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THE
ADMINISTRATION
OF
THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.



FOR CONSULTATION ONLY

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THE
RARE
ADMINISTRATION

OF

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY;

A HISTORY OF INDIAN PROGRESS.

86

BY JOHN WILLIAM KAYE,
AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN."

SECOND EDITION.

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"THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF WAR AND MANY DEGREES OF HEROIC KNOWN,
BUT THE HIGHEST PRAISE IS DUE TO THOSE WHO, BY THEIR VICTORIOUS ARMS,
HAVE OPENED NEW SCENES FOR THE CIVILISATION OF MANKIND, AND OVER-
COME BARBARISM IN SOME IMPORTANT PORTION OF THE WORLD."

RANKE'S "Civil Wars and Monarchy in France."

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Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

MDCCCLIII.

1853

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TO THE
CIVIL AND MILITARY SERVICES
OF
THE EAST INDIA COMPANY
THIS VOLUME,
RIFE WITH RECORDS OF THEIR GOOD DEEDS,
IS
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

London, April 25, 1853.



PREFACE.

I OFFER this volume to the public as a contribution to the general stock of information relating to India and her affairs—information which, in the present juncture, it is very desirable to possess. It contains much that is scattered over a great number of printed books, and much besides that is not to be found in any printed books. It will be seen that it is written almost entirely in a narrative form—that there is little of the disquisitional and controversial in it—and that I have not attempted to elucidate the great question of the future Government of India, except by throwing on it such light as is derived from illustrations of the past.

Perhaps, indeed, the volume may best be described as a series of historical illustrations of Indian Government, arranged with some regard to completeness and uniformity of design, but not at all pretending to the dignity either of a perfect history of the internal administration of India, or a finished picture of Indian Institutions. The exigencies of time and space have compelled me to pass hastily over the consideration of many matters, of the interest and importance of which I am fully sensible, and in one or two instances I have been necessitated to throw into an Appendix papers illustrative of certain topics of inquiry of which I had intended to treat in the body of the work. The subject of Indian Administration, indeed, is so vast; it branches out into so many different channels; and the materials at my disposal for its illustration have been so ample, that the



more I have drawn upon them the further off I have seemed from their exhaustion.

In dealing with a subject of such magnitude, the writer has the choice of two courses which lie before him. He may either so compress his materials into a narrow compass as to divest his fasciculus of facts of all living interest and external grace. Or he may select certain prominent topics of discourse, and illustrate them with that copiousness of detail which, by limiting its range of inquiry, necessarily subtracts from the encyclopædic value of the work, but imparts a vitality to it which I cannot help thinking extends its utility by increasing its attractions. I have followed the latter course. I believe that the reading public is less instructed than it should be on Indian subjects, because it has been less interested than it might have been, if writers had taken more pains to appeal to the common sympathies of mankind. I am not insensible of the value of statistics, and, indeed, I have dealt somewhat largely in them; but it is principally by representing men in action that the writer on Indian affairs must hope to fix the attention of the public.

It is mainly to anticipate any objections which may be raised on the score of omissions, that I make these remarks regarding what may be called the machinery of my work. Of the purpose and tendency of the work itself I have spoken elsewhere; and shall now only add the expression of a hope that, in consideration of what I have done, I shall be forgiven for what I have necessarily left undone in such a volume as this.

London, April, 1853.



PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

I AM unwilling to suffer the present edition of this volume to pass into circulation without adding a few words to what has already been written under this introductory head.

Since this account of the Administration of the East India Company was presented to the public, a few months ago, the great question of the future Government of India has been discussed, and, for the present, disposed of by the Parliament of Great Britain. No opinion of the merits or demerits of the India Bill of 1853 is called for in this place. But I may, without impropriety perhaps, avail myself of this opportunity of referring to the frequent allusions which, in the course of the Debates, were made to the present work. I may say generally of these allusions, that, as far as they related to myself, they only did me too much honor, and that they would have afforded me more gratification if I had not been painfully conscious, whilst I was cited as a teacher of others, that I had myself so very much to learn. But I wish to observe more particularly, at the same time, that though I wrote not without a hope that such a collection of facts might be an aid to the formation of



sound opinions by others, these chapters of administrative history were not written with the intention of recording any views, or propounding any doctrines, of my own. It was my object, in a word, to accumulate facts, not to express opinions. I endeavoured, as much as was possible, to abstain from argumentation, and to preserve the historical character of the book; and, on carefully reperusing what I have written, it appears to me that, if in this new edition I had expunged every line that is not of this purely historical character, the book would have lost almost as little in bulk as it would lose in permanent interest and value.

There was a time, perhaps, when I might not have hesitated to pronounce the most confident opinions upon the whole question of Indian Government—when I might not have shrunk from accepting the title and the office of the Judge. But I have read too much, and thought too much in later years, not to appreciate the difficulties of that question. India, with all its local peculiarities and ethnological varieties, is so vast and comprehensive a subject, that with increased study and reflection comes increased diffidence. The light of knowledge, the nearer it approaches, throws out into bolder relief the ignorance of the student. There is no subject, indeed, on which it becomes a man to write or to speak with more modesty and reserve. For my own part, though now for nearly twenty years I have been, with little interruption, reading and writing about India—though all this time it has been the business of my life to collect facts and to mature opinions relating to this great subject—though both in the East and the West the companions of



my solitude and my social life, the books and the men with whom I have been familiar have been mainly such as are depositories of Indian information—although I have had access to such stores of unpublished documents—the wealth alike of public and of private archives—as few men have had the good fortune to approach or the patience to examine—I am not ashamed to confess that there are many great questions connected with the administration of our Indian Empire upon which I am competent to express only a qualified, hesitating opinion—or none at all. I know, for my own part, that, after acquiring facts illustrative of such a subject as this, it is very difficult to form opinions; though it would seem, indeed, to be the easiest thing in the world to form these opinions before acquiring the facts.

I am not, however, without a belief that what has been stated in these volumes has had some effect in moderating the opinions of candid and unprejudiced, though imperfectly-informed readers. Nor am I without a hope, now that the subject of Indian Government has ceased to be one of the pressing topics of the day, and the book is divested of the controversial character which was conferred on it rather by this outward pressure of the times than by its own internal attributes, that it will induce many more to believe with me, that a History of the Administration of India, under the Government of the East India Company, truthfully and conscientiously written, is really a History of Indian Progress. That the present system of Indian Government is perfect, or that its agents are faultless, I have nowhere said, and nowhere implied. It is un-



deniable that they are capable of revision and improvement. To this revision and improvement they have continually and unceasingly been subjected. The progressive tendency towards good government has, under each new charter, been more and more strikingly developed; and if the ameliorative changes of the next twenty years only keep pace with those of the last, the historian of 1873 will address himself to his work with the delightful conviction that it is his to chronicle a series of good deeds done for the extension of civilisation and the advancement of human happiness, which, whether we regard the magnitude of the end, or the difficulties to be encountered on the way, may be ranked among the greatest administrative efforts which History has ever recorded, or the World has ever beheld.

September, 1853.



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THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

The claims of the Governed on the Governing—How they have been discharged
—England's Opportunities in India—Impediments to Domestic Improvement
—Administrative Difficulties in England and India—Crime and Poverty in the
two Countries—Encouragements to Exertion.

WHEN Mr. Barlow, then Secretary to the Indian Government, drew up the elaborate minute, on which the Bengal Regulations of 1793 were based, Sir William Jones, to whom this important document was submitted, struck his pen across the three first words. The correction which he made was a significant one. Barlow had written: "The two principal objects which the Government ought to have in view in all its arrangements, are to insure its political safety, and to render the possession of the country as advantageous as possible to the East India Company and the British Nation." Sir William Jones, I have said, erased the three first words. Instead of "*the two principal* objects," he wrote: "two of the primary objects;" and then he appended this marginal note: "I have presumed to alter the first words. Surely the *principal* object of every Government is the hap-



piness of the governed.”* Sixty years have passed away since that significant correction was made, and it is now a moot question, whether the practice of the British Government in India, throughout that time, has been in accordance with the words of Mr. Barlow, or those of Sir William Jones.

Not, however, that Barlow, who may be supposed, in this case, to represent the general body of the Company's servants in India, had overlooked the “happiness of the governed.” In the next paragraph he wrote: “It is a source of pleasing reflection to know, that in proportion as we contribute to the happiness of the people and the prosperity of the country, the nearer we approach to the attainment of these objects. If the people are satisfied with our government, we shall be certain that they wish for its continuance; and as the country increases in wealth, the greater will be the advantages which we shall derive from the possession of it.” The “happiness of the governed” was to be considered as a means to an end—not as the end itself. But in those early days of Anglo-Indian rule, it was something to think of the people at all. It was no small matter, indeed, to recognise the great truth, that the prosperity of the governing and the governed are mutually dependent upon each other; that, to secure the former, we must, at all events, promote the latter. The servants of the Company had been for nearly two centuries regarding the natives of India only as so many dark-faced and dark-souled Gentiles, whom it was their mission to over-reach in

* *MS. Records.*—I have copied this from the original note in Sir W. Jones's handwriting. The draft, which contains the autograph corrections of Lord Cornwallis, as well as the marginal notes of Sir W. Jones, is thus endorsed by Sir George Barlow: “This is the minute which led to the formation of the constitution of the government of our possessions in India, in 1793. It

was drawn up by me, and contained my suggestions to Lord Cornwallis. The notes in the margin are by Sir W. Jones, for whose opinion it was submitted. The corrections in the body are those made by Lord Cornwallis.” I need not say that the document is an extremely interesting one. I purpose to make larger references to it in another work.



business, and to overcome in war. But out of these hucksters and spoliators had now arisen a race of embryo statesmen with dawning perceptions of the duties and responsibilities of governments and the rightful claims of the people. Barlow, who sate at the feet of Cornwallis, was far in advance of his predecessors—far in advance of the great mass of his contemporaries. There may be expressions in his suggestive minute to jar upon the sensitive chords of modern philanthropy; but we must read it, not with the eyes of meridian enlightenment, but with the hazy vision of men just awakening, as it were, from dreams of conquest, and only then ceasing to look upon the inhabitants of India as a race of men to be defrauded and subdued.

“A spirit of industry,” continued Barlow, “has been implanted in man, that in seeking his own good he may contribute to the public prosperity. The husbandman and manufacturer will toil incessantly, if they are permitted to reap the profit of their labours.” But a question arose in practice, and one which has not yet received any very satisfactory solution, as to the extent to which, regard being had to the prosperity of the State, the people might be suffered to “reap the profit of their labours.” If the question had been satisfactorily solved, that would have been achieved by Indian administrators, which, as far as the range of my own knowledge extends, has yet been achieved by no administrators under Heaven. This, humanly speaking, indeed, is the greatest problem in the world. It is nothing, therefore, to say, that in India the rights of labour have not been determined—that its claims have not been acknowledged—in a manner to give entire satisfaction to every benevolent mind. Under the most favourable circumstances, we can only arrive at something of an approximation.

And what ought now properly to be considered is, not whether India has been governed by its European conquerors after any imagined model of abstract perfection, but whether, all circumstances duly considered, all obstacles and hindrances fairly weighed, as much has been done, within a certain time, and with certain appliances and means at our disposal, as reasonable men might rightfully expect.

All government is, more or less, an experiment. In India, it is, especially, an experiment; and it is one on a gigantic scale. We have been compelled to experimentalise upon a foreign people not easy to understand—upon a people whose character and institutions are not only extremely dissimilar to our own, but so fenced in with exclusiveness, so bristling with all kinds of discouragements and denials, that it is difficult, above all things, to acquire that comprehensive knowledge of their feelings and opinions which alone can enable us to adapt our legislation to their moral and physical requirements. It is the great evil of English legislation, that it is based upon an imperfect knowledge of the wants and wishes of the people. But an English legislator may converse with whomsoever he will, on any subject, in his own language. He may walk into the poor man's cottage, and ascertain for himself what are the poor man's wants. He has something in common with the poorest. He was born on the same soil—he speaks the same tongue—he prays to the same God. The two classes, to a certain extent, may be severed by imperfect sympathies; but there is *some* bond of sympathy to unite them. They are not utterly strangers and aliens to each other. They do not regard each other as infidels and blasphemers. They cross the threshold of the same temple together, and they may eat, without contamination, from the same dish. There is a vast difference, I repeat, between St.



James' and St. Giles'. The aristocrat of Belgravia but imperfectly comprehends the feelings of the inhabitants of the clanging rookeries. The great territorial lord has little in common with the wretched labourer who poaches by night on his overgrown estate. And hence the blunders of English legislation. But these privileged classes cannot help knowing more about the natural history of their own countrymen, however wide the distinction of rank, than the privileged classes of British India—the English conquerors—know about the dark-faced inhabitants of the country which they have subdued.

It is little more than sixty years since we began to govern India at all. Lord Cornwallis is the first Indian ruler who can be properly regarded as an administrator. Up to the time of his arrival, the English in India had been engaged in a great struggle for existence. Clive conquered the richest province of Hindostan. Hastings reduced it to something like order. But it was not until Cornwallis carried to India the large-minded liberality of a benevolent English statesman, that our administrative efforts took shape and consistency, and the entire internal management of the country under our rule was regulated by a code of written laws,* intended to confer upon the natives of India the benefits of as much European wisdom and benevolence as was compatible with a due regard for the character of native institutions. During those sixty years, India has never enjoyed any protracted season of rest. We have continually been engaged in wars and contentions, which have resulted in the extension of our empire, until it has reached the confines of the Afghan dominions; and many who

* Barlow, in the minute of which I have spoken above, always used the word "laws;" but Cornwallis invariably erased it, and substituted the word "regulations."

would fain have been peaceful administrators, have been conquerors in spite of themselves. During the sixty years of which I speak, we have been building up our present enormous empire. When, therefore, we come to consider the time at our disposal, and the opportunities at our command, with reference to the ameliorative measures which have emanated from the British Government, we must not take account of the result, as though we had been for sixty years in possession of our present territory, and those sixty years had been years of settled tranquillity; but as though we had all that time to do with an empire inchoate and imperfect, calling for measures—in the first instance, of defence, then of aggression—which have left neither leisure to consider, nor money to provide the means of domestic improvement.

For let us only just glance at the history of India during the last century—at the reigns of our different chief Governors, from Clive to Dalhousie, and see how they have been consecutively engaged, with but two exceptions, in great and engulfing wars. Think of the wars in Madras and Bengal—the Rohilla wars—the Mysore wars—the Mahratta wars—the Java war—the Pindarree war—the Burmese war—the Afghan war—the Sindh war—the Sikh war—with all kinds of minor wars occupying smaller space in the great history of Indian conquest. Of all our Governors-General, either reared in India, or despatched thither from our English bureaux, Shore and Bentinck alone contrived to surround themselves with an atmosphere of peace during the entire period of their administration. And yet all these warriors and statesmen, who were continually pouring their battalions into the field, were not all of them men, “out of measure addicted to fighting”—men of large ambition, greedy of conquest,



unmindful of the blessings of peace and the claim of an industrial people. Cornwallis—Minto—Amherst—Auckland—Hardinge—Dalhousie—were all by nature peace-Governors. Neither Hastings—commoner nor peer—can be justly accused of unscrupulous aggressiveness. And yet, somehow or other, all these rulers have been arrested in their career of internal improvement, or utterly prevented from giving a thought to it, by the necessity of concentrating their efforts on great schemes of military organisation, for the subjection of enemies who have threatened the security of our frontier, and compelled us to possess ourselves of new territory to enable us to retain possession of the old.

It is not for me now to consider in detail, whether this or that war "might have been avoided." The more thoughtful reader of Indian history will, perhaps, arrive at the general conclusion, that although some of our wars with our immediate neighbours might have been delayed, few, if any, could have been avoided.* It is enough for my present purpose, that the English in India, though not fairly chargeable with that lust of conquest which is often said to have marked our whole career in the East, have been, for a century, engaged in an almost continued struggle, which has paralysed the humane efforts of men, the desire of whose hearts has ever turned towards the domestic improvement of the country. If it had been possible for us to have held possession of a single province—say the rich province of Bengal—never to have gone beyond its limits—never to have been disturbed by fears of invasion—never to have been engaged in warlike operations, offensive or defensive—we might, perad-

* I say "with our immediate neighbours," for where we have crossed the frontier to attack another country, se-

parated from us by an extensive tract of intervening territory, this necessity is not to be pleaded.



venture, have established a model empire on the banks of the Hooghly. An overflowing treasury, at the command of an enlightened statesman, never arrested by any threatenings from without, in his quiet career of beneficence, never, indeed, looking beyond the limits of his own narrow territory, might, in the course of a century, have enabled us to build up an Eastern principality, so compact in itself, and complete in all its internal arrangements, as to leave little or nothing for the philanthropist to desire. But Providence has not willed that *such* should be our Eastern Empire. If one of the little handful of European officers, who, a century ago, in gaiters and perukes, followed the fortunes of Lawrence in the Carnatic, were now to stand again on Indian soil, and in one of our North-Western cantonments, to spread out before him a map of our Eastern Empire as now established, he would be overwhelmed with astonishment and incredulity. He would declare, that not one of his contemporaries, in the wildest flight of imagination, ever contemplated the possibility of the erection of such an empire as we have now built up in the East. But, in these times, it is equally difficult to imagine the existence of such an empire—limited, unexpansive, compact—as the Anglo-Indian of 1750, regarded as the extreme result of our conquests in the East. Grown wise by experience, we now declare that it is in accordance with a law of nature, universal and immutable, that our empire should have so expanded. Be this as it may, the history of India has been hitherto a history of expansion—of acquisition; and it is only by so considering the fact, that we can rightly estimate the much or the little which the British conquerors of the Indian world have done to promote the happiness of the people who inhabit it.



Many great political problems are yet unsolved—many great social evils are yet unremedied. Much, doubtless, has yet to be done before the voice of complaint can be authoritatively called upon, in the name of reason, to be still. Unqualified commendation in such a case would be as unreasonable as unqualified censure—not because it is unqualified commendation of the Indian Government, but because it is unqualified commendation of a terrestrial government, and, therefore, of one prone to all sorts of short-comings, and liable to all kinds of error. If there were nothing more to be complained of there would be nothing more to be done. Now, in India, it must be acknowledged that there is much to be done. But in England, also, there is much to be done. The Government of England has been, and is, a Government of Progress. We are astonished at the evils which our fathers permitted, and our sons will be astonished at those which we in our turn are permitting. And yet generations of Englishmen have boasted, and will boast, of the blessings of the British Constitution. We have not to consider whether this or that Government has attained perfection, but whether it is making reasonable efforts to approximate to it; we have not to consider whether the mass of the people are positively happy under any particular Government, but whether they are happier than they were fifty or twenty years ago under that Government. Progressive improvement is all that we have a right to expect, or a vocation to consider.

The history of Civilisation is the obituary of Error. We are continually burying defunct fallacies, and making Suttees of huge practical mistakes. I am not an old man. I have seen little more than half of the years allotted to humanity, and yet I have lived in times which, compared with the present, were years



of barbarism and darkness. I have witnessed the cremation of social and political evils, the existence of which, in such recent times, my children will scarcely credit. When I was a boy, the green slopes of Old Sarum were my habitual play-ground. There was a little inn on the white chalk-road which sent two members to Parliament, whilst Manchester and Birmingham sent none. A Roman Catholic could not sit in our Legislative Assemblies, or in our Municipal Corporations, or lead a regiment or command a ship. Slaves were held as property by English gentlemen in the colonies, and bought and sold like sheep. A man might be transported for seven years for knocking down a partridge or a hare. Such was the general effect of the game-laws, that it was said of them that "for every ten pheasants fluttering in a wood, one English peasant was rotting in gaol."* The Court of Chancery, with its agonising delays and its desolating voracity, made playthings of human life and human reason, and wrote its fearful annals on the walls of the lunatic's cell and the grave of the suicide. The state of our prisons was so detestable, that a young and modest girl thrown into gaol for some trifling offence, or perhaps wrongfully accused, came out an abandoned criminal. The gibbet was in such repute, that a man might be hanged for stealing a yard of silk from a shop-counter, for destroying a tree, or breaking down the embankment of a river. And it was no uncommon thing for men to be lured on to the gallows by a detective police, who made it their business to associate in flash houses with thieves and prostitutes, and incite them to the commission of crimes which it should have been their duty to prevent.

* Sydney Smith.



These are a few of the social and political evils which I have lived to see abolished by the intervention of a humane legislature. Perhaps I may be spared to see many more great changes; for many more great changes are needed, and this is an age of progressive amelioration. But although I see clearly around me many things which I know cannot be right, and I hope earnestly that some day they may be remedied, I know how difficult it is to devise a fit remedial application, and how the best efforts of benevolent statesmen may be baffled by the magnitude and obstinacy of the disease. There are clamorous social evils crying out for redress almost under the walls of the Palace at Westminster. From the windows of the committee-rooms of that great costly senate-house, our legislators may look out upon hundreds of miserable dwellings, overcrowded with squalid and hungry tenants, whose sufferings far surpass any endured by the inhabitants of a village in Bengal. It is not long since it was stated in Parliament by a nobleman, who has made the misery and the crime of the London poor his peculiar study, that "there were 30,000 naked, filthy, deserted, roaming, lawless children, who formed the seed-plot of 19-20ths of the crime which desolates the metropolis;" and again repeated at a public meeting, "that ninety-nine cases of crime out of every hundred were the result of want of honest occupation." I have no wish to dwell upon these things. I would only say that it becomes us, before we indignantly expatiate upon the sufferings of the people of India, to think of the suffering at our own doors; and to consider whether we have yet contrived, with all our Ministerial Cabinets, our Legislative Assemblies, our great corporate bodies, and our gigantic press, to furnish anything like a remedy for



this the greatest of social evils—the physical necessity of crime. The most enthusiastic advocate of the Government of the East India Company would not claim for it the merit of abolishing poverty and wretchedness, and annihilating crime; but the people of India are not driven to crime by want of honest occupation. It is easy to conceive what would be said on the subject if they were.

I would say something, too, regarding material wants. A well-informed practical man, writing in 1822, says, “The fertile plains of [], [], and [], are separated from each other by a deserted country, hitherto nearly an impassable barrier. This large district comprehends upwards of 900 square miles; in many places it is very populous. As might be expected under such circumstances, the people are turbulent, and their houses, being inaccessible for want of roads, it is not surprising that during the disturbances of 1821-22, this district was the asylum for smugglers and robbers, and that stolen cattle were drawn into it as to a safe and impenetrable retreat.” The blank spaces which I have left at the commencement of this extract the reader will, doubtless, feel disposed to fill with the names of some Indian cities or districts. But the fertile plains, separated from each other by a deserted country, the populous places rendered inaccessible, and the people turbulent and lawless by want of roads, are not in any part of the mighty Indian peninsula, but in a little island upon the other side of the Irish Channel. The places whose names I have omitted are Limerick, Cork, and Kerry.* “Notwithstanding,” adds the writer, “its present desolate state,

* The extract is taken from a report by Mr. Griffith, quoted in Mr. Porter's admirable work on the “Progress of the Nation.” I grieve to think that during the passage of this volume

through the press, this esteemed writer and valuable public servant has paid the ordinary penalty of a life of unceasing intellectual labour, and that his career of usefulness is at an end.



this country contains within itself the seeds of future improvement and industry."

It would be easy to multiply instances of tracts of country in Ireland, containing within themselves the seeds of improvement and industry, which, even at the present time, are little better than howling wildernesses. But I have no wish to enlarge upon the failures of our domestic administration. I merely desire to express my conviction that such failures, though deeply to be lamented, furnish no proof of the general incompetency of the Government which has unwillingly permitted them; I would not argue that because Ireland has been and is misgoverned—that, because there are large tracts of desolate country, and thousands of inhabitants in an extreme state of physical and moral destitution, the repeal of the Union is an event to be desired as an act of justice to the Irish people. I would give the British Government credit for the best intentions—I would believe that it has laboured, and not laboured in vain, for the benefit of the people, though it has left much to be done for their amelioration before we can congratulate ourselves on the general result. I willingly believe that it is no easy thing to govern Ireland, although it is a small island within a few hours' journey, by land and sea, from the senate-house of Great Britain, and contains less than eight millions of souls, all speaking the same language, and worshipping the same God.

But believing as I do that it is no easy thing to govern Ireland—no easy thing to govern England—no easy thing in one island or the other, to abolish human misery and eradicate human crime, I would wish it also to be believed that the Government of India, a country whose area it is difficult to compute, and whose population it is difficult to number, whose people present almost as many varieties of cha-



racter and language as the entire continent of Europe, and the whole of which are utterly dissimilar to our own, may be also difficult to govern.

I would wish it to be believed that in the government of such a country some credit is due for what is done well, and some allowance to be made both for what is done amiss and what is not done at all. I am afraid that too many amongst us are prone to make a severe reckoning of the errors and short-comings, and of the good deeds and successful results to take no sort of account.

It is because I believe that, under the Government of the East India Company much has been done for the benefit of the people of India of which little is known in this country, or if known, purposely ignored, that I now desire to throw together, in an historical form, some information, derived from a variety of sources, relative to the administrative results of British connexion with the East. In a word, I desire to show what we have done for India, and what we have attempted to do. The review may not at all points present matter for congratulation, for our efforts in India, as elsewhere, have not always been crowned with success. But I believe that, viewed in a calm, candid, judicial spirit, without passion and without prejudice, the aggregate result reflects no little honor on the Company and their servants, and may be honestly applauded by men jealous of the interests of mankind.

And assuming that there is much yet to be done—that much has been left undone which ought to have been done—that those to whom the administration of India is entrusted, require at times to be roused and stimulated by the consideration that there is a great tribunal at home—the tribunal of the British public, which takes cognizance of all their doings—I cannot help thinking that the great object of securing the zealous activity of



our Indian administrators is best to be attained by recording and commending their good deeds, than by an indiscriminate condemnation of what are presumed to be their bad. I doubt, indeed, whether the effect of all the vague general censure which is lavished upon British administration in the East, has not a tendency rather to cramp and repress than to foster and develop the beneficence of our exiled countrymen who constitute the executive Government of our Indian Empire. But I am certain, on the other hand, that nothing is more likely to develop all their best feelings, and stimulate all their energies and activities, than the knowledge that their exertions are not overlooked by their brethren at home—that their good deeds are duly reported to the British public, and by the British public read with interest, and commented on with applause. If there be full warrant for the belief that the British public will not be left in profound ignorance of all the good that is done in our far-off Indian possessions, nothing is so animating, so invigorating as the reflection, “What will be thought of this at home?” But if the only response that can be given to the stirring question is “Nothing”—if a general conviction is left to impress itself on the minds of Englishmen in India, that, let them do what they may, and suffer what they may for the people, scorning delight and living laborious days, still one general sentence of condemnation will be passed on our Indian administration—still ignorance and malevolence will be obstreperous in their denunciations—it is easy to conceive how all warmth may be chilled, and all activity paralysed; how in time they may be made to conform to the erring judgment. People are very prone to become what the world believes them to be.

Influenced by such considerations as these—rooted in the faith that I shall best subserve the interests of



India and her teeming millions of inhabitants, by encouraging the zealous and stimulating the active, than by writing what can only dishearten and repress, I purpose, in the following chapters, to show what our countrymen have done, and what they have attempted to do, for the better government of India, and the amelioration of the condition of the people—as evidenced in the development of the industrial resources of the country, the purification of justice, the civilisation of savage tribes, the suppression of unholy rites and cruel abominations, and the general diffusion of enlightenment and truth. It will be my privilege, in the course of this attempt, to record some incidents of our Indian rule, little known beyond the area that has been the scene of them, but which are not to be chronicled without the strongest emotions of national pride. And if ever such chronicle of good deeds done by English gentlemen, under the fiery skies of the East, isolated from their kind, far removed from all the ordinary incentives to exertion, amidst dangers and difficulties more than sufficient to repel the brave and deter the resolute, should stimulate one other Indian exile to go and do likewise, I shall not have written in vain, and I shall not be without my reward.



CHAPTER II.

India under the Moguls—The Arab and Tartar Conquests—The House of Toghlak—Perozh Shah—The first Indian Canal—The House of Timour—The Emperor Akbar—His internal Administration—Shah Jehan—Public Works—Decline of the Mogul Empire—Comparison of Mogul and British Rule—Their General Effects on the Happiness of the People.

I do not know that it is of much real importance to inquire whether the people of India would have been more or less happy and prosperous if they had been left to the government of their old Mahomedan conquerors and rulers. The inquiry must, at best, be unsatisfactory and inconclusive. But, from the days of Burke to the days of Ellenborough, the insatiable benevolence, the magnificent philanthropy, of the old Oriental despots has been so often vaunted, either as a reproach or an encouragement to us, that I cannot persuade myself to pass on without devoting a few pages to the subject.

The rulers whom we supplanted were, like ourselves, aliens and usurpers. We found the Hindoos a conquered people, and, little by little, we substituted one yoke for another. The tide of conquest had hitherto set in from the inland northern counties. It was rolled back by a power whose approaches commenced from the southern sea-board. From the Oxus and the Jaxartes, from the borders of the Aral lake, and from the snowy mountains, had come the overwhelming desolating stream of northern conquest. The Greeks and Arabs, who had preceded the Tartar hordes, scarcely passed the limits of the country which modern history knows as Hindostan. British arms



have now again extended the Indian Empire to the banks of the Indus, and our legions have encamped themselves, permanently and securely, upon the seat of the old Macedonian conquests. But of neither Greeks nor Arabs can it be said that they conquered India. A race of men, in whom the shepherd and the soldier were strangely blended, streamed from the countries watered by the Oxus and Jaxartes, and established themselves in Afghanistan; looking down from which, as from a platform of observation, upon India, they sighed for its legendary treasures, and meditated the invasion of the coveted land.

How at the dawn of the present millenium, before the Norman William, on the southern coast of England, had stricken down the last of the Saxon kings, Mahmoud of Ghuznee, the son of a Toorkhee slave, crossed the waters of the Jumna, and with a multitudinous army, appeared before the stately walls of Canoorj—how he attacked, plundered, and destroyed Muttra; and how he returned to Ghuznee laden with glittering spoil, and attended by a train of five thousand captives;—how, at another time, crossing the great desert, he poured his battalions into Goozrat, and made the walls of the far-famed idol-temple echo with the cry of *Allah Akhbar*—how he desecrated that beloved Pagan shrine and carried off its hoarded wealth; and how, on its backward march to Afghanistan, his army perished miserably on the burning sands;—are great historical events, not less interesting for their remoteness, at which it is scarcely necessary to glance. For although Mahmoud entered India—fought and conquered—he never there established an empire. He coveted the fabulous treasures which, it was believed, were hidden in its gorgeous palaces and rich idol-shrines; and his lust was satisfied with the gold and jewels, which he bore away from this ro-



mantic land. But he was a spoliator, rather than a conqueror; and his victories left upon India little more than the impress of transient calamities.

It was by a prince of less note in the page of history—by Shahab-oo-deen, of the house of Ghor, that India was first really conquered. It is hard to say why the life of one who reduced to subjection almost the entire country from Ajmere to Bengal, and left at his death the conquered provinces under his own officers, or under tributary princes, should stand out with so little individual distinctness from the great level of the Mahomedan chronicles. Little, however, is popularly recorded of his personal history and character. On his death, about the time when the great Charter of English privileges was signed at Runnymede, India became an independent Mahomedan kingdom, under the rule of the conqueror's favorite slave; and the dynasty of the Slave-Kings was commenced. Then the Empire of Delhi was established. Hindostan was nominally subject to one sovereign, the extent of whose real influence was mainly dependent on the energy of his personal character, and the vigor with which he held his satraps in control.* Much of his time was consumed in efforts to suppress the rising power of his provincial governors; and those governors, instead of concerning themselves about the welfare of the people, were continually striving to advance what they believed to be their own. Some splendid architectural remains, conspicuous among which is the *Kootab Minar* of Delhi, still bear pleasing testimony to the

* "All Hindostan, except some insulated portions, now acknowledged the government of Delhi; but the obedience of the different portions was in different degrees, from entire subjection to very imperfect dependence; and in this state, with various fluctuations, it remained till the end of the Mogul Empire. In a succession of strong reigns, the subject country would greatly ex-

ceed the rest, and the princes who retained the internal government of their territories would be quite submissive and obedient in general politics; but two or three weak rulers would again throw all into confusion; new princes would start up, and old ones would become unruly, until the next vigorous monarch had almost to begin the conquest anew."—[*Elphinstone.*]



magnificent tastes of the Slave-Kings; but, as peaceful administrators and guardians of the public weal, they can lay little claim to the approbation of posterity. Indeed, the judgment is not over harsh—which would pronounce them, for the most part, either unscrupulous tyrants or indolent debauchees. Nor were their Ghilji successors of a higher class. Their efforts at internal administration often took the shape of arbitrary interference of the most irritating kind, and they most incensed the people when they interfered most in their domestic affairs.

Of the succeeding dynasty—the house of Toghlaq—one of the greatest monarchs was a madman.* His successor—Feroz Shah—left behind him, perhaps, the brightest name of all the early Mahomedan princes. Considering the age in which he lived, and the circumstances by which he was surrounded, he was really an enlightened prince. Greatly in advance of his predecessors, he initiated many important public works; and though the accounts of them which have come down to us are somewhat vague and general, and perhaps fairly open to some suspicion of their accuracy, it is not to be doubted that he did much to promote the prosperity and to advance the civilisation of the country which he governed.† By Feroz Shah was constructed, in the middle of the fourteenth century, the first Indian

* Mahmud Toghlaq.

† "His reign, though not brilliant in other respects, was distinguished for the enlightened spirit of his regulations, and the extent and utility of his public works. He limited the number of capital punishments, and put a stop to the use of torture and the practice of mutilation, which last prohibition was the more meritorious, as it was at variance with the Mahomedan law. He abolished a great number of vexatious taxes and fees, put an end to all fluctuating and precarious imposts, and fixed the revenues in such a manner as to leave as little as possible to the collectors, and to give precision and

publicity to the demands of the state. . . . The following list is given of his public works, for the maintenance of which, lands were assigned:—50 dams across rivers, to promote navigation; 40 mosques; 30 colleges; 100 caravan-serais; 30 reservoirs for irrigation; 100 hospitals; 100 public baths; 150 bridges; besides many other edifices for pleasure or ornament." Elphinstone, from whom this account is taken, adds—"The round numbers, as well as the amount of some of the items, suggest doubts of the accuracy of the list; but the works of Feroz which still remain, afford sufficient evidence of the magnitude of his undertakings."



canal. The water seems to have been drawn from the Chetang *nullah*, at the foot of the lower range of Himalayahs, west of the Jumna, and the line extended thence to Hissar, where were the favourite hunting-grounds of the emperor. Whatever may have been the purposes for which it was constructed—and I see no reason to question that it was designed for the irrigation of the country, and the benefit of the people—it was but a little time in full fertilising operation. Not very long after the death of Feroz Shah, it seems to have been dried up; and it is believed that it never drew a permanent flow of water, until, two hundred years afterwards, the Emperor Akbar issued an order for its restoration.*

In 1389, full of years and trouble, Feroz Shah was gathered to his fathers. It was during the reign of his grandson, only a few years later, that India was laid prostrate by that stupendous calamity, the invasion of Tamerlane. Girt with the strange legend of miraculous conception, the lame shepherd-prince, with a frame of iron, and a heart of stone, came with a mighty Tartar army, bristling with pikes and javelins, from the country beyond the Oxus, and over-ran the provinces of Hindostan. Lust of conquest—nothing else—brought him to Delhi. He had no wrongs to redress—no insults to wipe away. But he had conquered the countries of Central Asia lying nearer to his home. Persia, Georgia, Mesopotamia, Syria, had fallen before his arms. He had captured Herat—thus made himself master of Khorassan—and thence crossing the Punjab, moved

* Elphinstone says that it was dis-used, "perhaps, since the death of Feroz" (in 1389); but it seems, from the following passage in a curious document discovered in Khytul, by Lieutenant S. A. Abbott, to have been in operation at a later date. It is an edict of the Emperor Akbar, relative to the restoration of the canal, commencing thus: "The Chetang Nuddi, by which Feroz

Shah Badshah, two hundred and ten years ago, brought water from the nullahs and drains in the vicinity of Sudhourah, at the foot of the hills, to Hansi and Hissar, and by which, for four or five months of the year, water was there available, has in the course of time, and from numerous obstacles, become so choked, that it is scarcely discernible," &c. &c.—[*Calcutta Review*.]



down with irresistible force on the beautiful capital of the Indian Empire. No language can exaggerate the horrors of that invasion—horrors which have rendered the name of “Timour the Tartar” familiar to every school-boy in Western Europe, as the type of an insatiable tyrant and a scourge of the human race.

It is certain, indeed, that these Mahomedan conquests were achieved at an enormous cost of human life—that the misery which the conquerors diffused in their desolating careers, makes by comparison the victorious progress of British arms in the East a mild and merciful migration. The Arabs and the Tartars were equally remorseless. Each in turn murdered and pillaged with as little pity and compunction as the other. In the first, the spirit of proselytism was the stronger. They went forth as children of the Prophet, and fought and conquered in his name. A genuine religious enthusiasm stirred the hearts of those early Mahomedan invaders. But the Tartar hordes were little better than lukewarm neophytes. They over-ran a new country; they made its treasures their own; but they rather merged themselves into the general population, and took shape from the surrounding mass, than stamped their own conformation upon it. It was in no spirit of toleration and forbearance, however, that they spared the idols of the Hindoos.* Their enthusiasm found vent through other channels than those of religious zeal. They murdered the idolaters, and plundered their temples, only because they delighted in cruelty, and were greedy of spoil.†

* This is only metaphorically and spiritually true. Literally and substantially, it is incorrect. The Mahomedan conquerors often did *not* spare the Hindoo idols; but their iconoclasm was very different from that of the Spanish conquerors of South America. The latter, when they struck down the idols of the Mexicans, struck at the false gods which the images

represented. When the former broke the graven deities of the Hindoos into pieces, they did so to see what they contained.

† The history of the Mahomedan dynasties in India is full of lamentable instances of the cruelty and rapacity of the early conquerors. Take, as illustrative of Arab cruelty, the following from Elphinstone's account

Tamerlane was proclaimed Emperor of Delhi, but he soon withdrew his army from India, leaving anarchy

of Casim's conquest of Sindh:—"Casim at first contented himself with circumcising all the Brahmins; but incensed at their rejection of this sort of conversion, he ordered all above the age of seventeen to be put to death, and all under it, with the women, to be reduced to slavery." And again, from the same writer—"The women and children were first sacrificed in flames of their own kindling; the men bathed, and with other ceremonies took leave of each other and the world; the gates were then thrown open, the Rajputs rushed out sword in hand, and, throwing themselves on the weapons of their enemies, perished to a man. Those of the garrison who did not share in this act of desperation, gained little by their prudence: the city was carried by assault, and all the men in arms were slaughtered in the storm. Their families were reduced to bondage." Speaking more generally of the character of Arab conquests, he says: "On the first invasion, each city was called on, as the army approached, to embrace the Mahomedan religion or to pay tribute. In case of refusal, the city was attacked, and if it did not capitulate, all the fighting-men were put to death, and their families were sold for slaves. Four cities held out to this extremity; and in two of them the number of soldiers who refused quarter is estimated at 6000 each."

Take the following from the record of the career of Mahmood of Ghuznee:—"During a halt of twenty days, the city (Muttra) was given up to plunder, the idols were broken, and the temples profaned. The excesses of the troops led to a fire in the city, and the effects of this conflagration were added to its other calamities. . . . This expedition was attended with some circumstances more than usually tragical. At Mahawan, near Muttra, the Rajah had submitted, and had been favorably received; when a quarrel accidentally breaking out between the soldiers of the two parties, the Hindoos were massacred and driven into the river, and the Rajah, conceiving himself betrayed, destroyed his wife and children, and then made away with himself. At Munj, after a desperate resistance, part of the Rajput garrison rushed out through the breaches of the enemy,

whilst the rest dashed themselves to pieces from the walls, or burned themselves, with their wives and children, in the houses; so that not one of the whole body survived." In Persia, Mahmood seems to have been even more remorseless than in India. "He invaded Irak, and, ungenerously, if not perfidiously, seized the person of the prince who had trusted himself in the camp before Rei. He then took possession of the whole territory, and having been opposed at Ispahan and Cazvin, he punished their resistance by putting to death some thousands of the inhabitants of each city." "Perhaps, however," says Elphinstone, "the most odious trait of his religious wars is given incidentally by a Mahomedan author, quoted in Price, who states, that such was the multitude of captives brought from India, that a purchaser could not be found for a slave at four shillings and sevenpence a head."

Again:—"Shahab-u-din was more sanguinary than Mahmood. When he took Ajmir, he put some thousands of the inhabitants, who opposed him, to the sword, reserving the rest for slavery." But it is in the history of such conquerors as Genghis Khan and Tamerlane that the horrors of these Mahomedan inroads are most clearly revealed. I can afford space only for one more example, taken from Elphinstone's account of the latter. "He (Tamerlane) then proceeded to Batner, and massacred the country people who had taken refuge under the walls. The place afterwards surrendered on terms; but, by one of those mistakes which so constantly accompanied Tamerlane's capitulations, the town was burned, and all the inhabitants put to the sword. He then marched to Samana, where he joined his main body, having slaughtered the inhabitants of every place he passed. From Samana the towns were deserted, and consequently there were no more general massacres. Many prisoners were, however, taken; and on reaching Delhi, Tamerlane put to death all of them above fifteen years of age (to the number, according to the exaggerated accounts of the Musulman historians, of 100,000). . . . Delhi surrendered under a solemn promise of protection, and Tamerlane was publicly proclaimed Emperor of India."



and desolation behind him. The great cities were depopulated. The country was without a government. The empire had been gradually falling to pieces since the early years of the reign of Mahomed Toghlak, and when now, after the withdrawal of Tamerlane, an attempt was made to re-establish imperial power in Hindostan, it was found that the sceptre of the new dynasty was waved over only a remnant of the extensive kingdom which had owned the sovereignty of the princes of Delhi. Everywhere independent monarchies had risen up, and it was not until a descendant of Tamerlane—known to the present generation by one of the pleasantest autobiographies ever written by sovereign or subject, a memoir as instructive as Xenophon's, and as amusing as Pepys',—came from the countries which had poured forth the teeming multitudes with which his great ancestor had conquered India, followed in his footsteps, and re-conquered Delhi, that any attempt was made to consolidate these distracted provinces. Baber found the empire broken up into a number of small principalities. Rebellion after rebellion in distant provinces had shorn the throne of Delhi of its strength, and reduced it almost to a pageant. In some of the principalities there was a sort of nominal dependence, in others there was not even that. But the successor of Tamerlane, having established himself in the imperial city, had no thought of halting there, or of returning to his royal home. He had not come merely as a conqueror and a spoliator. He had

What follows is so constant a concomitant of Tamerlane's promises of protection, that we are at a loss whether to ascribe it to systematic perfidy, or to the habitual ferocity and insubordination of the troops. On this occasion, the most credible accounts attribute the commencement to the latter cause. Plunder and violence brought on resistance; 'this led to a general massacre; some streets were rendered

impassable by heaps of dead; and the gates being forced, the whole Mogul army gained admittance, and a scene of horror ensued, easier to be imagined than described.' — *Brigg's Ferishta*. "We fear that the insatiable cruelty of the Mahomedan conquerors stands recorded upon more undeniable authority than the insatiable benevolence of the Mahomedan rulers.



come to establish a great empire on the banks of the Hindoo rivers; and he realised, in the fulness of time, the pregnant dreams of his imaginative boyhood.

Baber was sixth in descent from Tamerlane. A space of time, exceeding a century and a quarter, intervened between the invasion of the latter and the accession of the former prince.* And again, after the death of Baber, was the succession interrupted by the revolt of a noble of the house of Ghor, who wrested the sceptre from the hand of the descendant of Tamerlane, and established himself on the throne of Delhi. Shir Shah reigned only nine years; but his reign was a lustrous one. No prince had, up to this time, done so much for the improvement of the conquered country. He devoted himself, when not actually in the field, to the better ordering of the civil administration, and the construction of great public works. He improved both the fiscal and judicial systems of the empire. And the native annalists head the list of great works which he accomplished, with an account of a broad road, which in those days it took four months to traverse, stretching from Bengal to the banks of the Indus at Rhotas, along which noble rows of trees, and wells of good water at short intervals, shaded and refreshed the traveller; and caravanserais, at every stage, supplied with food for the poor, and attendants, alike for Mahomedan and Hindoo, invited the weary and the hungry to enter.†

* India, during that interval (from 1399 to 1526), was governed by the Sayuds and the house of Lodi. It was a period of great intestine commotion, and little appears to have been done for the improvement of the country.

† It is not, however, to be supposed that he was the first monarch who gave his attention to these things. "The roads," says Elphinstone, "may have been improved by Shir Shah; but Ibn Batuta, 200 years before his time,

found the highways shaded by trees, with resting-houses and wells at regular intervals along a great part of the coast of Malabar, then under the Hindus; and in an inscription lately discovered, which there is every reason to think is of the third century *before* Christ, there is an especial order by the king for digging wells and planting trees along the public highways." Ibn Batuta, however, makes no mention of the existence of any such works as these in Northern India, where the greater part



The revolts which interrupted the reigns of Shir Shah's successors paved the way for the restoration of the house of Timour. About the middle of the sixteenth century, the expelled son of Baber recovered a portion of his lost dominions; but only survived by a few months his return to the capital after sixteen years of ignominious exile. An accident deprived him suddenly of life; and history would, in all probability, set down against him that he had done nothing to earn the gratitude of posterity, if he had not begotten the greatest monarch who ever sat on the throne of Hindostan.

Akbar was thirteen years old when he began to reign. Our English Mary was then lighting up the fires of Smithfield in honor of the Pope of Rome. The Portuguese had rounded the Cape of Storms, and established themselves in Southern and Western India; but the British merchant had not yet begun to freight his argosies with the rich silks and fine muslins of the Indian world. India itself was then broken up into many principalities. The empire of the young king, on his accession, extended little beyond the government of the Punjab and the country about Delhi and Agra. A series of revolutions had destroyed, not only the integrity of the empire itself, but the regularity of civil administration and the continuance of social order and prosperity. But the royal pupil, as he entered on

of his time was spent, but says, on the other hand, that the highways were infested by robbers. According to this traveller, the South was in a more advanced state of civilisation, for he says that theft was unknown in Malabar. "Should anything fall from a tree, none except its proper owner would attempt to touch it." This was supposed to be the result of the extreme severity of the laws. The account of the great Malabar road, alluded to by Elphinstone, is worth quoting. "We next came into the country of Malabar, which is the country of black pepper. Its length is

a journey of two months, along the shore from Sindabur to Kawlam. The whole of the way by land lies under the shade of trees, and at the distance of every half mile there is a house made of wood, in which there are chambers fitted up for the reception of comers and goers, whether they be Moslems or infidels. To each of these there is a well, out of which they drink, and over each is an infidel appointed to give drink."—[*The Travels of Ibn Batuta*, translated from the Arabic, by the Rev. Samuel Lee.]

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manhood, soon began to perceive the true character of the work which then lay before him. He determined to restore the integrity of the old empire of Hindostan, and to place its internal administration upon a secure and permanent basis. Year by year he extended his conquests, until the rich country of Bengal lay at his feet, and Cashmere became a province of the empire. He again reduced to subjection his hereditary kingdom beyond the Indus, and then, turning his eyes towards the southern countries, meditated the conquest of the Deccan. He was, indeed, continually engaged in war, up to the time of his death; but in spite of these external distractions, he found time to fix his thoughts, as his heart was ever fixed, upon schemes of domestic improvement. He was at once a conqueror and an administrator. He had no delight in conquest. He fought when it was necessary to fight—and he fought with courage and vigor seldom surpassed. But he was happiest when engaged in the work of civil administration; and history delights to contemplate him rather as a philanthropic statesman, whose internal policy has placed him in the first rank of the great kings of all ages and all countries, than as a warrior whose victories have secured him the applause of more vulgar and unreflecting minds.

I wish briefly and fairly to state what the Emperor Akbar did for the improvement of the country and the people of Hindostan. He improved the system of land-assessment, or rather he improved upon the improvements instituted by Shir Shah. He adopted an uniform and improved system of land-measurement, and computed the average value of the land, by dividing it into three classes, according to the productiveness of each. This computation being made, one-third of the average produce was fixed as the amount of tax to be paid to the state. But as this was ordinarily to be



paid in money, it was necessary to ascertain the value of the produce, and this was done upon an average of the nineteen preceding years, according to local circumstances; and if the estimate was conceived to be too high, the tax-payer was privileged to pay the assessment in kind. These settlements were at first made annually, but afterwards were fixed for a period of ten years. The regulations for the collection of the revenue enforced by Akbar, were well calculated to prevent fraud and oppression, and, on the whole, they worked well for the benefit of the people; but it has been said of them, and with truth, that "they contained no principle of progressive improvement, and held out no hopes to the rural population, by opening paths by which it might spread into other occupations, or rise by individual exertions within its own."*

The judicial regulations of Akbar were liberal and humane. Justice, on the whole, was fairly administered. All unnecessary severity—all cruel personal punishments, as torture and mutilation, were prohibited, except in peculiar cases, and capital punishments were considerably restricted. The police appears to have been well organised, and subject to specific instructions, involving perhaps a little more interference than it was expedient to entrust to such hands, but, on the whole, not ill suited to the temper of the people and the character of the government. His enactments were, on the whole, of a humanising tendency. He prohibited those trials by ordeal, of which it is difficult to say whether they are more cruel or more absurd; he suppressed the barbarous custom of condemning to slavery prisoners taken in war; and he authoritatively forbade the burning of Hindoo widows, except with their own free and uninfluenced consent. He even interfered in person to suppress the

* *Elphinstone.*



horrid rite, when he believed that an unwilling victim was about to proceed to the funeral-pile. It is recorded in the Akbar-Nameh, that when the Rajah of Joudpore was about to force his son's widow into this horrible self-immolation, the Emperor mounted his horse, rode to the scene of the intended sacrifice, and prevented its consummation.*

That something of the historical lustre which surrounds the name of the Emperor Akbar was derived rather from the personal character of the man than from the great things that he accomplished, is, I think, not to be denied. His actual performances, when they come to be computed, fall short of his reputation. But his merits are to be judged not so much by the standard of what he did, as of what he did with the opportunities allowed to him, and under the circumstances by which he was surrounded. Akbar built up the Mogul Empire, and had little leisure allowed him to perfect its internal economy. He was

* No mention is made, by the historians of his reign, of Akbar's efforts to extend the system of canal irrigation initiated by Feroz Shah. But from the edict discovered by Lieut. Abbott some information may be gleaned. It is thus epitomised by the writer already quoted, in the *Calcutta Review*: "The indications given of his canal system are faint and feeble, and may be condensed into few words. A superintendent of canals was nominated, under the title of Mir-ab (chief of the waters), with absolute authority throughout his jurisdiction. In his hands were vested the charge of the works, the distribution of the water, in short, all executive revenue and police details connected with the canal. The works would appear to have been constructed by forced labor, since all local officers are enjoined to furnish laborers, &c., without delay. To those, however, who complied with this requisition, water is promised during the season of cultivation, and for the entire year. How

this water was distributed is but faintly indicated. The Mir-ab was to determine the number of cuts necessary for each pergunnah, and in a spirit of equal justice, he is directed to be careful that all parties, rich or poor, strong or weak, share alike. From other sources of information, it is supposed that the amount of water-rent was rated according to the time the heads of the cuts, probably of fixed dimensions, remained open. While the necessities of the Zemindars were thus ministered to, the comfort of travellers was not forgotten; and it is directed, "that on both sides of the canal, down to Hissar, trees of every description, both for shade and blossom, be planted, so as to make it like the canal under the tree in Paradise, and that the sweet flavor of the rare fruits may reach the mouth of every one; and that from these luxuries a voice may go forth to travellers calling them to rest in the cities, where their every want will be supplied."



so much in the stirrup, that the wonder is his portfolio sent forth what it did. But he was a man of a large and plastic mind, and so readily adapted himself to external circumstances, that the transitions from the camp to the council-chamber but rarely disquieted and unhinged him.

The successor of this great and wise king was a monarch of a very different stamp. Jehanguire inherited the vast possessions of his father, but none of his father's greatness of soul. There was no element of greatness in his character. He was, indeed, a very little man. Inconstant and self-indulgent, easily pleased with trifles so that there was some stamp of novelty upon them, he lived a careless, sensual life; now excited by wine, now stupified by opium, oblivious of the responsibilities of his station, and regardless of the welfare of his people. But he made great progresses to Cashmere, and the way was made pleasant for him. His public works were such only as benefited himself. Around the elegant licentiousness of the voluptuous monarch the genius of the poet may throw a halo of romance, but all that the historian can say of him is, that he was a marvellously poor creature and a singularly bad king. It is true that there was one not unlike him, who wrote letters from "our palace of Westminster," beseeching him to cherish and support our English traders, by the continuance of his favorable assistance and protection; but I am not sure that the character of Jehanguire will gain much by the admission that he was not, either as a monarch or a man, worse than our first James.

The most interesting personage to be met with in all the annals of Mahomedan India is, doubtless, the Emperor Akbar; but it was during the reign of his grandson, Shah Jehan, that the Mogul Empire reached



its highest state of prosperity.* Old travellers, who found their way from Europe to the Empire of the Great Mogul, speak with rapture of the paternal government of Shah Jehan, and of the grandeur of the cities which dotted his vast empire. It was the good fortune of this prince to reap the benefit of his predecessor's conquests. He was not free from the distractions of war, but the wars in which he was engaged were for the most part carried on beyond the limits of his own dominions, so that they were not torn and desolated by the fierce conquests which, both before and after his reign, had rent and convulsed the provinces of Hindostan. If great public works were ever executed in India under the sway of the Moguls, it was whilst Shah Jehan ruled over the country from the Peacock throne of Delhi.

Shah Jehan was the cotemporary of our first Charles. Like that prince, he reigned for more than thirty years, and was then violently deposed. The Company of English merchants, who, under the sanction of his predecessor, had established factories at Surat and on the coast of Coromandel and Malabar, were struggling for a precarious existence against their powerful rivals, the Dutch. It would be difficult to exaggerate the idea which in those days was entertained by our countrymen of the power, wealth, and grandeur of the Great Mogul. Far above all kings and emperors, in the imaginations of men, ranked this mighty Eastern potentate; and two centuries later, the name of the Great Mogul capped, with its traditionary magnificence, those of all the potentates of the earth, in the nursery-sports of English children. Nor did the conception owe much to the prodigality of the imagina-

* "Khafi Khan, the best historian of those times, gives his opinion, that although Akbar was pre-eminent as a conqueror and lawgiver, yet, for the order and arrangement of his territory

and finances, and the good administration of every department of the state, no prince ever reigned in India that could be compared to Shah Jehan."—*[Elphinstone.]*



tion. The prince who covered acres of land with carpets of silk and gold, who reared above them stately pavilions glittering with emeralds and rubies, whose elephants and horses were lustrous with trappings of jewels and gold, whose crimson tents stretched out over long miles of level country, and whose throne the practised eyes of European lapidaries valued at six millions of English money, might well be regarded as the most magnificent sovereign of the earth. But magnificence is not benevolence. It must be admitted that the most lavish of our English viceroys has never been more than partially *sultanised*.* Our splendor is at best but tinsel and tawdriness beside the radiant magnificence of the Mogul Courts. We have never attempted to compete with them in this direction. Let credit be allowed them for their royal progresses—their stately palaces—their gorgeous tombs. The genius of our country does not display itself in demonstrations of this kind. But we have far greater wonders to show—far grander spectacles to exhibit. When we have got millions to spend, we do not lock them up in peacock-thrones.

Did these royal progresses benefit the people? I am very certain that they did not. The approach, indeed, of the Mogul camp was something like the dreaded descent of a great flight of locusts. The inhabitants of the country through which the Emperor progressed shrunk from the contact of the royal traveller. The honor may have been great, but the injury was greater. Even if the personal character of the monarch himself was such as to cause him to desire the full indemnity of the people, his influence was not sufficient to secure it. If his benevolence dictated

* Sir James Mackintosh spoke of Lord Wellesley as a "*sultanised* Governor-General." Lord Wellesley had as good an idea of vice-regal pomp as

any man who ever went out to India, but at best he was only a very little "Great Mogul."



payment to the uttermost *pice* of every one who supplied the royal camp, it may not uncharitably be doubted whether his satraps were equally scrupulous and equally honest. My impression is that the people paid heavily for the honor of these royal visits. There is one legend, at least, which favors the idea that the coming of the Great Mogul was looked upon almost with as much horror as English people, in these days, anticipate the approach of the Cholera. The Emperor had constructed a sort of regal hunting-box, at a place called, in his honor, Badshah-mehal. The waters of the Doab canal ran past it, and supplied its sporting fountains and its marble baths. Thither went Shah Jehan, with his courtiers and his servants, his wives and his concubines. Brief, however, was their rustication. From this pleasant retreat the Court, as tradition asserts, was soon scared away in fluttering confusion. At the foot of the hills, that disfiguring disease so well known among Alpine residents, the *goitre*, happened to be very common. There were some clever people in the neighbourhood of Badshah-mehal, who turned it to good account. Assembling a number of women so afflicted, they sent them into the Zenana with supplies. At the sight of the unseemly facial appendages with which these poor women were decorated, the ladies of the Court, filled with horror and pity, eagerly asked what had produced such cruel deformities. Well-instructed beforehand, the women answered, that the air and water of the place had caused these ailments—that no one ever escaped the affliction who resided long in these parts—and that the ladies would soon discover this unhappy truth for themselves. Such alarming intelligence as this burst like a loaded shell among the inmates of the Zenana. They soon appealed to the Emperor. Would he leave them in such a pestiferous country, to be so afflicted



and disfigured? Their entreaties are said to have prevailed. He sent them away from Badshah-mehal, spent a week or two in the surrounding forests, enjoying the pleasures of the chase, and then followed the ladies into a part of the country more favorable to the retention of their charms.* He never made his appearance in so dangerous a locality again.

Whether, after this mischance, the waters of the canal continued to flow in the direction of the regal hunting-box, does not very clearly appear. The ground upon which we here tread is rough with controversial asperities. They who, desiring to produce strong contrasts unfavorable to the British-Indian Government, greatly extol and exaggerate the beneficence of the Mogul Emperors, are ever pointing to the remains of the great aqueducts and reservoirs, which the traveller in India stumbles upon and pauses over; whilst another party, perhaps, with equal want of candor, declares that the Mogul princes were nothing better than selfish tyrants, and that all the roads which were made, all the trees that were planted, all the wells that were dug, all the caravanserais that were erected, and all the canals that were excavated by them, owed their origin to nothing more ennobling than a desire to render their journeys more agreeable and their residences more habitable to their Imperial Majesties themselves. In all probability, the truth is to be found midway between these two extremes. To a certain extent, both parties are right. The Mogul Emperors may not have been wholly unmindful of the interests of their subjects. They were never unmindful of their own. Fortunately for the former, the claims of the two were not wholly antagonistic. It

* I have borrowed this story from the article on "Canals of Irrigation in the North-West Provinces," in the *Calcutta Review*, No. XXIII. I have never met with it elsewhere; and it is probable that the ingenious and experienced writer derived it from local tradition.



the Emperor had shut himself up in a single palace, it is possible that the fine causeways and the noble aqueducts, over the remains of which we now shed our archæological tears, would not exist to agitate the sources of our regret. But as the Great Mogul was, by nature, of the peripatetic class—as he delighted in change of scene and change of residence—it was necessary that there should be roads over which to move the material mass of his leviathan camp, and it was desirable that the sultriness of his regal halting-places should be mitigated by baths and fountains, supplied with a constant flow of the refreshing element. The roads were made, and they benefited the people. The canals were dug, and they benefited the people. But when the Emperor ordered the construction of a road, or the excavation of a canal, and determined the direction which either should take, it may be doubted whether the line that was taken was always that which most promoted the internal traffic or the agricultural irrigation of the country. The personal convenience of the Emperor himself was of more account than the happiness and prosperity of the people. But the happiness and prosperity of the people were not wholly forgotten. The Mogul Emperors somewhat reversed the sentiment contained in Barlow's initiatory minute on the Regulations of 1793.* “It is a source of pleasing reflection,” they thought, “to know that in proportion as we contribute to the happiness of ourselves and the prosperity of the Court, the nearer we approach to these objects”—*i. e.*, the welfare of the people. The “principal object” of the Mogul Government was certainly not the happiness of the governed.

That Shah Jehan did much which in effect promoted the prosperity of the country, is not to be denied. He was aided by the greatest executive officer

* See *ante*, page 2.



who ever served a Mogul prince. Ali Murdan Khan, an architect and engineer, who would have been conspicuous in any age in any country, was at the Emperor's right hand. The Delhi canal was his work.* The Eastern Jumna, or Doab canal, is also said to be his work. The former appears to have been more or less in operation up to the year 1753. The efficacy of the latter was more short-lived. Indeed, it has been questioned whether it very long survived the panic of the Court ladies at the sight of the disfigured throats of the poor women who entered the Zenana with their

* I give the following account of the direction it took, and the countries it traversed, from an article, already quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, by the best historiographer of our Indian canals:

"Ali Murdan Khan's first line parted from Feroze's canal at a place called Madlonda, and pursuing a southerly course to Korana, it there entered an extensive natural hollow, the head of a great drainage line, and following that, in a highly embanked channel, as far as Gohana, it turned thence to the south-east by Intoula, and, nearly on the existing line, entered Delhi. On the first opening of the new canal, it was found that the embankments near Gohana were inadequate. The water, entering the great hollow there, found no efficient line of escape: it gradually rose over, and ultimately burst, the banks, and committing fearful devastation, destroyed the town of Lalpur, the extensive ruins of which are still to be seen in a hollow near Rohtuk. The inefficiency of the line having been thus fatally demonstrated, an entirely new channel was excavated from Rehr to Intoula, traversing the anticlinal ridge, or natural water-shed of the country, until it reached the vicinity of Bowana. Between this point and the city of Delhi, very low land intervenes; and to carry the canal successfully across this hollow much caution and skill were required. To give command over the supply, an escape or outlet was constructed at the upper extremity of the line of embankment, by opening which the surface-level of the canal could be greatly reduced. Over the lowest part of the hollow the canal was carried by a masonry aqueduct, be-

neath which the drainage-water of the country found escape. Clearing the low land, the canal wound for some distance along the base of the Aravulli hills, and, at a favorable point, boldly crossed this ridge by a channel cut through the solid rock, no less than sixty feet deep at the crest. It then flowed through the city in a masonry bed, throwing off to the right and left innumerable minor streams, by which the residences of the nobles, and the various divisions of the city, were abundantly supplied. Throughout the great halls, and courts, and private apartments of the imperial palace, the plentiful stream was carried in numerous channels, both above ground and below, supplying the graceful fountains, filling the marble baths, watering the rich fruits and flowers of the adjoining gardens, and adorning, throughout its entire extent, that truly regal abode in a manner worthy of the magnificent taste of its great architect.

"The success of Ali Murdan Khan's labors was complete. The immense number of old water-courses along the whole line of the Delhi canal show to how great an extent the agriculture of the country benefited by its existence. Traditions of incredible amounts of revenue having been realised from villages on its banks still linger among the people there; and a proverbialism, current at Delhi, intimates that the clear returns from the canal were sufficient for the maintenance of 12,000 horsemen. The permanent establishment, maintained for purposes of police and repair, consisted of numerous bildárs (diggers), 1000 armed peons, and 500 horse, stationed, under their officers, at points three or four miles apart."



supplies. But if the *goitre* had not destroyed it, there were engineering difficulties of too formidable a character to be surmounted even by Ali Murdan Khan; and though an attempt was made long afterwards to re-open it, it seems wholly to have failed.*

The reign of Shah Jehan may be regarded as the golden age of Mogul rule. Soon after his deposition, it was evident that the seeds of decay had been sown in that vast empire. Aurungzebe was a prince of greater energy of character; but it was not permitted to him to enjoy the blessings of repose, and to turn its opportunities to the advantage of the people. His reign was a long and troublous one. He lived in an atmosphere of strife. And what were the effects of these civil wars may be gathered from the letters of our own people. Industry was paralysed; trade was at a standstill. People buried their money in the ground: "It does not a little trouble us," wrote one of the Company's chief servants, "to pay nine per cent. interest for what money we shall be forced to take up for your account towards providing of goods for the next year, and at that rate little to be had, every one rather burying

* The following account of the Eastern Jumna, or Doab canal, is from the same source as the preceding note:

"In common with the Delhi branch, the construction of this canal is ordinarily attributed to Ali Murdan Khan. Its head was established immediately under the sub-Himalayan, or Sowalik hills; possession having been taken of an old bed of the river, bearing at this day the name of the 'Budha Jumna.' Passing by the hunting-palace of Shah Jehan, called Badshah-mehal, it entered the bed of the Raipur-nala, and, carried thence in an excavated channel across the Intunwala and Nowgong mountain torrents, it was thrown into a low ravine near the town of Behut, which it followed until it reached the head of the Muskurra river, near the village of Kulsia. Entering there upon the high land, the canal was carried past Saharanpur, Rampur, Jellalabad, Shamli, and other large towns, until it descended again into the valley of the Jumna, and, passing another imperial

palace at Ranup, fell into the river nearly opposite the city of Delhi. . . .

"The great difficulties at the head of the canal were doubtless beyond the skill of the Mogul engineers: and, as there are no signs of irrigation in the southern part, and no masonry works of any kind, it may be concluded that, after the first opening, which is said to have been followed by great injuries to the towns of Behut and Saharanpur, the attempt to maintain the supply was abandoned.

"About 1780, Zabita Khan, Rohilla, is said to have re-opened the channel, and to have brought a stream of water, through the bed of the Kirsunni river, to the site of the great city projected by him in the neighbourhood of Jellalabad, Thana Bhowan, and Lohari, in the district of Muzaffernuggur. But his canal could have been open only for a few months; and with the first rain-floods, it was doubtless seen that the difficulties were too formidable to be overcome."



their money than adventuring to trust it out in this time of war.”* And with good reason, too, was the treasure buried deep in the ground, for another of the old Company’s servants writes, about the same time, that “upon any occasion of war the king will either have the purses, or else purse and head.”† Nothing was more dangerous, in those days, than to be the possessor of a little available coin. The Mogul princes opened their loans at the edge of the scimeter.

In the eyes of the general body of Mahomedans, Aurungzebe stands upon a higher pinnacle of reputation than any one of his predecessors. He was the most magnificent of potentates, and the most arbitrary of despots. He was every inch a king, according to the Mussulman standard of consummate royalty. No man was more prodigal of money, or more prodigal of life. The gorgeousness of his Court, and the unscrupulousness of his acts, reached a height that had not been attained during the reign of his predecessors. By this time European intercourse with the countries of the East had greatly increased; and we have, therefore, more vivid and more faithful pictures of the splendor of Aurungzebe’s Court, and more detailed accounts of the general state of the empire during his reign, than the Mahomedan historians have handed down to us. And it must be acknowledged that no traveller, before or since, has dazzled the world with such a glitter of words, signifying gorgeous realities, as the pleasant French physician‡ who accompanied the royal camp from Delhi to Cashmere, and has told us in rapturous language, of the stately spectacle of Rowshera Begum, on her Pegue elephant, “glittering with gold and azure, followed by five or six other elephants almost as stately as her own,” and “a troop of Tartarian and

* Nathaniel Wyche to the Company, Feb. 14, 1658-59. *India House Records.* MS.

† Henry Revington and others to the Company, 1659. *India House Records.* MS.

‡ Bernier.



Cashmerian maids of honor around her person, all fantastically dressed."

But the only question to be considered is, what effect had all this upon the happiness of the people? It is certain that regal magnificence is no test of national prosperity. The wealth which was lavished upon all the sumptuous palaces and the panoramic camps of those restless Emperors, must have been primarily extracted from the people. How the imperial coffers were filled it is not difficult to conjecture. Some of the early Mogul conquerors enriched themselves by a series of stupendous burglaries. If we could trace the career of any particular emerald or ruby from the days of Mahmoud of Ghuznee to those of Shah Jehan, there are few who would not rather think of the costly jewel in the blaze of the peacock's tail, than in the deep obscurity of the bowels of a hideous idol. But we have no means, amidst so many broken dynastic chains, of establishing any imperial succession of this kind; and we might fairly assume, even if we had no positive evidence to rest upon, that, directly or indirectly, the people paid the price of all the gorgeous magnificence which rendered the Court of the Great Mogul a type of regal splendor throughout the whole of the civilised world. It is stated that the progresses of Shah Jehan had no perceptible effect upon his coffers—that all his vast undertakings, indeed, were managed with so much economy that he left an overflowing treasury, and a jewel-house groaning with wealth.* We may gather from this significant fact some idea of what it was that caused the people to regard with unmingled horror the approach of the Mogul Court. It would be curious to ascertain what was the amount of

* *Elphinstone*. Bernier computes the amount at something under £,000,000*l.* of our money, Khafi Khan at 24,000,000*l.*, "and," says the historian, in a note, "he is not likely to exaggerate, for he makes Shah Jehan's revenue 23,000,000*l.*, whilst it is generally reckoned to have been 32,000,000*l.*"



forced labor extracted from the people, and to what extent they were paid for their supplies. It is easy to "manage vast undertakings with economy," if little or nothing is to be paid for work or materials. And I hardly think that with such data before us—as costly expeditions undertaken at little cost, and the popular dread of the Emperor's approach—it is very unfair to assume that the rights of the people, inhabiting the country through which the despot dragged the cumbrous length of his gorgeous camp, were very slenderly regarded either by the sovereign himself, or the officers who attended his Court.*

That the Mogul Emperors left behind them some magnificent works, rests not merely on the authority of the Mahomedan historians. There are many picturesque evidences of the fact still patent to the senses of all who journey through the provinces of Hindostan. But only a small portion of these works ever conferred any substantial benefit on the people, and a still smaller portion were intended, primarily, to promote their happiness. If they did, it was more by accident than by design. Many of the works of which traces are still to be seen, were in active operation for any one's benefit but for an extremely short space of time. Many of them had served their purpose when a particular king ceased to migrate in a particular direction. There is nothing more remarkable, indeed, in this florid picture of Mahomedan beneficence, than the fact that there is nothing of a *sustained* character about it. The beneficence of the Mogul Emperors was personal and accidental. It was never the growth of any fixed principle inherent in the Government, and, as such, handed down from one representative of monarchical power to another; but was dependent ntirely on individual character, which was often only

* It is evident from Akbar's Canal in his time, were excavated by forced labor. Act, quoted *ante*, page 29, that canals,