The law of India permitted no woman to survive her husband; if she refused to be burned with him on the pile, she was for ever dishonoured, and obliged to remain a widow during the rest of her life, not being allowed to be present at sacrifices or any other religious ceremony. The law mentioned only a single wife; here were two, each of which claimed the preference. The eldest alleged her right from antiquity; the youngest replied, that the law itself excluded her rival from the pile, because she was pregnant; and so it was decided. The former retired in grief, bathed in tears, rending her clothes and tearing her hair, as if some great calamity had befallen her. The other, on the contrary, in triumph, attended by a numerous body of relatives and friends, decked in her richest ornaments, as on her wedding-day, advanced with firmness to the place of the ceremony: there, after distributing her jewels and trinkets among her relations and friends, and bidding them a last farewell, she was placed on the pile by her own brother, and expired in the midst of the applause and acclamations of nearly all the spectators!"

This account will be recognized by every one who has witnessed a suttee to be, in every particular, in exact conformity with the feelings and usages of the Hindus of the present day—a circumstance not more worthy of attention, as it shews the deep-rooted prejudice on which this barbarous practice rests, than as an example of that strong and almost invincible tenacity of usage which characterizes this ancient and extraordinary people.

* Vide examination before the House of Lords in 1813, and Sketch of Political India, page 468.

the Author some time ago, have been confirmed by his more recent experience*, and are given

* The following extract of a letter, dated Camp Mhow, 7th November, 1818, to the Reverend Mr. Marshman, who had requested the author, on the part of the Baptist Missionary Society of Serampore, to become a patron of their college, was written amid scenes which gave him a full opportunity of judging every part of these important questions.

" I am flattered by your letter of the 1st September; any man must be gratified by possessing so much of the good opinion of a society like yours at Serampore. I should, however, ill deserve the sentiments you express, if I were to have any reserve in my reply; I shall be proud to become one of the patrons of your college, and to add my subscription to its support, if you think me worthy of the honour, after the following explanations. Though most deeply impressed with the truths of the Christian religion, and satisfied, were that only to be considered in a moral view, it would be found to have diffused more knowledge and more happiness than any faith man ever entertained; yet I do think from the construction of our empire in India, referring both to the manner in which it has been attained, and that in which it must (according to my humble judgment) be preserved, that the English government in this country should never directly or indirectly interfere in propagating the Christian religion. The pious missionary must be left unsupported by government, or any of its officers, to pursue his labours, and I will add that I should not only deem a contrary conduct a breach of faith to those natives whom we have conquered, more by our solemn pledges given in words and acts, to respect their prejudices and maintain their religion, than by arms, but likely to fail in the object it sought to accomplish; and to expose us eventually to more serious dangers than we have ever yet known. The reasons for this opinion I have more than once had occasion publicly to state; I shall not therefore trouble you with the repetition.

in this place as the result of the most conscientious conviction.

"I come now to the second part of the subject, and your more immediate concern, that of spreading knowledge.

"In contemplating the probable future destiny of our extraordinary empire in Asia, it is impossible not to think but that the knowledge we are so actively introducing may in the course of time cause great changes, but how these may affect our power, is a question that the wisest of us will find it difficult to answer. I must ever think that to impart knowledge is to impart strength to a community, and that, as that becomes enlightened, the love of independence, combined with a natural pride in self-government, which God appears to have infused into the spirit of man and of nations, will be too strong for all the lessons of duty, of meekness, and of gratitude to their intellectual benefactors, that we can teach our Indian subjects, but I am not deterred by the possibility (nor should I be by the probability) of such consequences from being the advocate for their instruction in all the arts of civil life. We live in an age which is above such policy, and we belong to a country which has recently made itself too conspicuous for destroying the fetters which had for ages enslaved the body, to tolerate arguments in support of a system for keeping the human mind in ignorance of any knowledge that is calculated to promote its happiness; but the question here assumes its most difficult shape. It is the nature of the knowledge, and the mode we pursue in imparting it, that is likely to make the difference between its proving a curse or a blessing to India—between its supporting (at least for a long period) our power over that quarter of the globe, or accelerating its downfal; enthusiasm or over-zeal is quite competent to effect the latter, while the former requires for its accomplishment a steadiness of purpose, a clearness of head, and a soberness of judgment, that are seldom found united with that intentness on the object

which is also quite essential. I wish, my dear Sir, I could be certain, that your successors in the serious task you propose would have as much experience as you and your fellow-labourers at Serampore;—that they would walk, not run in the same path;—I would not then have to state one reserve. I should be assured that it would be considered as safer to commence by giving a good deal of knowledge to a few than a little to many;—that efforts would be limited to countries where the people are familiar with our government, and would understand the object;—that men, in short, would be satisfied with laying the foundation-stone of a good edifice, and not hazard their own object and incur danger, (for in all precipitate or immature attempts of this nature there is danger) by desiring to accomplish in a day what must be the work of a century.

"I have given you my sentiments as fully as I can in this short letter. I really have not time to enter more into details. I hope this explanation will be satisfactory, but it is a justice due to you and to myself to declare, that while I shall be proud to be a patron, and to support the plan now proposed, I shall steadfastly and conscientiously oppose (as far as I have the power) any deviation from the original principles, or any departure from that moderate spirit of gradual and rational improvement in which it has originated, and in which I trust it will be conducted."

The above communication was received and acknowledged in terms flattering to the feelings of the writer, who was elected a patron of the college.

FREE PRESS.

The subject of the free press in India, which has of late occupied much attention in England, is of such importance as to require the fullest consideration.

It is little more than half a century since the first newspaper was printed at Calcutta. The times were favourable for the profit and popularity of an editor prepared to promulgate the acts, the misrepresentations, the calumnies, the public and private scandal, which distracted and disgraced the period at which his labours commenced. A contest for power between his majesty's supreme court of law and the Bengal government was at its height. The latter was compelled to seek, and it found, some safety in conciliating the support of the chief judge of his majesty's court, without which it must either have perished or have been forced upon the most extreme and arbitrary acts to maintain its existence. Amid such scenes, every individual high in station had his advocates and his calumniators, and the violence of public and private feelings was gratified and aggravated by a journal which gave publicity to every word and deed that suited the views and sentiments of a party. The open scurrility of its abuse exceeded perhaps that of any periodical paper now published in England. The civil government, which was then from its

constitution weak, took what steps it could to remedy the serious evil of a paper directed against its reputation and authority, by confining the circulation as much as possible, by frequent prosecutions for libellous matter, and by establishing another paper, in opposition. But though these measures had ultimately the effect of ruining a bold and indiscreet individual*, there can be no doubt that the place in the community which he was forced to abandon would have been soon occupied, had not the acts of the legislature which immediately followed altered the frame of the civil government, and given it a power completely adequate to defend itself against insults and attacks.

From the discontinuance of the periodical paper† to which we have alluded, no publication in India demanded the serious interposition of the authority of government, till 1791, when Lord Cornwallis directed the arrest and transmission to England of an editor‡, in consequence of an offensive paragraph reflecting upon a French public officer and some of his countrymen then residing at Calcutta.

The editor applied to the supreme court for a writ of Habeas Corpus, which was granted. The serving of the writ upon the town-major of Fort William, who had charge of the prisoner, gave rise to a long discussion between the government and the supreme court of judicature; which terminated

* Mr. Hickey. † Hickey's Bengal Gazette.

‡ Mr. William Duane, Editor of the Bengal Journal.

in a solemn and unanimous decision of the judges, recognising the right exercised by the government; and the editor, on being brought into court, was remanded to the custody of the town-major. The intercession of the French agent at Calcutta, however, saved him from being sent to England on this occasion; but the publication of a number of improper and intemperate articles subsequently, caused this penalty to be inflicted on him in 1794; a proceeding of which the court of directors highly approved.

In 1796, several paragraphs appeared in the public papers which excited the displeasure of government; but on the editors expressing regret, and promising more care for the future, no extreme measures were resorted to. In 1798, there appeared in the Telegraph, a periodical publication of Calcutta, a paper signed Mentor, which was thought to be calculated to excite discontent and disaffection in the Indian army. On Captain Williamson of the Bengal establishment being discovered to be the author, he was suspended the service. The court of directors afterwards gave this officer the half pay of his rank, but refused to comply with his petition to be allowed to return to India. In the same year a letter appeared in the Telegraph, signed Charles M'Lean, reflecting upon the judge and magistrate of Ghazepore. The editor and Mr. M'Lean were called upon by government to make an apology to that public officer.

The former complied with the requisition, but the latter refused; and in consequence of this contumacy, and of previous misconduct in quitting the ship to which he was attached, and remaining in India without permission, he was sent to England. The court of directors fully approved of this proceeding.

The editor of the Telegraph incurred in the ensuing year the further displeasure of government, by the insertion of several offensive paragraphs; and this incident, together with some of a similar nature in other newspapers, led the Governor-general in council to establish the following rules for the regulation of the press at Calcutta:—

1. Every printer of a newspaper to print his name at the bottom of the paper.

2. Every editor and proprietor of a paper to deliver in his name and place of abode to the secretary of government.

3. No paper to be published on a Sunday.

4. No paper to be published at all, until it shall have been previously inspected by the secretary to the government, or by a person authorized by him for that purpose.

5. The penalty for offending against any of the above regulations to be, immediate embarkation for Europe.

The court of directors, on receiving the report of this regulation, gave it the sanction of their approbation; as they did to further restrictions issued

under the administration of Lord Wellesley, which interdicted newspapers from giving any general orders, or naval intelligence, (such as the arrivals and departures of ships) unless such articles had appeared in the Gazette, thereby to ensure the authority of government to their publication.

The first of these restrictions proceeded from a desire that the orders of government should not come before the public before they had an official and authentic form; and the latter was designed to protect the commercial interests and those of the state from our enemies. The Indian seas were at this period filled with French privateers; and it was discovered that the shipping intelligence, inserted to gratify the curiosity of the readers of newspapers, was sent to every point where it could reach the commanders of these vessels, whom it often enabled to intercept merchantmen, and to avoid the British cruizers. This last restriction, which the carelessness or contumacy of editors compelled government often to repeat, will shew, in the strongest point of view, the great difference between the character of the press in India and England. At first view, it will certainly appear very harsh, and almost tyrannical, to prohibit the public papers from inserting arrivals and departures of vessels, these being occurrences in which it may be said many are deeply interested; but we shall be sensible, on reflection, that the government could hardly have shewn more negligence of its duty, or

more injustice to those living under its protection, than to permit this to be done at the expense of its commercial subjects, of its own reputation, and that of his majesty's naval commander. The chief end to be answered by the articles published would be, to gratify the curiosity of the English inhabitants of Calcutta, not amounting in numbers to those of some large village in England, and to convey to public servants and residents in the interior of India information which, if at all interested in it, they were certain of receiving through private channels.

This case may be deemed an exception; but the nearer we look at the question of a free press in India, the more exceptions we shall find, and be compelled to confess that, as long as the necessity exists for the maintenance of absolute power, it is far better, both for the state and individuals, that it should be exercised to prevent than to punish such offences, particularly where the punishment is so severe. In the latter case, government has no option, it has only one course to pursue; and when its authority is slighted, and its disposition to moderate measures treated with contumacy, it is compelled to proceed to the extreme exercise of its prerogative, or present to its subjects the spectacle of its authority contemned and defeated.

After the establishment of the office of censor, there were no cases of offence, except what were comparatively trivial, and which seem to have originated more in negligence than design.

The steps taken in Lord Minto's administration, to prevent the publication* of religious works offensive to the nation, has been already detailed. During the whole of the government of this noble-

* Lord Minto's exercise of his authority upon this occasion was represented by the Rev. Mr. Buchanan, then a clergyman at Calcutta, to be contrary to the practice of former Governors-general; but his lordship, in a despatch to the secret committee of the court of directors, (7th Nov. 1807,) fully repelled this attack upon the measures of government. He adverted to the proceedings, already noticed, of Lord Wellesley relative to the proposed thesis of disputation at the college of Fort William. He also adverted to the recent massacre at Vellore, and to the sentiments which the court of directors had expressed on hearing of that disaster. With regard to publications, he observed, "that the existing restrictions upon the press in India had been in force many years, and that it could not be supposed that any former administration would have deemed it consistent with the public safety, or with the obligations of the public faith, as pledged to the native subjects of the Company for the unmolested exercise of their religions, to permit the circulation of such inflammatory works as those which had been brought to notice."

Lord Minto, in reference to the discussions with the missionaries at Serampore, observes "that no innovation has taken place in the principles and practice of this government relative to the control of the productions of the press, that no new and specific imprimatur has been established for works on theology; but that the restrictions which virtually existed with regard to publications in general, were practically applied to theological works only when works of that class, containing strictures on the religions of the country in terms the most irritating and offensive, by being circulated among our native subjects, exposed the public tranquillity to hazard."

man there appears to have been a very vigilant superintendence of the press*. In 1811 the names of the printers were directed to be affixed to all works, advertisements, papers, &c.; and two years afterwards, further regulations directed not only that the newspapers, notices, handbills, and all ephemeral publications, should be sent to the chief secretary for revision, but that the titles of all works intended for publication should be transmitted to the same officer, who had the option of requiring the work itself to be sent for his examination, if he deemed it necessary.

These additional restrictions upon the press were made under the government of a nobleman who, from his character, was the most unlikely of men to impose any restraint that he could avoid upon the liberty of his countrymen. They were a strong confirmation of the wisdom and foresight of his predecessor, and evinced the necessity of increased vigilance to check a growing evil. They had the effect of preventing his being forced upon any harsh measures to individuals; and it is worthy of observation, that from the time the office of censor was established, though there were never less than five newspapers published at Calcutta, in which every

* The editors of the newspapers were censured, in 1807, for publishing intelligence about the distribution of his majesty's fleet, such articles being contrary to orders; and these restrictions were directed to be observed at Madras and Bombay.

kind of European intelligence, and all matters of general and local interest, were inserted, there did not occur, from 1801 till 1820, a period of twenty years, one occasion on which government was compelled even to threaten to send any individual to England.

During the first three years of the administration of Lord Hastings, frequent censures had been passed on the editor of a paper, called the Asiatic Mirror, for what was deemed improper conduct. The editor, for one of his pleas of justification, remonstrated * upon the varied mode in which different individuals who filled the office of censor performed its duties, and the consequent difficulty there was in understanding exactly the course which an editor was to pursue. No notice was taken of this remonstrance; but in the subsequent year, the office of censor was abolished, and as a substitute, regulations † for the conduct of editors of newspapers were issued.

By this measure the name of an invidious office

* Letter from Dr. Bryen, editor of the Mirror, dated February, 1817.

† These regulations were as follows:—

"The editors of newspapers are prohibited from publishing any matter coming under the following heads:—

"1. Animadversions on the measures and proceedings of the honourable court of directors, or other public authorities in England, connected with the government in India; or disquisitions on political transactions of the local administration; or offensive remarks levelled at the public conduct of the members

was abolished, and the responsibility of printing offensive matter was removed from a public functionary to the author or editor; but this change, so far from rescinding any of the restrictions upon the press, in reality imposed them in as strong, if not in a stronger degeee, than any measure that had been before adopted. This conviction would, no doubt, have been general, but for the misinterpretation of a passage in the answer given by Lord Hastings to an address from the inhabitants of Madras. In this address, his lordship was complimented on the adoption of a measure "calculated to give strength to a liberal and just government, to which freedom of inquiry and the liberty of discussion was the best support;" and his lordship's answer was couched in terms*, which were in some

of council, of the judges of the supreme court, or of the lord-bishop of Calcutta.

"2. Discussions having a tendency to create alarm or suspicion among the native population of any intended interference with their religious opinions.

"3. The republication, from English or other newspapers, of passages coming under any of the above heads, or otherwise calculated to affect the British power or reputation in India.

"4. Private scandal and personal remarks on individuals, tending to excite dissension in society."

* Lord Hastings, in his reply to the address from the inhabitants of Madras, observes, "My removal of restrictions from the press has been mentioned in laudatory language. I might easily have adopted that procedure without any length of cau-

quarters altogether misinterpreted. It was erroneously inferred that his lordship was disposed to give a very great latitude to freedom of publication; and that the restrictions which had been before imposed, if not virtually repealed by this public declaration of his opinions, would, at least, not be enforced by the arbitrary punishment inflicted by former Governor-generals of sending offenders to England. The editor* of the Calcutta Journal was forward to declare this impression and to act upon it. This paper early evinced a talent and

tious consideration, from my habit of regarding the freedom of publication as a natural right of my fellow-subjects, to be narrowed only by special and urgent cause assigned. The seeing no direct necessity for those invidious shackles might have sufficed to make me break them—I know myself, however, to have been guided in the step by a positive and well-weighed policy. If our motives of action are worthy, it must be wise to render them intelligible throughout an empire, our hold on which is opinion. Further, it is salutary for supreme authority, even when its intentions are most pure, to look to the control of public scrutiny: while conscious of rectitude, that authority can lose nothing of its strength by its exposure to general comment. On the contrary, it requires incalculable addition of force. That government which has nothing to disguise wields the most powerful instrument that can appertain to sovereign rule. It carries with it the united reliance and effort of the whole mass of the governed: and let the triumph of our beloved country in its awful contest with tyrant-ridden France speak the value of a spirit to be found only in men accustomed to indulge and express their honest sentiments."

* Mr. Buckingham.

industry that would have given it success under any circumstances; and when its pages added, to the excellent matter with which they were often filled, attacks upon public measures, with strictures on the highest official personages in India, its circulation greatly increased. The very disputes of the editor with individuals and with government gave a piquancy to his pages, while his display of attachment to English principles, in the bold assertion of the liberty of the press, and his resistance to what was reprobated as arbitrary power, gained him many and zealous advocates, who, awakened as it were at his call to feelings congenial to their native country, forgot for the moment the vast difference between that and the land in which they had chosen to reside. Encouraged by their approbation, and by the profit and popularity which for a short period attended his labours, the editor persisted in his course, which terminated in his being sent to England. The legality and justice of this extreme measure were confirmed by the decision of the court of directors, and by the king in council, to both of which authorities he made his appeal against the severity of his treatment in India.

It would occupy too much space to detail the measures which Lord Hastings took before he left Bengal to restrain the licentiousness of the press, or to give the sentiments he recorded expressive of the disappointment at the effects

produced by the latitude which he had desired to give to this cherished English privilege. The moderation with which he performed his duty on this occasion did not save him from the attacks of those who had a short time before hailed him as the bestower of that freedom which he was now represented as anxious to destroy. His successors, Mr. Adam and Lord Amherst, were virulently assailed for the acts which the continued offences of the successive editors of the Calcutta Journal compelled them to adopt; and the former incurred more obloquy from a popular party on account of the regulations established by him, with the sanction of the supreme court of Calcutta, by which every printer is obliged to have a license before he is authorized to print newspaper, pamphlet, or work of any description whatsoever; which licenses are to be withdrawn on the transgression of any of the restrictions under which the press is placed. This measure applies to all classes, and is deemed, for that reason, better than the restoration of the office of censor, which, as far as the arbitrary act of banishing from India operated, could apply to Europeans only; while the Anglo-Indians and natives could consequently print and publish what they pleased, without being amenable to any punishment but what the ordinary course of law inflicted.

The history of the press at Madras and Bombay is, on a small scale, not unlike that of Calcutta.

At the former presidency one case occurred, thirty years ago, of an editor* being ordered to England for publishing a libellous paper; but no similar act of severity has been required there since, owing, no doubt, to the office of censor having been continued in that presidency. It is important, however, to state that, when that able and respectable nobleman, Lord William Bentinck, was at the head of this government, one of his majesty's judges† sent to the government a copy of his charge to the grand jury at the preceding sessions, with a request that it should be printed; which request was not complied with, as the charge in question was considered to contain an attack on the civil government of the country. The governor took this occasion of expressing his sentiments in the most decided manner regarding all such publications.

"It is necessary, in my opinion," his lordship observed, "for the public safety, that the press in India should be kept under the most rigid control. It matters not from what pen the dangerous matter may issue; the higher the authority the greater the mischief."

This was the just and deliberate opinion of a nobleman deeply imbued with the true principles of English freedom, but, at the same time, too

* Mr. Humphries. He made his escape from on board the ship in which he was embarked.

† Sir Henry Gwillim.

well acquainted with the frame of our Indian government to admit any part of that to suffer injury when in his hands, from a desire either to evade responsibility or to court popularity.

The press at Bombay was placed under the supervision of a government officer in the year 1791; and the censorship continued until it was done away at Calcutta, when it was also abolished at Bombay. Though various discussions had arisen, no extreme act of authority was resorted to until lately that the governor in council directed the editor* of the Bombay Gazette to be sent to England, on a complaint from one of his majesty's judges at that presidency, founded on an alleged mis-statement of the legal proceedings of the court in which he presided. The quarter from which this appeal was made to the civil government, unless we impugn the conduct of the judge who made it, must carry with it irresistible evidence of the necessity of that authority whose aid was solicited; and with respect to the extreme resorted to, in affording this aid, there is one unanswerable plea to be preferred, which is, that a government so situated cannot suffer the commands it has issued to be successfully opposed by an individual, without a loss of that impression of its power which is quite essential to the fulfilment of its various and important duties.

The foregoing is a short history of the press in

* Mr. Fair.

India, from its first establishment till the present date. It is not necessary to notice the many discussions and publications to which the more recent occurrences at Calcutta have given rise in England. The author's sentiments upon that question, as given at a debate at the India house, will be found in the Appendix*; but he must, in this place, offer some general observations, which, he trusts, will be perused with that calmness and consideration which a subject of such vital importance to our Indian empire demands. It is no easy task to reconcile Englishmen to any principles which have an appearance of militating against that freedom, to which, from their very birth, they are so fondly attached; but they will not refuse assent to the reasonableness of some departure from these principles, if proved to be alike essential to maintain the prosperity and glory of their country, and to promote the good and tranquillity of distant nations, who, though subject to its power, are, and must long continue, in a totally different state of society.

The mode in which we can best arrive at a safe conclusion upon this important point is, to examine carefully the general character of a free press, and the effects which its introduction would be likely to have upon the different classes of our subjects in India. Throughout the civilized world, a free press is a powerful engine for good or for evil. When the knowledge of the people, their institutions and

* Vide Appendix, No. VI.

form of government are such as to admit of its freedom, the good preponderates; when the reverse is the case, the evil. It is safe to admit the press to comment freely upon the acts of government and the conduct of its functionaries, when there is an independent public to whom its observations and strictures are addressed, and by whom it is salutary, for the general welfare, that they should be canvassed and understood, in order that their opinion should check misrule; and that the fear of offending or outraging it, should temper with moderation and justice every act of those intrusted with the administration of state affairs; but no part of this description of an independent public applies to our empire in India. The English part of the population is, perhaps, as respectable a community as any in the world; but they are not what an Englishman would designate as a public. The great majority are civil and military servants, of whom a very considerable proportion hold their offices at the pleasure of the local government under which they serve; and the other part, composed of merchants, free-traders, missionaries, shop keepers, and artisans, not in the service of government, enjoy, under the protection of British courts of law, every privilege of an Englishman, except such as the interests of the Indian empire would make it dangerous for them to possess. But the want of these excepted privileges is rarely felt, for such is the happy effect of our free constitution,

that a portion of it attends and guards Englishmen in whatever soil and situation they are placed. Its beneficial influence tempers the actions of the most absolute power with which an English government over foreign countries can be vested, having for its support the sympathy of all who are born Britons; and, in the respectable community now formed by the English in India, this feeling has gained, and will continue to gain, a strength that must rank it among the most powerful of the checks we can expect to have upon a government which circumstances require to be strong, and in some cases almost despotic.

There can be no doubt that, in substance, there exists in our empire in India as much of personal liberty as is compatible with our sovereignty of that country; but if, from a desire to assimilate with the national government of England the unnational government which extraordinary events have given us in India, any individuals are to be suffered to exercise the same rights there as are exercised in England, in commenting upon the acts of local administration, animadverting upon its functionaries, publishing complaints and grievances, discussing questions of internal and external policy, and exposing as objects of ridicule and detestation the usages and religion of our native subjects; they will create insubordination, contention, and disaffection. Unless strong and political restrictions are enforced, neither the grave admonitions of those

in authority, nor an occasional appeal to the law, will stop men in a career where their profit and popularity will be so commensurate to the boldness of their attacks as always to indemnify them for the slight hazard they incur from judges bound by the letter of the law, or juries, consisting of men who, from their condition, will look with no hostile feeling at those who rail at persons in office, or attack the measures of their superiors in society. But the evils likely to result in the European part of the community from the admission of a free press appear slight to those which would be produced, and at no distant date, amongst the natives* of India; and it is the consideration of their good, even more than of our own, which demands attention to this subject. It is impossible England should desire to withhold from her subjects in India the benefit of knowledge; but on the manner in which this benefit is imparted, her glory and their happiness depend. On this point, therefore, it is our duty to exert our best judgment; and what person that has studied the past history of the natives of India, and fully understands their

* At the courts of most of the native princes, papers of news, termed Ackbars, are produced; which are court-gazettes, giving a statement of occurrences, true or false, as matters of fact, without comment or opinion. From the situation of the writers under such governments, it will easily be conceived that these Ackbars bear no affinity to an English newspaper.

present character and condition, will venture to recommend us to commence this improvement by the agency of a free press? That may, perhaps, be the last boon given to a people whom, with a policy unknown to former ages, we shall have gradually matured into a state of society fit to receive it; the gift will be ennobled by the conviction that the existence of a spirit of national feeling and independence, which it is calculated to spread and maintain, is irreconcilable with the continuance of submission to a foreign rule, however enlarged the views and just the principles upon which that rule is founded.

The establishment of a free press in India is congenial with the interests and feelings of a number of that class of Europeans who dwell at the presidencies under English law. It is from their support that it has lately derived, and will hereafter derive, confidence in its attacks upon the local administration, and upon the usages and religion of the natives of India. There is no preventing this effect if the law is exclusively appealed to, and the victories which editors obtain over government and its officers will daily strengthen a cause which has gained, in a short period, much ground both in India and in England; for even in the former country the great majority of English residents are but little acquainted with the true character of those ties by which we hold our eastern empire. The general sentiments of persons connected with the

courts of English law are, from education and from habit, favourable to what appears the cause of liberty. Many members of the European part of the community are discontented with their condition and prospects; others continue at the presidencies with unchanged English ideas and feelings, and ignorant of the condition of the country and its native population beyond the limits of the capitals in which they reside. Such persons often cherish a hatred (which they flatter themselves is constitutional) to all that, in their opinion, approaches to oriental despotism. A great number (and this class increases rapidly) are so ardent for the propagation of education and religion, that they welcome, with an inconsiderate zeal, every aid which they think will accelerate the early attainment of their objects, and we cannot be surprised that among those they deem a free press one of the most essential. Thus professional feeling, ignorance, disaffection, prejudice, and enthusiasm, swell the numbers of the advocates of a free press in India; and these meet with coinciding sentiments in England in all who are ignorant or but superficially acquainted with the history and condition of India. Better informed men, however, will be convinced that the good of the latter country needs a mixture of some principles happily uncongenial to England; and that not only the interests of Great Britain, but those of humanity and of knowledge, require our firm resistance to this and other

points similar in their spirit of innovation, and unseasonable excitement.

The establishment of a free press in India has been represented as a mean of advancing the knowledge and promoting the utility of that class of our subjects denominated "half-castes," or Anglo-Indians. The attention which this class has lately received has been already noticed; and it may be added, that the success of the measures which have been adopted with a view to their improvement would be much more likely to be defeated than advanced by a free press, which might prove a fatal boon to a society yet in its infancy of knowledge. That freedom would be more likely to instil principles of insubordination, division, and misplaced ambition, than to convey lessons of virtue and moderation to a community whose rise into respectability and consideration in the state depends on habits of active industry and solid acquirements. The press, as at present licensed in India, affords to this body of our subjects all that can be well desired of instruction. If its freedom were extended beyond this point, it might work them evil; it could render them no good: but a view of the benefit or injury it might bring to this class, or to a few Europeans*, sinks into insignificance when we contemplate its probable effects upon eighty millions of our native subjects. In treating this

* The estimated numbers of all the Europeans in India, not in the civil or military service, is about 3000.

part of the subject, we may commence by assuming, that there never was a government actuated with more just and liberal views, nor one more anxious to exercise its sovereign functions in a spirit of mildness and toleration, than that of the British in India. Arrived as it now is at a state of unrivalled power, it may look to an undisturbed progress in the execution of its plans for a substantial and gradual improvement of the natives of its vast empire; but this fair prospect must be destroyed, if we unwisely anticipate the period when the blessings we intend can be safely imparted. By doing so, we shall not only hasten our own destruction, but replunge India into a greater state of anarchy and misery than that in which we found it. Of all the means that could be devised to accelerate this deplorable crisis, none is so efficient as the admission of a press restrained only by laws adapted for a free and independent country, into one where, before freedom and independence can be understood, the mind of the people must be wholly changed, and where, before they can be worthy of these blessings, they must have thrown off the yoke of foreigners." But to understand the ground of those opinions, we must examine the character of the people in question.

The two great divisions of our Asiatic subjects are Mahomedans and Hindus: the former, who are the least numerous, have been the greatest sufferers by our establishment in India; but their means of

subverting our power are slight compared with those possessed by the Hindus. Though the Mahomedans are no longer actuated by that enthusiastic spirit of religion which, at one period, gave them strength and union, their idleness and bad habits, combined with their courage, render them dangerous; for they are prone to change, and have strong passions, with an unrestrained appetite for sensual pleasures, for the gratification of which they will incur any hazard.

Such a race have hitherto been, and will continue to be, apt instruments for the purpose of the designing and disaffected.

The Hindu population of India comprises all descriptions of human beings, from the most intelligent to the most ignorant, from the most courageous to the most timid: but, though divided by their tribes and castes, as well as by their various dispositions, pursuits, and qualities, there are some general feelings that will unite them; and of these the more instructed part of the community understand how to take full advantage whenever it suits their purpose. The Brahmins and the civil classes have for ages been the nominal servants and real masters of the turbulent and bold, but ignorant and superstitious, military tribes of their countrymen. Their skill in wielding this dangerous power has become complete by frequent exercise; and when we consider what they have lost by the introduction and extension of our dominion, it would

be folly to expect that they should not have a wish to subvert it.

Contemplating, as we always should, the possibility of such an attempt, we ought to be very careful that we do not ourselves contribute means for its success; and it may be asserted that, until the minds of the natives of India are changed, their prejudices subdued, and knowledge gradually diffused, we could give to the Brahmins, and others of the instructed classes of India, no weapon which they would know better how to use against us than a free press. Their efforts would be chiefly directed to corrupt our native soldiery, who are neither insensible to their own consequence, nor inobservant of the depressed scale on which they serve. It is our duty, as it is our interest, to guard these brave and attached men from insidious attacks upon their fidelity. A contest with any part of our native army must commence with a destruction of links essential to our existence. If we oppose English to revolted Indian troops, the best result would give success only for a short period; for, from the moment that we began to rely upon our physical strength, the chain by which we hold our eastern empire would be broken, and we should have to struggle through recurring difficulties and dangers to an inglorious termination of our power.

The measures hitherto employed by artful enemies to produce dissatisfaction in our subjects and native troops, and their partial success, give earnest

of the dangers to be apprehended from the dissemination in the native languages of printed tracts and papers, such as might be expected from a free press. It is not necessary to enumerate the instances to which allusions are here made*; suffice it to say, they are numerous, and all directed to the same object, the excitement of a feeling hostile to the existence of our power.

Upon a view of these facts, we can imagine no precaution of such consequence as a watchful restraint of the press. If that is not restricted from publications tending to lower the respect in which government and its officers are held, from offending and weakening princes and chiefs, by lessening their estimation with their subjects, from alarming and irritating the natives of India, by attacks on their usages and religion, and from disseminating principles of sedition and rebellion, it will gradually undermine and destroy our power; and it may compass this without any serious transgression against the

* It may be affirmed, from the most authentic documents, that, for the last thirty-five years, there has been, in different parts of India, a most active circulation of inflammatory papers, in the form of proclamations, letters, and prophecies, directed to the subversion of the British power. These have, in almost all cases, been addressed to the interests and passions of our native troops. They have too often made deep impressions; but the difficulty of multiplying copies, and the fear of detection, has limited their circulation to particular parts of the country, and, in a great degree, prevented the mischiefs which such efforts of our enemies were calculated to produce.

law of England, or, indeed, without the slightest evil intention of some of those who aid in working the mischief. Their limited knowledge and imperfect information, combined with their zeal, may blind them to the dangers they engender; and others, who have deeper designs, will court their names in a cause that must be popular with many, from its supposed association with the propagating of freedom, useful knowledge, and true religion.

We must necessarily deduce from what has been stated, that the existence of a press, free in the same degree as that of England, is incompatible with a government such as that we have established in India. It would accelerate the destruction of our power long before its dissolution could be a benefit to the natives of that country: it would impede instead of promote the progress to improvement now making by the Anglo-Indians and Europeans whose curiosity, national prejudices, and personal feelings, which it might amuse and gratify, would be thrown by its unlicensed action into parties and dissensions every way injurious to the happiness and interests of this small but important part of the population.

That a spirit of emulation might be excited, and some latent talent be elicited, by the freedom of the press, cannot be denied; nor is it meant to deny that good might arise from its observations on public men and measures, and that it might occasionally constitute a check against abuses;

but, in a government like British India, such good would be partial and uncertain, whereas the mischief to which a free, unlicensed press would open the door, would be general and incalculable. The present press in India is under no restrictions that can prevent its doing good on as large a scale as can be rationally wished. It is restricted from attacking a government so placed and constituted that it would lose by such attacks the impression which is indispensable to fulfil its duties; it is interdicted from publishing any articles that have a tendency to disturb the society, and to excite passions and feelings that would lead through discontent and disaffection to sedition and revolt. These salutary interdictions excepted, it has every freedom and every encouragement that a friend to publicity (which every friend to just government must be) could desire. There is no restrictions that can prevent the spread of intelligence, and the dissemination of science and instruction, in every art and improvement of civilized life. But it is important to observe that our continued ability to give the press that latitude which will make it a great and useful instrument to further our plans of improvement, depends on the strict * and vigilant manner in which we check

* No individual in authority can have a right to act upon his personal feeling or discretion for the toleration of departure from established regulations. The moment the rule ceases to be imperative in all cases, its application in particular ones be-

any trespass upon the limits which have been prescribed to those by whom it is conducted.

It has been argued that a free press in India would prove a channel through which complaints would be heard; that it would be a protection to the weak and oppressed; that it would convey wrongs and abuses to the ear of government and its high functionaries, and would prove in this and in other ways an efficient check to the abuse of power: but it is sufficiently obvious that such benefits could alone result when those that conducted the press had complete information and perfect knowledge of the languages, the manners, the character, and concerns of the people; where, in short, all their feelings were congenial with those of the society of which they were the advocates; otherwise their representations would be full of error, and their observations superficial and inconclusive. No English editor of a paper can have the means of becoming qualified for an impartial and useful advocate of our Indian subjects; and with regard to native editors, we cannot expect them to exercise such a privilege within limits that could be tolerated by a government

comes invidious or unjust. The temptation to pass the line of demarcation will always be great. Profit and popularity will attend the person who outsteps it, and his example will soon have followers. Checks will be daily more difficult, and the effects of injudicious forbearance and lenity may even cause an abridgment of the latitude now given to useful publications.

whose power is at variance with those principles of national independence and freedom which it would be their duty, if worthy of the task they undertook, to disseminate amongst their countrymen. We are too separated from the great bulk of the population of India to be enabled to judge with precision the progress of change in their feelings and sentiments; but it must be obvious to all who are acquainted with their character and the construction of their society, that freedom of discussion and of action, to be beneficial amongst such a people, must be a plant of slow growth. A very long period must elapse before it is naturalized in a land to which its very name is hitherto unknown; nor can this great gift ever be a blessing till men's minds are prepared to receive it. Through the institution and maintenance of well-regulated colleges and schools, and the circulation of good and useful compositions, we can alone look with confidence to the accomplishment of our just and liberal views. By such rational means we shall disseminate instruction in process of time amongst those peaceable classes of our subjects where it will be most beneficial, and our efforts for their improvement may increase as their

to the turbulent and military part of our population, whose passions they would provoke by published contempt of their religion and usages; while they excited their ambition, and invited their attack, by exposing and decrying the authorities to which they are subject. The very men whom we have armed for our defence would, in all likelihood, be among the first whose principles of obedience and duty such a press would undermine. Through it, seductive but false lessons would be taught them by the discontented and designing. They are already at a stage of knowledge and condition which renders it (as experience has shewn) too easy to delude their credulous and ardent minds. By the aid of an unrestricted press our enemies would soon make this brave, and hitherto faithful, body of men believe that their independence and advancement would be achieved by our downfal and destruction.

To conclude, it is not from ephemeral publications, nor from the desultory efforts of talent without experience, and enthusiasm without judgment, that we are to expect the improvement of the natives of India. Such may dazzle and attract [illegible] and societies

must be general; it must be wrought by the society itself, and come as the result, not as the object of our persevering and unwearied labours. By the extreme of care in the selection of those who are to rule over this people, who are to command our armies, and to distribute justice; by stimulating the zeal and ambition of those employed in the public service; by liberal encouragement to commerce, and to the introduction of the useful arts of civilized life; by addressing ourselves not only in the substance but mode * of administration to the understanding and feelings of those we have to govern; by useful public works; by a moderate assessment of revenue from our subjects, and toleration of their religious and superstitious usages; by institutions founded on sound and solid principles; by raising into consideration and distinction those of the native population whose services, superior talent and integrity, or weight and influence with their countrymen, make it wise and politic to elevate; and above all, by governing our vast territories in India with more attention to their interests, and to the character and condition of their inhabitants, than to the wishes and prejudices of those

* There is no consideration of more consequence than the manner as well as conduct of every public servant towards the natives of all classes and ranks. This subject has been carefully treated in the instructions which the author gave to his assistants before he left India in 1821. These instructions form Appendix VIII.

of England, we shall succeed in ultimately accomplishing every plan now in progress for the benefit of this singular and great empire. But the conduct and direction of all these plans must be left to the local administration, the members of which, anxious as they must ever be for their reputation and good name in their native land, will be found more desirous to accelerate, than to retard the march of improvement. We may change the character of the natives of India in the course of time, but we never can change the character of our government over that country. It is one of strangers, and cannot endure but in the shape in which it now exists, well regulated, but absolute; acting under the strictest responsibility in England, but vested with a power in India efficient to prevent and repress every danger to which it may be exposed from the intemperate zeal, the contumacy, or the opposition of its subjects, as well as from the machinations or the aggressions of its enemies.