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INDIA

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LORD ELLENBOROUGH.

INDIA is no longer the land of enchantment and romance —of exaggeration and wonder. It has been transferred from the realms of fancy to that of fact. For nearly a century its interests, real or supposed, have afforded topics for discussion to parliamentary orators and ephemeral writers. During that period, the readers of political journals have been at intervals excited by startling intelligence from the East; often of successes the most astonishing and unexpected, occasionally of reverses equally unlooked for. At one time our isle has been "frighted from its propriety" by denunciations of delinquency in the high places of India; at another, the tax-bearing people of Great Britain have been encouraged to look for relief to a country which the imagination pictured as the seat of riches, which no extravagance could exhaust, though exercised through as many millions of years as Hindoo chronology claims for the age of the earth. Gradually, however, the public mind settled down to more sober views, and at present there



seems more danger of the value and importance of India being underrated, than of their being estimated at an undue height.

As to the extent of country properly comprehended under the name of India, opinions may differ. In conformity with popular acceptance, its boundaries may be assumed as follows:—On the north, the mountains which form for a part of the line the southern boundary of Nepaul, and for the remainder, that of Chinese Tartary; on the south, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal; on the east, the territories constituting the Burman empire; and on the west, the river Indus for the more northern part, and the ocean for the southern. The country thus bounded extends into twenty-four degrees of latitude, and as many of longitude, and is estimated to contain a million and a quarter of square miles. Much of the land within this vast area is to be classed among the most fertile in the world, and it is overspread by an active and industrious population, the number of which cannot be reckoned at less than a hundred and fifty millions. The soil and climate are peculiarly suited to the production of various commodities, some of which are of high price, and some in universal demand. Among the latter may be mentioned cotton and sugar. Cotton might be produced in India to any extent that even the devouring appetite of the manufacturing districts of England and Scotland is likely to claim, and sugar to meet the demands of the whole world. The larger portion of this great and rich country renders homage to the Queen of Great Britain, and much of the remainder, though under princes nominally independent, is practically subject to the British Government.

For three centuries England has been endeavouring to extend its colonial dependencies. Myriads of Englishmen



have quitted their native shores for the desolate wastes of distant climes, there to extend the foundations of their country's greatness, and raise new out-posts for its maintenance. The reign of George III. witnessed the violent severance of the better portion of these offshoots from the parent stock. The North American colonies dissolved their connection with the land whence they had sprung; and the country which had previously constituted a main arm of the strength of Great Britain was thenceforward to become permanently a commercial rival, sometimes a political enemy. But the loss which was sustained in the West was compensated in the East. About the time when indications of the approaching conflict with America began to appear, the English in India exchanged the character of tenants of circumscribed factories for that of lords of extensive provinces. At the time when, after an inglorious war, the reluctant consent of the British sovereign was extorted to the acknowledgment of American independence, some additions had been made to the first acquisition, and before the close of his reign the British were paramount in India, exercising positive rule over the better part of the country, holding military possession of a portion of the rest, and overawing, by their predominant power and influence, the whole. It would be idle to discuss whether India is a colony or not. If not a colony, it is something better. If it be desirable to occupy distant lands in the name of England; slowly and laboriously, and at vast expense, to establish civilized communities in dependence upon the country which sends them forth, how much more desirable must it be to receive the transfer of a country, not only of immense extent, but of almost unbounded capacity of production, the natural fertility of which has been increased by the sedulous culture of ages, and where nothing is



wanting but that reformation in the "spirit of man," and that security to life, property, and industry, which European rule and that alone is able to give. "Ships, colonies, and commerce," were the objects declared to be specially sought by the man to whose genius and good fortune Europe, with one exception, succumbed. That exception was found in the country which, small in its extent, and limited in its natural resources, was mighty in the spirit of its sons, by whose courage and enterprise it had spread its limbs into every clime and covered every sea with its ships, richly freighted to meet the wants of every people. Napoleon, at least, understood the value of India; and happy would he have been to have wrested this precious possession from the "nation of shop-keepers," whom he at once despised, envied, hated, and feared.

India gives to Great Britain a vast accession of political power in reference to the other nations of Europe. If it were lost, the amount of loss would be incalculable and irretrievable. There is no empire on the opposite side of the world to be gained to compensate the privation, as was the case when the American colonies of Great Britain renounced their allegiance. If the British possessions of India were again over-run by native powers, the loss of them would be deeply felt; if transferred, in whole or in part, to any European rival, it would be felt still more deeply, inasmuch as that rival, whoever it might be, would gain to the extent of our loss. The loss in reputation would be greater even than that of dominion, and Great Britain would sink in the scale of European nations from a first to a third or fourth rate power. In this humble position, moreover, we must not expect to pursue our trade with India as now. The restoration of native governments would restore all the uncertainty, the vexation, the tyranny, and extortion



which they were wont to exercise towards merchants, and which they still exercise wherever they are not controlled or overawed by British influence. If the territory lost to England passed into European hands, our prospects would scarcely be better, seeing the almost universal jealousy of our trade which pervades Europe, and the wide-spreading confederacies which are formed against it. India now receives annually upwards of £5,000,000 in value of our manufactures. How much would be taken if our political connection were severed? India now affords employment to upwards of 200,000 tons of our shipping. What amount of tonnage would be thus occupied were the power of Great Britain not paramount in that country? The civil and military services of India open honourable sources of employment to many thousand Englishmen, all of them finding therein respectable means of subsistence, and some of them returning to their native land with decent competency for future years. Besides this, India remits annually a tribute of £3,200,000, to meet charges of various kinds defrayed at home. Among these charges are the dividends on East-India Stock, and the interest on East-India Bonds. Were India lost, what would be the fate of these dividends and this interest? Either the claimants must lose their property, or the nation must take the charge upon itself. Would the creditors of India be satisfied with the former branch of the alternative? Would the people of England, already complaining heavily of the pressure of taxation, and recently extricated from heavy financial embarrassment only by the re-establishment of an impost peculiarly offensive, and on that account always understood to be a special reserve for periods of war—would the people of England, thus taxed, thus relieved, be likely to submit to the latter? Would the millions who are *not* creditors



of India, but who would share in the common evils resulting from its loss, if lost unhappily it should be, be willing to take upon themselves the additional loss of the hundreds who *are* creditors? This is a question which, when the good government of India is concerned, should, in common prudence, never be absent from the minds of those who have a direct pecuniary interest in maintaining the existing relations between that country and England.

Besides the holders of East-India Stock and the bond creditors of the East-India Company, there is another class of persons interested in like manner in maintaining the peace and security of India in dependance upon Great Britain—the creditors under the various loans raised by the Indian Government at various times for various public objects. Part of these creditors are natives of India, or residents in that country, but part also are European born, and resident here. The interest upon their capital invested in India is remitted through private sources, and its amount is not readily ascertainable; it is, however, large. To the head of private remittances, must also be added the savings of individuals in India sent or brought home for investment, and the whole must be combined with the sums remitted for public purposes, before we can know the total amount of the wealth which India annually renders to her European protector in return for the advantages bestowed on her by the connection. Politically, commercially, and financially, then, the safety of India is an object of paramount importance to Great Britain. Territory, power, and wealth are the adjuncts of the connection, and unless infatuation, like that which lost America, prevail, every effort will be made to preserve it. Territory equal in extent to Europe, if the dominions of Russia, Sweden, and Denmark be excluded; power rivalling that of Rome in its



brightest days, and surpassing that of any other country whose history is on record; wealth in all the abundance that can flow from natural advantages improved by active commerce; these are the gifts of India to Great Britain, and the full measure of their value is not yet enjoyed. Under British protection, India will become every year more settled, more peaceful, more industrious, and more prosperous. Its territory will receive the advantages of better cultivation, its revenue will increase, its facilities for commercial intercourse will be multiplied and extended; it will become more free from internal commotion and less readily assailable by external force; all British institutions there will acquire that stability which time only can bestow, and while the possession of this noble appanage of Great Britain may still excite, as it has before excited, the envy of other powers—though such feeling may increase with the advance of that whereon it feeds, it will but become more impotent as India shall become more valuable and more closely bound to the country which is destined, as we trust, to be the instrument of promoting—gradually and safely, but not less surely—its progress in all that can conduce to its permanent happiness.

Most extraordinary is the subjection of India to Great Britain. It is extraordinary in its origin and progress, for the dominion was not sought, but almost forced on the possessor. It is the result, not of any deeply laid plan of policy, but of circumstances which no one could or did foresee. It is extraordinary, again, in regard to the means by which the dependant country has been brought into obedience to its superior, and by which the authority of the latter is maintained. The instrument by which these objects have been effected is an army, commanded, indeed, by British officers, but composed of native troops



—of men differing from those whom they serve in descent, in language, in creed, in modes of thought, in habits of life—in every thing, in short, in which man can differ from man;—some of them fierce and fanatical in the extreme, all of them intensely imbued with prejudice, calculated to shock the feelings of their rulers on the one hand, and on the other, to render those rulers objects of contempt to the masses below them—yet all rendering prompt and cheerful obedience, patient under privation, brave in action, in all situations dutiful, and even affectionate, where not irritated by ill-treatment. Such is the army of India—such is the composition of that force which has been the chief instrument of winning for Great Britain its gorgeous eastern empire. Before the experiment was made, such an army would have been judged to be but a rope of sand; yet it is by an agency which, while untried, must have been deemed so unsuitable to the purpose, that Divine Providence has transferred the sceptre of India from Mahometan and Hindoo rulers, born in the land in which they held sway, to the Christian sovereign of a small kingdom, distant thousands of miles.

The extraordinary circumstances which mark this connection do not end here. Not only is it, in ordinary language, accidental, but it is anomalous. Great empires have arisen from small beginnings. The sword of the conqueror has sometimes been rapid as well as widely sweeping in its achievements. But India has been added to the dominions of the British crown, not by the wisdom or the good fortune of the servants of that Crown—of its acknowledged and accredited ministers—but by the labours of a small and, for a long period, an obscure body of British subjects, who, seeking for themselves the profits of mercantile adventure, have given to their country the most magnificent boon ever bestowed.



At the very close of the sixteenth century, a period when the commercial spirit was superseding that passion for military adventure which formed the distinguishing feature of the middle ages, but when commerce itself, as Coleridge has observed, partook of the character of romance, a small association of merchants, stimulated by the successes of the Portuguese and the Dutch, obtained a charter from the Crown for carrying on an exclusive trade with India. At this time, when the authority of the Crown, though theoretically subjected to constitutional checks, was in practice little controlled by them; when the chief, if not the principal, business of the House of Commons was understood to be that of granting money to supply the necessities of the sovereign, and when they were not safe from reproof if they presumed to interfere with matters which were regarded at court as beyond their sphere and above their capacity, the association gave an early and notable proof of independence. It is of small importance in regard to their commercial history, but as illustrating the spirit which they displayed when humble petitioners for favour at the hands of a sovereign all but absolute, it is not altogether irrelevant to a part of the inquiry to which the attention of the reader will shortly be called. The petitioners had been encouraged to make preparations for a voyage while their patent of incorporation was under consideration. But the kindness of the Government extended further than this. Whether with a view to benefit the Company, or to promote the interests of an individual, the Queen's advisers recommended Sir Edward Mitchelbourne for employment in the proposed expedition; the committee who managed the affairs of the subscribers—the germ of the present Court of Directors—refused their consent, at the very moment when they were applicants for an exercise of



royal indulgence; when they hung on the breath of the sovereign for corporate existence, they repelled the attempted dictation of the Queen's servants as to the agents whom they should employ in the conduct of their affairs. They put in peril the grant which they sought rather than compromise their independence. The example thus furnished by the authorities of the East-India Company when feebly struggling into existence, should never be absent from the minds of their successors.

While this manifestation of independence was honourable to the Company, it was scarcely less honourable to the Queen's ministers that they abstained from resenting it as an offence. The charter applied for was granted, and the Company commenced its operations. But it was no safe or easy path which the petitioners had obtained the royal sanction to pursue. They went forth as traders, but as warriors also. They had formidable enemies in those nations who had preceded England in the enjoyment of the commerce of the East, and with the Portuguese their conflicts were frequent and sanguinary. In the Dutch they encountered not only commercial rivalry and open hostility, but cruelty and perfidy; and the murder of several British subjects (servants of the Company) by the Dutch Government of Amboyna, perpetrated as the result of a pretended judicial inquiry, attests but too well the malignity with which the new adventurers were regarded and the fearful extent to which it was carried.

Nor was it abroad only that the Company had to contend with dangers and difficulties. At home, though addressed less powerfully to the feeling of physical fear, they were neither few nor trifling. The rights secured, or thought to be secured, by royal charter, were repeatedly invaded under royal authority. New associations were



empowered to compete for a share in the trade which had been given to the Company by a solemn act of the Crown, and, in addition to these breaches of faith, the funds of the Company were sometimes put in requisition to meet the exigencies of the state.*

Amidst all these discouragements and embarrassments the Company kept on, sometimes on the verge of destruction and never enjoying any long immunity from difficulty. They established settlements, some of which were lost; while others, Fort St. George and Fort William, remained to become the seats of powerful governments. From the British Crown they received the Island of Bombay, which had been part of the marriage portion of Catherine of Portugal, wife of Charles II., and this was the only territorial acquisition which the Company ever acquired through the English Government. All besides was gained by their own exertions, and the courage and military talent of their servants. Rarely did any long interval elapse without some occasion calling those qualities into exercise. The Company were engaged in hostilities, sometimes with the Mahrattas, sometimes with the Moguls, and with various fortune. Triumph now attended their arms, and now their factories were plundered and burned, and their servants

* On one occasion the sovereign engaged in a transaction with the Company of very questionable character. Charles I., in want of money to carry on the disputes with the Parliament, adopted the extraordinary expedient of supplying his necessities by resorting to a practice, not unfrequent with bankrupt or swindling traders, but which, it is to be hoped, is almost or entirely without parallel in the annals of public finance. He bought the Company's stock of pepper on credit, and sold it immediately for ready money, at a loss of about thirteen thousand pounds. A small part of this debt was subsequently allowed to the Company as a set-off against a claim for customs duties, but the greater part appears to have been lost.



slain or made prisoners. At home their difficulties did not abate. A new company was raised and incorporated, and the old one was compelled to save itself from dissolution by consenting to a union of the two. Thus arose (1709), "The United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies," which in the course of years became the most powerful corporation which the world had ever seen.

For more than a quarter of a century after the junction, the Company was silently acquiring power and importance and stability. Their credit was found useful in ministering to the necessities of the state by loans granted in consideration of their exclusive privileges; but excepting with regard to the aid which the Company were thus enabled to furnish, those who were intrusted with the administration of public affairs in England seem to have bestowed little thought upon India. A striking illustration of this occurred in the year 1746, when Fort St. George was suffered to fall into the hands of the French. Some petty additions had been made to the British naval force in the Indian seas, but they were inadequate. From advices received by the Court of Directors, that body became convinced of the necessity of further reinforcements. The subject was urgently pressed upon the attention of the Admiralty, but the answer was, that the fears entertained by the Court were groundless, and that no French ships had sailed for the East Indies. Slowly and reluctantly, some preparation was after a time commenced, but it was too late. News arrived that the celebrated La Bourdonnais had sailed with a fleet from the Mauritius, and the next intelligence was, that he had taken Fort St. George, which was only recovered by the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

The Company had, however, by this time, with little



assistance from the state to which they belonged, established a high confidence in the British name; and even at this early period, though it would be ridiculous to dignify their small possessions by the name of territory, they were regarded as having a political existence, and their alliance and support were on more than one occasion invoked by native princes. This result was undoubtedly favoured by the peculiar state of society in India, where almost any one who could collect a body of armed followers might aspire to something of a princely character, and where both landed and monied capitalists frequently found it necessary to resort to such means for their safety. But the tact with which the Company and their servants conformed to this and other native habits was remarkable, while, by engrafting on an eastern stock the spirit, energy, and discipline of Europe, they were silently, but deeply, laying the foundations of the Anglo-Indian empire, as it now exists. The rivalry of the French kept them constantly on the alert; the memorable contests for the Soubahdarship of the Deccan and the Nabobship of Arcot gave strength and coherence to their military establishments; and the disastrous capture of Calcutta by Sooraj-oo-Dowlah, with the murderous horrors of the Black Hole, did but afford occasion for the British power, exercised and maintained by the British East-India Company, to spring into a degree of vigour and security greater than had previously been known. The military genius of the young writer, ROBERT CLIVE, unexpectedly developed by the circumstances among which he had been thrown with far different views, shed lustre on the Company's service, while it upheld their power and influence. The Great Mogul Empire was now breaking up, and the address of Clive procured for those whom he served the gift of



the Dewanny* of three of its richest provinces. The territory known as the Northern Circars was also added to the dominions of the Company.

In looking back from this period at the history of the Company, it is impossible not to be impressed by its singularity. For more than a hundred years their career had been an almost unbroken series of difficulties and misfortunes. For upwards of thirty years afterwards they enjoyed comparative ease, but little distinction. The calm was broken by calamity—the loss of one of their most important settlements. The misfortune was overcome; the Company advanced from the position of an Association of Foreign Traders to that of one of the political powers of India, and in about fifteen years to that of a leading power. This rank was gained, after a series of contentions with an European rival, powerful, ambitious, and of military habits, by men whose chief business in India was not the acquisition of territory, and who belonged to a nation less influenced by the love of conquest than any of its neighbours. Power and dominion of equal extent were never in any other instance acquired with so little of aggression. Circumstances favoured the aggrandizement of the Company, and those circumstances were prudently watched and carefully improved.

The Dewanny was acquired in 1765. The news of the acquisition, as might be expected, had a powerful effect on the members of the Company at home. But the elation was not confined to them, it extended to the nation at large, and wherever a newspaper found its way, the most extravagant visions of wealth to be derived from England's new possessions were raised and entertained. The enormous for-

* The Dewanny was the right of collecting the revenues; and as he who enjoys the profits of the land is virtually its master, the gift was, in fact, the transfer of the provinces themselves, Bengal, Behar, and Orissa.



Lunes acquired by a few individuals in India, within periods which seemed inadequate to their accumulation, unless rupees were to be picked up on the highway, tended to feed these imaginings, which did not, as might have been supposed, prevail exclusively among the more ignorant part of the community; the Cabinet and the Parliament shared in them, and bent an anxious eye towards the mine of inexhaustible treasure, which it was believed the East-India Company had found. The proprietors of India Stock called loudly for increased dividends. The Court of Directors prudently discouraged the desire, and in this they were supported by the ministry; the latter body, however, intending, when time and opportunity should suit, to pounce upon the acquisitions, which it was soon murmured were unfit to be retained by a Commercial Company, and which, indeed, it was asserted, the Company, as subjects of the King of Great Britain, could not legally possess. Had a strong ministry at that time existed, it is probable that a desperate attempt would have been made to transfer India from the care of the East-India Company to that of the immediate servants of the Crown, the revenue expected therefrom being much wanted to supply the Home Exchequer, and the patronage being, in ministerial eyes, still more desirable even than the revenue. But the ministries which for some successive years went into office and came out again—for so brief was their tenure of employment and so insecure at all times their position, that it is more accurate thus to advert to them than to speak of their having *held* office—these evanescent administrations, which appeared and vanished like figures in a phantasmagoria, were all so weak, that it was with some difficulty that they could be held together till the next succeeding change was ripe, and they were, consequently, not in a condition to



peril the utter wreck of their miserable craft, by bearing down directly on the East-India Company. Further, there was at that time a spirit abroad among the public out of Parliament, so utterly hostile to any thing that should tend to increase the power or influence of the Crown, that an attack upon the revenues of India, if accompanied by any considerable extension of ministerial patronage, would probably have raised a storm, more violent than any—and they were neither few nor light—which the advisers of the Crown had to encounter. There was, however, a great show of doing something. Papers were called for, inquiries instituted, resolutions moved, and Acts for limiting the amount of the dividends of the East-India Company passed. Hints of something further were thrown out, and Alderman Beckford, a man whose wealth exceeded his knowledge as far as his popularity transcended his modesty, was chosen as the mouth-piece of one of the sections of political party to claim for himself and his “brother landholders” the revenues of India as lawful spoil. Behind the curtain which veils the proceedings of cabinets from vulgar gaze, intrigues were going on for effecting covertly, that which it was not convenient or safe to attempt openly. Not only were the public excluded from all knowledge of these mysteries, but even those most closely interested in the subject of them—the Court of Directors of the East-India Company. Commissions were secretly despatched to India, designed to supersede the authority of the Company. The consequence was, that at Madras, the scene chosen for this singular specimen of diplomacy, the servants of the Company and the servants of the Crown became involved in fierce disputes, to the astonishment of native powers and the discredit of the British name. The Governor and Council remained and exercised their



powers as before. The King's commissioner came, and though he did not presume to set aside the former authorities, he acted in perfect independence of them. Madras rivalled Brentford with its two kings, saving that, at the former place, instead of amicably smelling to one nosegay like the polite potentates of the latter, the governor and the commissioner pursued opposite lines of policy, and gave and received mutual affronts in a manner calculated to afford to the natives a most edifying impression of the manner in which public affairs were managed in England.

A ministry which seemed to enjoy a firmer seat than any which had for some time preceded it, at length ventured upon a step somewhat more decisive than had been attempted before. Lord North, whose political courage was far greater than his political success, was the premier under whose auspices the Act of 13 George III., called the Regulating Act, was passed. The minister who lost the dependencies of the British Crown in America undertook to provide for the good government of the people of India, newly transferred to British rule. The augury was not the most happy, but the bill was, upon the whole, better than its paternity might be supposed to indicate. It made great changes in the constitution of the East-India Company, some of them improvements; but the alterations effected in India were marked by a right ministerial love of patronage. The Government of Bengal, the chief settlement, and the seat of the controlling authority, was vested in a governor and council named in the bill,—consequently named by the minister; the council consisted of five, two of whom were servants of the Company, but three—a standing majority—were either friends whom the party which then held the reins of power at home wished to benefit, or enemies whom they wished to conciliate. It has



been conjectured, with some probability, that one of the three* was the author of a series of political letters, distinguished alike by their wit, eloquence, and acrimony, directed during several years against various unpopular public men, and even the august personage whom they served, or wished to serve; and that the appointment to India was the price of his silence. This, however, is but conjecture; but the fact is indisputable, that in re-modelling the Government of India, under the Regulating Act, one prominent object, if not the most prominent, was to open for the minister an entry to the patronage of that country—that patronage which he and his predecessors had so long and so ardently coveted. The nomination of the Council of Bengal, which the ministers enjoyed, under cover of a parliamentary majority, was not all they gained. A new source of patronage was devised in the erection of a Supreme Court of Judicature at Calcutta, where English law was to be administered by English judges, nominated by the Crown and rewarded by large salaries. Into the consequences that followed, this is not the place to inquire; the subject is noticed only in reference to patronage. But though this famous Regulating Act bore on its face the unequivocal stamp of jobbing, it is not to be inferred from this fact (no extraordinary one) that interference on the part of the Crown or the Parliament with the newly-acquired authority of the East-India Company was altogether to be condemned. The acquisition of the Dewanny and of other territorial rights had changed the character and circumstances of the Company. The Crown and the country had become materially interested, and it was quite right that provision should be made for securing the honour and interest of

* Sir Philip Francis, believed by many to have been the author of Junius's letters.



For this purpose it was required, that all the Company's correspondence relating to civil or military affairs, the government of the country, or the administration of the revenues, should be laid before the Treasury by one of the secretaries of state. This was certainly not more than might reasonably have been expected. The East-India Company was not to become an independent sovereign, nor was the Dewanny to be looked upon as its private estate, which it might manage, alienate, or retain at its pleasure. The territory gained in India was to be regarded as an integral part of the British empire. The Company were not to establish an *imperium in imperio*; they had a right to expect to continue stewards of the domain, and it was for the benefit of both countries that they should; but, like all other stewards, they must account. The great evil of the Act of 1773 was, that it interfered injuriously, as well as offensively, with the exercise of the functions of the Company, by giving to India a parliamentary council; but there was this source of consolation, that the arrangement was temporary. It was renewed by an Act passed in 1779, and again by another in 1780, on each occasion for one year. The ministry were too insecure and too much embarrassed by their ill success in America, and the torrent of public indignation which followed, to think of tightening their grasp upon the patronage of India. They had reason for congratulation in being able to keep things as they were. This much they were able to effect. In 1781 another Act was passed for temporarily regulating the government of India and the affairs of the East-India Company, and two* parliamentary

* It seems to have been the prevailing opinion of the day, that India committees must necessarily hunt in couples. A few years before a similar nomination of two committees, carrying on their inquiries simultaneously, was ridiculed by Burke, who compared them



committees, one secret and one open, were appointed to investigate the Company's affairs. These continued to inquire and report, while rapid changes passed over the political system. The manifold blunders and failures of the American war at length precipitated Lord North from the seat of power. The Marquis of Rockingham succeeded, but his death was attended by the death of his administration. The Earl of Shelburne then took the reins of power, but was soon obliged to drop them; when they were caught up by an administration strong (as far as a combination of powerful families could confer strength) beyond any which had preceded it, and perhaps any which has followed. The great Whig party under Mr. Fox, and the party which had for a long period acted under Lord North, had coalesced, and those who had for years denounced each other as enemies of the country, now entered the cabinet arm-in-arm. The statesman, whose policy had dismembered the empire, and his eloquent rival, who had declared that for that policy he deserved to lose his head, divided between them the secretarial duties of the state. A Whig nobleman,* potent in wealth, took his seat at the Treasury as the ostensible head of this motley cabinet; the remaining offices were allotted among the adherents of the two great chiefs, who, like the two ladies in Canning's burlesque of the German drama, had suddenly made up their minds to swear an eternal friendship. This ministry, proudly conscious of its strength, felt no hesitation in screwing its courage to the point of grappling with the to two parts of a smoke-jack—the one committee, whose proceedings, it seems, were slow, to the weight—the other, who were more vivacious, and, in the language of the great statesman, went “like hey! go mad,” to the flyer, and he concluded that by the combined operation the Company were to be roasted.

* The Duke of Portland.

East-India Company ; and one of the boldest and most extraordinary plans ever devised for aggrandizing a political association at the expense of chartered rights, public liberty, and royal prerogative, was the result of their councils. It proposed to take away from the Company all their political power, and to vest it in the hands of commissioners, to be named in the first instance by Parliament. But, further, the Company were not even to retain the management of their commercial concerns. These were to be committed to another set of commissioners, also to be named in the first instance by Parliament, and who were to act in subordination to the political commissioners. The entire patronage of India was thus to be transferred to the nominees of the Coalition Ministry, who already commanded the votes of about two-thirds of the House of Commons, and, thus fortified, might soon have increased their majority to nine-tenths of that assembly. But the very step meant to render them unassailable proved the cause of their overthrow. Beyond the walls of Parliament they had no party ; public opinion was universal and clamorous against the Coalition Ministry and its favourite child, the India Bill. At court they were in no better odour than in the country ; the King hated them, and this monster bill afforded him the means of getting rid of them. It passed the Commons triumphantly, and though warmly opposed in the Lords, would have passed there also but for the sudden announcement of the King's hostility. This induced the Peers to pause ; the King availed himself of the pause to dismiss his ministry, and call a new one to his councils, and thus was turned aside this fearful blow, aimed not at the East-India Company only, but at the independence of Parliament, the liberties of the people, and the dignity of the Crown. The new ministers were of



course in a minority in the House of Commons, and a bill introduced by them for the government of India necessarily failed. But a new Parliament was called, and the result of the elections gave them a triumphant majority, by the aid of which an Act was passed (1784) which was the foundation of the system under which, with some slight occasional modifications, India has been governed down to the present time. Under this Act the Court of Directors were to continue to conduct the government of India, as well as their own commercial concerns; but in exercising the former duty, their Acts were to be subject to the approbation of a Board, composed of persons nominated by the Crown. There were certain exceptions to the exercise of the authority both of the Court and the Board. Affairs requiring secrecy were to be withdrawn from the cognizance of the Court at large, and transacted by the Board, through a secret committee chosen by the Court of Directors from their own body. The discretion of the Board was, however, limited by defining the subjects on which secret orders were to be given—they were declared to be “the levying of war or making of peace, or treating or negotiating with any native princes or states of India.”* Further—the Board were to have nothing to do with the general patronage of India. The right of making nominations, whether to the civil or military services, was reserved exclusively to the Court of Directors.†

* Extended by 3 & 4 Will. IV., cap. 85, by adding the words “or with any other princes or states touching the policy to be observed with respect to such princes or states.”

† This was in accordance with the judgment of the greatest and wisest statesmen who have thought on the subject. In a speech of Burke, made in July, 1773, and reprinted from an old magazine, in the ‘Portfolio’ for November, 1844, that distinguished man thus expresses himself:—“God knows, that the places, and pensions, and expectances furnished by the British establishment, are too powerful



It has not been the practice for the Court to interfere with the subsequent progress of those admitted to the services, but to leave their advancement to the established rules of promotion and the discretion of the local governments. There is an exception to this in the case of members of the councils of the chief and subordinate presidencies. To these offices the Court have invariably appointed in conformity with the provisions of the law on the subject.

As no useful purpose would be answered by minutely tracing the slight variations made in the law previously to the year 1833, it will be most convenient to proceed at once to that important era in the history of the Company when their trade, thrown open as to India in 1813, was entirely suspended. But when this great commercial revolution took place, the government of India was continued in the East-India Company, on conditions little varying from those previously imposed. The Board, the Court, and the Secret Committee, with their respective rights and duties, as already explained, are still preserved. The powers

for the small remains of patriotism and public spirit that remain in our island. What then will become of us, if Bengal, if the Ganges pour in a new tide of corruption? Should the evil genius of British liberty so ordain it, I fear this House will be so far from removing the corruption of the East, that it will be corrupted by them. I dread more from the infection of that place, than I hope from your virtue. Was it not the sudden plunder of the East that gave the final blow to the freedom of Rome? What reason have we to expect a better fate? I conjure you by every thing a man ought to hold sacred; I conjure you by the spirits of your forefathers, who so nobly fought and bled for the cause for which I now plead, I conjure you by what includes every thing—by your country—not to yield to the temptations which the East, in the hands of the Crown, holds out—not to plunge into the gulf of corruption, and drag after you your posterity—your country."



of the chief local government have been considerably extended, and the parties comprising it are termed the Governor-General of India in Council. The Governor-General and the governors of the subordinate presidencies, under this and former Acts, are appointed by the Court of Directors, subject to the approbation of the Crown. The appointment of Commander-in-Chief of the forces of India, and of provincial commanders-in-chief, also rests with the Court, subject to the like approbation. The members of the respective councils are appointed as before, with the exception of an additional member to the Council of India, whose office is created by the Act last named, and whose appointment by the Court is made subject to the approbation of the Crown.

It will be evident, from the above sketch, that the policy adopted by successive Parliaments, from the year 1784 downwards, has been to secure to the Court of Directors of the East-India Company a large and responsible share in the government of that country, and that to that end very extensive powers have been reserved to the Court. Among the most important of these is the power of recall. This power, indeed, is inherent in the Company. It is a portion of its original authority, the exercise of which it has always enjoyed, with the exception of a few years after the passing of the Regulating Act, when it was temporarily suspended with regard to the Governor-General and his Council, in order that the nominees of the ministry might retain their appointments. But during the same period, the power of appointing members of Council was also suspended, except with the approbation of the Crown; and even in those evil times when corruption was rampant, and legislation was directed rather to private than public objects, the renewal of the right both of nomination and removal was expressly



provided for.* Decency—even according to the standard of decency then prevailing in political circles—required this much. Except in the charters to which the Company traces its original constitution, this right of recall is nowhere pretended to be given or created; it is, throughout the statutory enactments affecting the Company, recognized as something previously existing, an undoubted and unquestionable right. It is thus referred to in the 33 Geo. III. (1793), chap. 52, where a section (35) giving to the Crown the power of recall is succeeded by another (36) which runs thus:—"Provided always, and be it further enacted, that nothing in this Act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to preclude or take away the power of the Court of Directors of the said Company from removing or recalling any of the officers or servants of the said Company, but that the said Court shall and may at all times have full liberty to remove, recall, or dismiss any of such officers or servants at their will and pleasure, in the like manner as if this Act had not been made, any Governor-General, Governor, or Commander-in-Chief, appointed by his Majesty, his heirs or successors, through the default of appointment by the said Court of Directors always excepted;† any thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding." A similar proviso is found in the Act 53 Geo. III., chap. 155, sec. 80, wherein, after the right of the Court to appoint to the offices of Governor-General, Governor, and Commander-in-Chief, has been re-assured to the Court, subject to

* "And from and after the expiration of the said term of five years, the power of nominating and removing the successors of Governor-General and Council shall be vested with the Directors of the said United Company."—13th Geo. III., cap. 62, sec. 10.

† If the Court neglect to appoint to these offices within a limited period, the right of appointment (for that turn) lapses to the Crown.



the approbation of the Crown, the Act continues, "Provided always that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to take away or affect the power of the said Court of Directors to remove or recall any such Governor-General, Governor, or Commander-in-Chief, but the said Court shall and may at all times have full liberty to remove, recall, and dismiss any such Governor-General, Governor, or Commander-in-Chief, at their will and pleasure, in the like manner as if this Act had not been made." Again, in the 3 & 4 William IV., chap. 85, an Act effecting greater changes in regard to the Company than any other passed from the commencement of its existence, the right of recall is not less distinctly recognized. The 74th section secures the right of the Crown in this respect, the 75th reserves that of the Court of Directors. "Provided always, and be it enacted, that nothing in this Act contained shall take away the power of the said Court of Directors to remove or dismiss any of the officers or servants of the said Company, but that the said Court shall and may at all times have full liberty to remove or dismiss any of such officers or servants, at their will and pleasure." The remainder of the section exempts from recall by the Court, as before, any servant of the Company appointed by the Crown, in consequence of the default of the Court to appoint.

The power of the Court to recall is indeed so clear, that to argue in defence of it may seem like an ostentatious lighting of lamps amid the blaze of a noon-day sun. An array of authority, on a point so indisputable, may appear entirely superfluous, and it would be so, but for the extraordinary statements which are reported to have been made on the subject. It is said to have been stated that the retention of a free exercise of the power of recall by the



Court "must have resulted from an oversight,"* that the law upon this point "was renewed without consideration," or "at all events without discussion."† Now, it must have been a very extraordinary oversight which could lead to the continuance of such a power for sixty years after the government of India became the subject of permanent regulation, and could not only so continue the power, but recognize it over and over again in solemn acts of the Legislature. These recognitions, indeed, are *mere* recognitions—they convey no new power: they only bear testimony to the existence of one previously possessed. But to talk of "oversight" in the face of these recognitions is surely trying the possible effect of bold assertion, far beyond the limits of common prudence. A clause, like this, solemnly recognizing a power so great and important, slipping into an Act of Parliament—aye, into several Acts of Parliament—no one knows how, is a fact, if fact it be, somewhat startling. Such a fact is surely without parallel, except in the case of Dibdin's Jew, who, on his return from a walk, finding a gold watch in his pocket which was not there when he set out, records the discovery in his journal with the quiet comment, "dropt in by accident." And so it seems that this clause found its way into Act after Act, and no one could account for it. There it stood plain and clear as the type of the royal printer could make it, to sear the eyeballs of those who loved it not; but how it came there they knew no more than that mysterious personage who is said to inhabit the lunar planet—"dropt in by accident!" But then the clause was renewed, in the last instance at least, (in 1833), "without consideration," or "at all events without discussion." The proof offered of this is, that upon refer-

* See Hansard's Debates, vol. 74, p. 276.

† Ibid. vol. 74, p. 345.



ence to the *Mirror of Parliament* for that year, it does not appear that there was a single word said about it in either House.* This may be quite true, but it only proves that the clause passed without parliamentary discussion. It does not prove that those who framed the Act or those who passed it were ignorant of what they were doing—that the extent of the power in question, and the possibility of its being called into exercise, were altogether overlooked. To prove this, the eminent person whose hostility to the clause induced him thus to account for its introduction is reported to have said, “I have looked into the papers of the correspondence between the Directors and the Board of Control, and there is not one single word said of it in these on either side; and I have looked into the debates of 1784, when Mr. Pitt first brought in the bill containing this ill-omened clause, *for it was in that originally*, and I find not one single word said on either side in either House.”† Now the papers of correspondence between the Directors and the Board here referred to are undoubtedly those connected with the renewal of the Company’s government and the suspension of their trade, effected by the Act of 1833, which papers were printed by order of the Court of Directors for the information of the Proprietors, and collected in a volume, the title-page of which bears the date of that year. These papers, it is alleged, have been “looked into,” and found to afford no trace of the subject of recall by the Court having undergone any consideration; “there is not one single word said of it in them on either side.” The look bestowed on these papers must certainly have been very transient and cursory, for it does happen, that instead of containing “not one single word” on the subject,

* See Hansard, vol. 74, p. 345.

† Hansard, vol. 74, p. 345.



they contain several words, which words occur in at least three different places. At page 4, in a "Memorandum, or paper of hints," transmitted to the Chairman of the Company by the President of the Board, the following passage presents itself: "Appointment of governors subject, as now, to the approbation of the King, but the Board to have a veto on the recall. The same with regard to commanders of the forces." It seems then that the subject was not overlooked by the ministers,—nor was it by the members of the Court. At page 127 of the volume, the following passage occurs in a dissent recorded by Henry St. George Tucker, Esq.: "The retention of the power to recall governors and commanders-in-chief appears to me to be highly essential to the respectability and efficiency of the Court of Directors. This power has been rarely exercised, and there can be no temptation to abuse it; but if it be withdrawn, the public functionaries abroad may set at nought the authority of the Court, and may hold us in contempt. A governor may be lavish in the public expenditure, may think only of providing for his own dependents or those of the ministry, may be indolent and inactive, or arbitrary and capricious in the exercise of his powers, and notwithstanding these and other defects of character and conduct, he will retain firm possession of his station, as long as he can succeed in propitiating the ministry of the day, who may be interested in his continuance of office, and even derive influence and advantage from his mal-administration." Again, at page 187, it will be found that the President of the Board, in replying to a letter from the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of the Company, thus expresses himself: "I do not know if the words 'exercising the same powers as the Company now possess under their charter' are here introduced



with any specific reference. To the general propositions which they express, his Majesty's ministers have, through me, repeatedly declared their adherence, and they are not aware that it is, in the slightest degree, impaired by any modification they contemplate in the existing system. Whatever changes Parliament may in its wisdom see fit to adopt, will, I doubt not, be made without detriment to the substantial authority of the Company. It is possible that the words in question have been inserted in consequence of the hint thrown out in the memorandum, that the Board should have a veto on the recall of governors and military commanders in India. In order to obviate misconstruction, I avail myself of this opportunity to inform you, that it is not the intention of his Majesty's ministers to insist on the suggestion just mentioned."

And was the insertion then of the provision of recognition in the new Act an "oversight?"—was the retention of an unqualified power of recall by the Court allowed "without consideration?" Above we have an official suggestion from the ministry for the modification of the power—an argument against its modification by a member of the Court of Directors, and finally a formal withdrawal of the proposal for modification by the authority from whom the proposal came—and all these are contained in the volume which was searched without one single word on the subject being found!

Let us pass on to the consideration of the statement, that the clause recognizing the right of the Court to recall was originally in the Act of 1784, and that, notwithstanding, nothing was said on the subject in the course of the debates in either House. Here, unfortunately, is manifested a defect of vision exactly opposite in nature to that which prevailed when the correspondence on the renewal of the



Company's powers in 1833 was examined. In the correspondence, that which is obvious to all the world besides, is unseen by the examiner. In the Act of 1784, that which no one else can discern is distinctly visible. Like him

“Who to the Dean and silver bell can swear,
And sees at Canons what was never there,”

the examiner of the Act of 1784 finds a clause—an “ill-omened clause” it is called, which the Act does not contain—which it certainly never did contain, unless it has dropped *out* by some chance not less wonderful than that by which the same “ill-omened clause” dropt *into* a later Act. The power of recall by the Court is not adverted to in that Act, the reason probably being that as the Court already possessed the power, and no intention existed of interfering with it, there was no absolute necessity for bringing it forward. It was distinctly recognized in the succeeding Act of 1793, and at this distance of time it is not easy to determine the motives to such recognition. It probably originated in some apprehension, on the part of the Court, that their right might, by lapse of time, be overlooked or forgotten. But why is the clause in question—the clause which is *not* in the Act of 1784, and which *is* (whether by oversight or otherwise) in the Act of 1833—called “an ill-omened clause?” Whatever view may be taken of the question—whether or not the Court of Directors should possess the power of recall, the clause is a very harmless one. The right of the Court does not depend upon it. The sum of its possible effect is, to put a stop to quibbling. Suppose the clause had been left out of the last Act, by which the administration of the government of India was continued to the East-India Company, would the power of recall have thus been silently dropped, like the clause itself, from the Act of



1784? Certainly not. The Act of 1833 is only part of the law under which the authority of the Company is exercised, and it happens to contain the following section (not let in, it may be presumed, by "oversight"): "And be it enacted, that all and singular the privileges, franchises, abilities, capacities, powers, authorities, whether military or civil, rights, remedies, methods of suit, penalties, provisions, matters and things whatsoever, granted to, or continued in, the said United Company by the said Act of the fifty-third year of King George the Third, for and during the term limited by the said Act, and all other the enactments, provisions, matters and things contained in the said Act, or in any other Act or Acts whatsoever, which are limited, or may be construed to be limited, to continue for and during the term granted to the said Company by the said Act of the fifty-third of King George the Third, so far as the same or any of them are in force, and not repealed by, or repugnant to, the enactments hereinafter contained; and all powers of alienation and disposition, rights, franchises, and immunities which the said United Company now have, shall continue and be in force, and may be exercised and enjoyed, as against all persons whomsoever, subject to the superintendence, direction, and control, hereinbefore mentioned, until the thirtieth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four."

The right of the Court of Directors to recall without reference to any other authority, then, is clear; it is recognized by the Act under which the Company's term of government was last renewed; and if that Act were silent on this particular point it would be immaterial, for the right rests on preceding charters and acts, the validity of which is therein solemnly affirmed. Indeed the right is not a subject for question, though, in some quarters, it is mat-



ter for great wonderment how it ever came to exist, and how it came to be continued to this good year 1844, then to be exercised, to the astonishment of at least one of those through whose "oversight" it had been permitted to be retained. The learned individual thus amazed "verily believes," according to Hansard, "it was left in one India bill after another, from a perfect persuasion that it would never be acted upon,"—a different thing by the way from 'oversight'—"but would remain a dead letter, unless some extraordinary emergency—some crisis of the fate of our Indian empire—might render it necessary for the Directors to exercise this most anomalous and extraordinary jurisdiction."* Now what sort of emergency, what sort of crisis is here contemplated? And who is to judge whether the emergency be sufficiently great, or the crisis sufficiently dangerous to render "necessary" the exercise of the power? Who can judge but the Court, who are intrusted in this case with uncontrolled authority? In their judgment the recall of Lord Ellenborough was necessary—in the judgment of their learned critic it was not. The whole question resolves itself into a matter of opinion, and to talk of limiting the exercise of a strictly legal right, by reference to considerations of which no philologer can fix the exact meaning, and which no casuist can reduce to logical distinctness, is idle in the extreme. The qualification, therefore, of the position first laid down, by reference to an emergency or a crisis, is worth nothing—in the language of the law, it is void for uncertainty, and we are thrown back upon the naked principle, the principle evidently entertained by the speaker, that this important power of recall, so long enjoyed and so frequently confirmed by solemn acts of the legislature, ought never to be exercised at all. In the language above quoted

* Debates, vol. 74, page 345.



from the parliamentary debates it is to be "a dead letter." And can it be that the legislature, passing clause upon clause recognizing the power, has been only adding fresh acts to a solemn farce—that the intention was to give the semblance of power and withhold the reality? If such were the case, most clumsily has the intention been fulfilled, for the power has actually been conceded; and not until it is used in a manner which does not meet the approval of one noble peer do we hear that the law on the subject was never designed to have any effect—that its framers meant nothing—or worse than nothing, for if this interpretation of their intentions be correct, they must have meant to deceive. In what a dignified position does this place both the Legislature and the East-India Company! The latter, it seems, were trusted with the power of recall, upon much the same condition as the Vicar of Wakefield's daughters enjoyed the privilege of pocket-money; each of the young ladies received a guinea, with a strict injunction never to change it. This we are told was for the honour of the family. For whose honour the Court of Directors were to have charge of a power which they were never to use, does not appear. The contract between the Legislature and the Company, in this view, would be much like one described by Selden in his Table Talk. "Lady Kent articed with Sir Edward Herbert that he should come to her when she sent for him, and stay with her as long as she would have him, to which he set his hand; then he articed with her that he should go away when he pleased, and stay away as long as he pleased, to which she set her hand." So, by law, the Court of Directors are to have the power of recalling a Governor-General "at their will and pleasure"—thus runs the Act—but then, on the other hand, the Governor-General may hold office as long as he shall please (at least as far as the Court are



concerned), do what he may—except, indeed, on the occasion of some great “emergency,” some fearful “crisis” not defined nor definable—one of those extraordinary events which set at defiance all ordinary rules, and of course among others, the rule that the Court of Directors should not recall a Governor-General unless it is his pleasure to come back. Thus, for instance, if a Governor-General should throw off his allegiance to the British Crown, should declare himself sovereign of India, and raise an army to support his pretensions, why, such a case perhaps might be regarded as an “emergency,” a great “crisis,” and the Court of Directors might resort to a recall. True it is, that the case is not very likely to occur, and if it did, the exercise of an independent power of recall would scarcely be indispensable, for no authority in this country would oppose the views of the Court; and if the Court are to act on their own sole responsibility only when no human being can differ from their judgment, it must be granted that their responsibility is not very onerous.

But it is not so. The right to recall is not a mere name; it is not a piece of solemn, but hollow pomp—an appendage of state harmless as the sword that dances by the skirts of a court-dress, for show and not for service, or as the mace of the Lord Mayor, which has never been raised as a weapon of offence since wielded by Sir William Walworth, in Smithfield. It is a substantial power, and it is a power necessary to enable the Court of Directors to discharge their functions with efficiency. Without it a contumacious servant might altogether defy them. He may be disobedient now, but it is at his peril. For the exercise of the power of recall the Court, like all persons in the country who are intrusted with political authority, are responsible. They are not to exercise it



capriciously, or without just cause. Indeed, it should never be exercised but with the highest degree of gravity and deliberation. So great is the punishment thereby inflicted upon the offending party—so deep is the wound inflicted upon his reputation—so fearful the effect upon his prospects—that those at whose bidding the punishment descends may well pause before they strike. A meritorious minister may be excluded from the cabinet by jealousies and dissensions among his colleagues, or he may be removed by the influence of parliamentary faction. Neither of these causes can operate in the Court of Directors. They may act erroneously in dismissing one of their servants, but the presumption must always be that they act honestly.

The Court have certainly shewn no undue appetite for the exercise of this great power of recall. The first instance of their recalling a Governor-General does not occur till sixty years after the Government of India was placed on its present footing, and during that period the power of recall has been exercised only once with regard to the governor of a subordinate presidency. The novelty of the event which has deprived Lord Ellenborough of office, has more than any other cause drawn attention to his removal, and the habitual moderation of the Court in the exercise of its power, has thus given to the act a degree of public interest which but for this circumstance it could scarcely have commanded. If the recall of a Governor-General were of frequent occurrence, it would pass with little observation; but the rarity of such an event, together with the circumstances under which it is understood that the appointment of Lord Ellenborough was made, and those under which it was annulled, give an impulse not only to popular curiosity, but to the inquiries of those who desire to form a rational judgment on the merits of the case. The circum-



stances here alluded to are these. It is believed, that in appointing his Lordship to the office of Governor-General, the Court of Directors were nearly unanimous; it is pretty generally known that on the question of his removal they were quite unanimous. Now if he had been elected by a bare majority and afterwards removed by a bare majority, there would have been room for ascribing his removal plausibly, whether justly or not, to personal feeling, or to chance operating through the periodical changes in the Court, which take place under legislative provision. But when all but unanimity of opinion in selecting him, is succeeded by perfect unanimity as to the necessity for his removal, it is quite impossible to attribute the later act to any such causes as those adverted to. Again, if his Lordship's tenure of office had been of extraordinary length, circumstances might readily be imagined to have arisen gradually to cool the affection of his friends, and give confidence to his enemies. But his Lordship retained his honourable appointment for only about two years, and the accomplishment, within so brief a period, of a revolution of opinion, so great and general, in the body to whom he owed both his appointment and his recall, is certainly a startling fact; and the more so when the character of that body is taken into consideration. If any one quality were to be selected as peculiarly characteristic of the Court of Directors of the East-India Company, it would be caution. Every member of the Court has a pecuniary stake in India, and the Court collectively are the representatives of the great body of claimants upon its territory. Among the Directors are men personally acquainted with India, and with the sources from which danger in that country is likely to arise; men trained by long experience in civil, political, legal, military and maritime affairs; merchants of great eminence and bankers of



the highest standing ; most of them are of mature age, and the political opinions of the majority are those of the party with which Lord Ellenborough has generally acted. If indeed a body eminently conservative in its views and habits, and cautious beyond the ordinary measure of caution, were sought for, it would be found in the Court of Directors of the East-India Company ;—if they be found to act rashly, there is no faith to be placed in human discretion. By that body Lord Ellenborough was elevated to the office of Governor-General—by that body he has been dismissed, under circumstances of striking singularity. It remains to inquire into the reasons for this last step ; and there is no satisfactory mode of ascertaining them but by examining his Lordship's policy and conduct during the brief term of his government.

In ordinary candour, it must be admitted, that on the arrival of Lord Ellenborough in India, his situation was neither enviable nor easy. He found the long triumphant flag of England humbled by disaster and defeat. A vast army had been sacrificed without any countervailing advantage ; isolated bodies of British troops still remained exposed to danger, while a number of unhappy captives were in the hands of a ruffian chief, on whose probable disposal of them no one could guess ; the power of the British name had received a fearful diminution ; the spirit of the army was shaken by the disasters which had overtaken their comrades, and the past and the future seemed alike involved in gloom. The earliest impressions and earliest declarations of Lord Ellenborough were such as became a British Governor-General. He arrived at Calcutta on the 28th February, 1842, and on the 15th March following his Lordship in Council addressed the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Jasper Nicolls, in language well suited to the circumstances which surrounded him.—“ Whatever course,” it is



observed, "we may hereafter take must rest solely upon military considerations, and have, in the first instance, regard to the safety of the detached bodies of our troops at Jelalabad, at Ghuznee, at Khelat-i-Ghilzie, and Kandahar, to the security of our troops now in the field from all unnecessary risk, and, finally, TO THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF OUR MILITARY REPUTATION, by the infliction of some signal and decisive blow upon the Affghans, which may make it appear to them, to our own subjects, and to our allies, that we have the power of inflicting punishment upon those who commit atrocities, and violate their faith, and that we withdraw ultimately from Affghanistan, not from any deficiency of means to maintain our position, but because we are satisfied that the king we have set up, has not, as we were erroneously led to imagine, the support of the nation over which he has been placed."* In a subsequent part of the same letter his Lordship, after urging the necessity of paying regard to circumstances in coming to action with the enemy, so as to secure to the British force the advantages derived from their superior discipline, thus continues: "At the same time we are aware that no great object can be accomplished without incurring some risk, and we should consider that the object of striking a decisive blow at the Affghans, more especially if such blow could be struck in combination with measures for the relief of Ghuznee—a blow which might re-establish our military character beyond the Indus, and leave a deep impression of our power and of the vigour with which it would be applied to punish an atrocious enemy—would be one for which risk might be justifiably

* Papers relating to military operations in Affghanistan, presented to both houses of Parliament by command of her Majesty, 1843, p. 167.



Incurred, all due and possible precaution being taken to diminish such necessary risk, and to secure decisive success." * His Lordship likewise adverts to the release of the prisoners taken at Kabool, as an object "deeply interesting in point of feeling and of honour," and suggests, with a view to attain it, the taking of hostages from those parts of the country which the British force might be able to occupy, as well as the prospective advance of General Pollock beyond Jelalabad even to Kabool.

Thus much was well, but how did his Lordship fulfil the expectations which he had thus excited? He found that considerable preparations had been made for recommencing operations in Affghanistan, and he proceeded to complete and to add to them. He left Calcutta and his Council in order that he might be nearer to the seat of war and give the weight of his personal influence and the advantage of his personal superintendence to the affairs in progress on the frontier. This seemed to indicate not only great energy, but great determination of purpose; and those who observed the conduct of the Governor-General, who knew the character of the officers and men at his disposal, and who thought, moreover, of the great objects before him—the military reputation of Great Britain to be re-established—the terror of its name to be restored—treachery to be punished—and its surviving victims, comprising women and children as well as men, to be rescued—those who felt the importance of these objects, and who witnessed or heard of the restless vivacity of the Governor-General, never doubted that all would be well—never supposed for a moment that any check would be put upon the ardour of the military commanders, that any obstacle would be interposed between their desire for action and the



gratification of it ; or that he who had thought the prosecution of the war a matter of so much importance, as for the sake of aiding it to separate himself from his Council, and make a journey of several hundred miles, was prepared to acquiesce in so pitiful a termination of the labours of himself and his predecessor as that of merely getting the troops in Affghanistan back again to India. Yet thus it was. Some ill success befel the British cause—Ghuznee was surrendered to the enemy, General England failed in his attempt to join General Nott at Kandahar, and further, a bad spirit was understood to prevail in a part of the force under General Pollock. The new Governor-General, it became apparent, in spite of his high purposings, was not a man to encounter difficulties or persevere under discouragement—his moral courage oozed away as he approached the scene of action, and the “re-establishment of our military reputation—the decisive blow at the Affghans”—and the safety of the prisoners—were all cast to the winds. On the 19th April, General Nott was ordered to destroy Kelat-i-Ghilzie, to evacuate Kandahar, and to fall back to Quetta.*

In advising the Commander-in-Chief of the transmission of these orders, the Governor-General says, “The severe check experienced by Brigadier England’s small corps on the 28th ultimo—an event disastrous as it was unexpected—and of which we have not yet information to enable us to calculate all the results, has a tendency so to cripple the before limited means of movement and of action which were possessed by Major-General Nott, as to render it expedient to take immediate measures for the ultimate safety of that officer’s corps, by withdrawing it, at the earliest practicable period, from its advanced position, into nearer

* Papers, pages 223, 4.

communication with India.”* On the very day on which these orders to General Nott and the letter to the Commander-in-Chief bear date, the Governor-General published a notification of the successful advance of the troops under General Pollock into the Khyber Pass, and of the evacuation by the enemy of the fort of Ali Musjid.† On the same day the Governor-General addressed to Sir Jasper Nicolls a second letter, the subject being the position of General Pollock,‡ to whom he desired the Commander-in-Chief to transmit instructions; and this was followed by a third, in which the nature of these desired instructions is unequivocally anticipated. His Lordship says :—“ What ulterior destination may be given to those corps, when that of Major-General Nott, having drawn off the garrison of Khelat-i-Ghilzie, shall be concentrated ultimately in the vicinity of Sukkur, and *that of Major-General Pollock having drawn off the garrison of Jelalabad shall be again on this side of the Khyber Pass*, is a matter for the most serious consideration, and one upon which I am most anxious to have the opportunity of conferring personally with your Excellency, or with some officer in your confidence, whom you may depute to me for that purpose.”§ His Lordship then alludes to the possibility of selecting a new line of advance should the war be renewed *after the retreat of the two Generals as above assumed*, but immediately adds :—“ It will, however, likewise be for consideration, whether our troops, having been redeemed from the state of peril in which they have been placed in Affghanistan, and, it may still be hoped, not without the infliction of some severe blow upon the Affghan army, it would be justifiable again to push them for no other object than that of revenging our

* Papers, page 224.

† Papers, page 201.

‡ Papers, page 224.

§ Papers, page 225.



losses and of re-establishing, in all its original brilliancy, our military character." For no other object! The restoration of our military character is not much it seems, and the safety of the prisoners nothing, for this point is not adverted to. Two days after this, namely, on the 21st of April, the Governor-General received authentic information of Sir Robert Sale's victory at Jelalabad and of General England having regained, without further loss, his position at Quetta, where he had been joined by the rest of his brigade. These events he communicated to the Secret Committee in a letter dated the 22nd, together with the following account of their influence, or rather want of influence, on his opinion with regard to the necessity for retreat. "These several events, although they improve our prospects to some extent, have in no respect altered my deliberate opinion, that it is expedient to withdraw the troops under Major-General Pollock and those under Major-General Nott at the earliest practicable period into positions, wherein they may have certain and easy communication with India;"* that is, to withdraw the troops of General Pollock to Peshawur, and those of General Nott to Quetta. "That opinion," his lordship adds, "is formed upon a general view of our military, political, and financial situation, and is not liable to be lightly changed." The same general views are expressed in nearly the same words in a letter dated the 24th April, to Mr. George Clerk, the Governor-General's agent with the Sikh Government—"To regain concentrated positions for our armies, having easy and secure communications with India, is the present object of the Government, and one not lightly to be changed;" and again—"All that the Governor-General regards"—*all*, be it observed—"is the security of our communication with the troops beyond

* Papers, page 223.



the Upper Indus, and their withdrawal, at the earliest practicable period, from their advanced positions, in a state of continued efficiency, undiminished by the climate or by the enemy.”* Such was the unvarying tenor of Lord Ellenborough’s language from the time that he quitted his council and acted without advice or check of any kind. The burden of his instructions was retire—fall back—get towards India as fast as you can—leave the Affghans to themselves, and by consequence leave the British prisoners to be mal-treated and murdered by those whom our pusillanimity will thus relieve from the restraint hitherto imposed by their fears.

Reverses had shaken his lordship’s confidence in every thing but his own judgment; success had no power to re-assure him. And yet, on one occasion, he did indulge in a flight of expectation which, to all but himself, must appear most extravagant. It has been seen how he spoke of the situation and prospects of the British armies in Affghanistan on the 19th, 22nd, and 24th April. On the 28th he caused no less than three letters to be written to General Pollock, one intimating his belief in the reports of the death of Shah Shoojah, and his conviction of the impossibility of the British Government recognizing a successor under the circumstances that prevailed; a second, giving permission to treat with a *de facto* government for the exchange of prisoners, if such government were capable of carrying an exchange into effect; and a third, the crowning letter of all, announcing that the aspect of affairs in Upper Affghanistan appeared to be such, that his lordship could not but contemplate “the possibility”—a possibility indeed—of General Pollock having been led to “advance upon and occupy the City of Kabool.”† Certainly his lordship’s

* Papers, page 232.

† Papers, page 235.



notions of possibility were not narrow. He speaks of marching to Kabool as coolly "as maids of fifteen do of puppy dogs." This offhand way of treating a great and most difficult military operation—an operation so great and so difficult, that the Governor-General seems, both before and after this communication, to have regarded it as all but hopeless, is highly characteristic. The consistency of his lordship is not less remarkable. At one time to advance, is treated almost as much beyond rational contemplation as a journey to the moon. At another the march of an army from Jelalabad to Kabool is spoken of as lightly as a walk from London to Highgate. But, let justice be done—though the Governor-General actually indulged in a vision of the possibility of an army situated like that of General Pollock, without preparation and without arrangement or understanding with General Nott, pushing on to Kabool and occupying it as easily as a party of schoolboys would run over Blackheath, he still harps on his old string, retirement. General Pollock is assured that the Governor-General's views are unchanged, and that if he should be at Kabool, he must leave it as quickly as possible. "If that event," the imaginary march to Kabool, "should have occurred, you will understand, that it will in no respect vary the view which the Governor-General previously took of the policy now to be pursued. The Governor-General will adhere" (this WILL is very characteristic also) "to the opinion, that the only safe course is, that of withdrawing the army under your command, at the earliest practicable period, into positions within the Khyber Pass, where it may possess easy and certain communications with India.*" But the hallucination about marching to Kabool afforded but a temporary interruption to the

* Papers, page 235.



uniformity of the Governor-General's strain. Only nine days before it commenced,—that is, on the 19th April,—he had called on the Commander-in-Chief to furnish additional instructions to General Pollock, and it has been seen what sort of instructions were expected. Sir Jasper Nicolls seems to have doubted as to the propriety of thus embarrassing the general; whereupon Lord Ellenborough, unable to brook delay, himself undertook the duty of reading a lecture on war,—not to Hannibal, but to a very able and experienced officer, who, in the judgment of his immediate military superior, stood in no need of the assistance. “The general,” said Sir Jasper Nicolls, “is a clear-headed, good officer, and you have loaded his advance with heavy cautions.”* These heavy cautions, however, were repeated in a letter dated the 4th May. Not quite a week had elapsed since the Governor-General had hoped or feared, it is difficult to say which, that General Pollock was at Kabool, or in full march thither. On the 4th May, he indulges imaginings as to what the general is about, as he did on the 28th April, but their complexion is not quite the same. Let the reader judge. Here is Lord Ellenborough's vision of General Pollock, as presented to his Lordship's mind on the date first named above, but last in the order of time,—viz. on the 4th May: “The most recent accounts which have been received of the difficulty experienced by you in obtaining supplies at Jelalabad, and in bringing forward supplies from Peshawur; and the very deficient means of movement, as well as of provision, which you possess, induce the Governor-General to expect”—now mark the expectation; within a week after, he thought it possible that General Pollock had gone to Kabool—“that you will have already decided upon withdrawing your

* Papers—*ut supra*—page 240.



troops within the Khyber Pass into a position wherein you may have easy and certain communication with India, if considerations, having regard to the health of the army, should not have induced you to defer that movement.”* And while the reader notes the marvellous consistency of these expectations, between the indulgence of which six days only intervened, let him not omit to notice the testimony given by the Governor-General to the means possessed by General Pollock for making the march to Kabool, which it was thought possible he might have undertaken—“the very deficient means of movement as well as of provision which you possess”—these are the Governor-General’s words, and yet he dreamed that in such circumstances an officer of so much ability and so much experience as General Pollock should commit the folly of marching for Kabool; this too, in the teeth of his own avowed opinion thus declared: “His Lordship is too strongly impressed with confidence in your judgment to apprehend that you will ever place the army under your command in a situation in which, without adequate means of movement and supply, it could derive no benefit from its superior valour and discipline, and might be again subjected to a disaster which, if repeated, might be fatal to our power in India.”* Most just was this his Lordship’s impression; but how is it to be reconciled with his former impression or supposition, something less than a week old?

Before the letter of the 4th May was written, the Commander-in-Chief had come to the rescue, and had issued instructions in general accordance with the Governor-General’s wishes; so much so, indeed, that his Lordship tendered in return, not only his approbation, but his thanks; and in order that the instructions might have all the weight

* Papers, page 241.



which his own military knowledge and experience could give them, Lord Ellenborough lost no time in assuring General Pollock, by another despatch, that his judgment confirmed that of the Commander-in-Chief.* The orders thus embodying the views of the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief were very distinct. After adverting to the instructions given to General Nott to evacuate Kandahar, and retire first upon Quetta, and ultimately upon Sukkur, it is added, "You are required to make a similar movement in Upper Affghanistan, and to WITHDRAW EVERY BRITISH SOLDIER FROM JELALABAD TO PESH-AWUR."†

From these orders no deviation was to take place, except in three possible cases. First, that certain negotiations in progress for the release of the prisoners lately confined at Buddeabad should have been brought to such a point that its accomplishment might be endangered by withdrawing; secondly, that before the receipt of these orders, General Pollock should have despatched a lightly-equipped force to endeavour to rescue those prisoners; thirdly, that the enemy at Kabool should be moving a force to attack that of the English general. In this "improbable case," as it was most justly termed, it was held to be advisable to inflict a blow on the enemy, but provided only that "any respectable number of troops" should "have descended into the plain below Jugdulluk" with the intent of making such an attack as that referred to. If the number were not "respectable," or, though "respectable," should not have advanced beyond Jugdulluk, but were only on their way thither, the British army was to run before them. With regard to the prisoners, the qualification introduced was as follows: "I allude entirely to the officers and ladies now or

* Papers, pages 242, 243.

† Papers, page 242.



lately at Buddeabad, or its vicinity. Those at Kabool cannot, I think, be saved by any treaty or agreement made, under existing circumstances, at Jelalabad." So their recovery was given up. Such were the instructions of which the Governor-General entirely approved, as he assured the Commander-in-Chief and General Pollock. Lest General Nott should be inconveniently influenced by a professional passion for maintaining his country's honour, he, too, on the 7th May, was once more addressed; he was apprized of the nature of the instructions which had been forwarded to General Pollock, and reminded of the tenor of those previously transmitted to himself. The 13th May produced another letter to General Nott, adverting to the proposed advance of General England to join that officer, and admitting that the position of the former at Kandahar was more favourable than it had been supposed to be when the orders of the 19th April were issued; "But," it was added, "this improvement of your position is not such as to induce his Lordship to vary those instructions, in so far as they direct your retiring upon Sukkur. That movement you will make at such period, and with such precautions, as may best conduce to the preservation of the health of your troops and the efficiency of your army. The Governor-General understands that, consistently with the necessary regard to these objects of primary importance, you cannot retire below the passes till October."* This extension of time is attributed by Lord Ellenborough to the advice of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Jasper Nicolls.* A similar extension was conceded to General Pollock, in accordance, as it would appear, with the views of the General himself, acting under the discretion intrusted to him by the Commander-in-Chief, when, in compliance with

* See Papers, page 251.



the pressing desire of the Governor-General, he issued his further instructions. This is to be inferred from a letter of Mr. Clerk to Sir Jasper Nicolls, dated 5th May, in which he says: "Adverting to the opinions expressed by General Pollock, in his letter written after the arrival of Captain Mackenzie in his camp, I conclude that, with the discretion vested in him under your Excellency's orders, he will not abandon either the British captives, or the position he holds at Jelalabad."*

Referring to this letter from Mr. Clerk, Lord Ellenborough, writing to the Commander-in-Chief on the 14th May, says: "The advance of the season, however, which really renders the retirement of Major-General Pollock at the present moment a measure of some hazard to the health of his troops—the improved facilities which the major-general finds of obtaining supplies of provisions—but, more than all, *the influence which those now about him*, anxious to vindicate the army by some signal blow against the Affghans, and to effect the restoration of the prisoners to liberty by negotiation supported by force, must necessarily have upon his mind,—all these things induce me to apprehend that it will hardly be until October that the major-general will commence his homeward march."†

Notwithstanding all the reasons here enumerated in favour of delaying the retirement of General Pollock, the measure was obviously not in favour with the Governor-General. This might be presumed from the somewhat ungracious reference to the "influence of those about" the general, and the presumption is strengthened by a letter to General Pollock, dated the 29th of May, written, as it

* Further Papers, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 17th February, 1843.

† Papers, page 252.



appears, under a deep apprehension that the General might have mistaken his instructions, and have given to the discretion left him wider limits than those by which it was intended to be circumscribed. The date of this letter, however, affords some food for reflection. The ostensible occasion of its being written is a passage in a letter from Mr. Clerk to General Pollock, dated the 18th of May, a copy of which was forwarded to the Governor-General on the 21st. In this letter, Mr. Clerk had expressed his belief that, with the negotiations pending in front, General Pollock would not withdraw. There is no evidence as to the time when this letter was received by Lord Ellenborough, but it is certain that on the 14th of May he was in possession of a letter addressed by Mr. Clerk, on the 5th of that month, to Sir Jasper Nicolls (already quoted), in which he says (speaking of General Pollock), "I conclude that with the discretion vested in him under your Excellency's orders, HE WILL NOT ABANDON EITHER THE BRITISH CAPTIVES, OR THE POSITION HE HOLDS AT JELALABAD." The Governor-General, on the 14th of May, if not before, knew that such was Mr. Clerk's belief, and that it was formed upon opinions expressed by General Pollock; but he takes no notice, beyond a brief reference to it in addressing the Commander-in-Chief on the subject of General Pollock's remaining, until October, beyond the Khyber Pass, in which measure, though with some reluctance, he seems to acquiesce. But on the sight of another letter, shewing that Mr. Clerk continued to hold the opinion which he had declared in the previous letter, namely, that General Pollock would not withdraw, the Governor-General is suddenly thrown into an agony of apprehension and anxiety. He has good reason, on the 14th May, for believing that General Pollock intends to follow a certain course, which he



disapproves, yet he does nothing, but waits the result with as much calmness as a Swiss herdsman expects the avalanche which is to crush his cottage to atoms, or a good Mussulman the fire which is raging three houses off, and must soon reach his own. But Mr. Clerk's letter of the 18th May rouses him. Why? Thus is the question answered by the letter to General Pollock of the 29th May: "As Mr. Clerk was, on the 18th instant, in possession of the orders addressed to you by the Commander-in-Chief, on the 29th ultimo, the Governor-General infers that in so expressing his belief that you would not withdraw, with the negotiations pending in your front, he had in view the paragraphs in those orders which relate to negotiations for the release of the prisoners."* "*The Governor-General infers!*" Did he only infer? Had not Mr. Clerk, in his letter to Sir Jasper Nicolls, dated the 5th May (a copy of which letter was in Lord Ellenborough's possession on the 14th), used these memorable words?—"I conclude that with the discretion vested in him (General Pollock), under your Excellency's orders, HE WILL NOT ABANDON EITHER THE BRITISH CAPTIVES OR THE POSITION HE HOLDS AT JELALABAD;" and after this the Governor-General—cautious man—can only "infer" allusion to the said discretionary power. But the ground of this inference is worth looking at: "As Mr. Clerk was, on the 18th instant, in possession of the orders addressed to you by the Commander-in-Chief on the 29th ultimo, the Governor-General infers," &c. Indeed Mr. Clerk *was* in possession of the Commander-in-Chief's orders on the 18th of May, for he was in possession of them on the 5th, when he wrote the former letter. That letter commences: "I do myself the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 30th ultimo, enclosing a copy of your Excel-

Agency's orders to Major-General Pollock, of the 29th ultimo." This letter was before Lord Ellenborough on the 14th; from it he knew that Mr. Clerk had the Commander-in-Chief's orders on the 5th, and that he was of opinion that General Pollock would exercise the discretion thereby allowed, and remain at Jelalabad. Yet the Governor-General, on the 29th, speaks of Mr. Clerk's being in possession of those orders on the 18th as though he was ignorant of his possessing them on the 5th, and he "infers" that Mr. Clerk's belief as to General Pollock's course has some reference to the discretion vested in that officer, a point distinctly noticed in the letter of the 5th, which Lord Ellenborough had lying before him fifteen days before he drew this notable inference.* However, having drawn it—and the task required no extraordinary measure of sagacity—he caused General Pollock to be enlightened as to the precise limits of his discretion with regard to the prisoners. The general was informed that the instructions could only apply to negotiations, almost brought to a close at the time of receiving the Commander-in-Chief's letter—not to any then pending, the event of which might be doubtful, still less to any which might be subsequently commenced. The letter thus closes:—"The Governor-General does not suppose that you can have misunderstood those instructions"—the instructions of the Commander-in-Chief—"but if the observation in Mr. Clerk's letter of the 18th instant had been suffered to pass in silence, that silence might have appeared to be acquiescence in a wrong interpretation, and you might possibly have been so misled into adopting it."† Yet Mr. Clerk's letter of the 5th, referring to what he believed to be the General's opinion as to

* Mr. Clerk's letter of the 5th May does not appear in the Blue Book, but is printed as a supplementary paper.

† Papers, page 295.



withdrawal, was “suffered to pass in silence;” and on the 14th Lord Ellenborough had made up his mind to General Pollock’s protracted stay at Jelalabad. On the 29th he becomes frightened, and directs a letter to be written to General Pollock, warning him not to be too zealous in his endeavours to obtain the release of the prisoners. Is this the conduct of a great statesman? Is it that of a man even of plain common sense? No; it is that of a man so vacillating as to shift with every breeze, and even without any external cause for change, or so incompetent to the duties of his high charge, that all his faculties were overwhelmed, and he forgot by the end of the month what he had written at the middle of it; or, what is far worse, that of a trickster, anxious only so to play his cards as under all circumstances to exonerate himself from blame, and whatever might befall the army at Jelalabad, be able to secure his own reputation from wreck. But if this letter of the 29th May spoke the honest judgment of the Governor-General—and if it did not, let his friends find an excuse for his duplicity—it is clear that he was then anxious for the return of the army. Unless the negotiations for the release of a part—only a part—of the prisoners were complete, or nearly so, at the time of General Pollock’s receiving the instructions of the Commander-in-Chief, he was to come back. This is the purport of the letter, and happily it is so decisive, that there is no possibility of explaining away its obvious meaning; and, let it be remembered, that when these explanatory instructions were given, Lord Ellenborough knew that General Pollock was deficient in the means of moving his troops, but had excellent means of providing for their comfort where they were.

The next letter addressed to General Pollock is dated the 1st June. It treats of the continued stay of the general at Jelalabad as then a settled point; and what is



its tone? that of disappointment, chagrin, and fear. "The retirement of your army," it is observed, "immediately after the victory gained by Sir Robert Sale, the forcing of the Khyber Pass, and the relief of Jelalabad, would have had the appearance of a military operation successfully accomplished, and even triumphantly achieved. Its retirement, after six months of inaction, *before a following army of Affghans*, will have an appearance of a different and less advantageous character."* Here, again, it is plain that it was the wish of Lord Ellenborough that General Pollock should retire immediately after effecting a junction with Sir Robert Sale. He not only directed this at the time, but more than six weeks after the junction had been effected, we find him lamenting that his directions had not been followed, and predicting evil from their having been neglected. In this letter a melancholy acquiescence is accorded, not to the arguments in favour of the army remaining, but to the force of circumstances, which rendered it impracticable for it to move. "Since circumstances seem to compel you to remain there till October,"—this is the language used under the instructions of the Governor-General.

We have now to consider a letter to General Pollock, dated June 6th. This, like the letter of the 29th May, is explanatory of previous orders, the Governor-General having a great horror of General Pollock's misunderstanding his instructions. Some thoughts had been entertained of making over the fort of Jelalabad to the Sikhs, and General Pollock had been instructed to give them possession if required by Mr. Clerk to do so. This had been adverted to in a letter from General Pollock to the secretary to the Governor-

* Papers, page 297.



General, and forthwith a letter is despatched, "at headlong speed," to prevent any thing so calamitous as General Pollock's concluding that he was to stay at Jelalabad till it should be decided whether the fort should be given up to the Sikhs or not. It was known that General Pollock would not move till October. The delay had been coldly and sullenly assented to, but yet on the 6th June it is deemed requisite to warn General Pollock not to delay, with reference to any arrangement with the Sikhs, his movement from Jelalabad, which was not expected to take place for four months. This is not very intelligible, but it marks very distinctly the eagerness of the Governor-General for the return of the army—an eagerness so extreme, as apparently to involve his faculties in oblivion with regard to every thing else. The answer of General Pollock, though framed in perfect accordance with the relative situations of the Governor-General and himself, yet conveys to the former a very severe though dignified reproof by a mere calm statement of facts. The general says, "Had it been in my power to retire on Peshawur, I should not have delayed doing so for the purpose of making over Jelalabad to the Sikh troops, unless the transfer could have been effected immediately. It will be observed that in my letter, No. 64 (to which yours, No. 313, is a reply), I have stated that, owing to the want of carriage-cattle, it was not in my power to withdraw this army."*

General Nott does not appear to have been written to so frequently as General Pollock, but whenever he was addressed the tone of communication was the same—retire, retire, retire. On the 1st June, he was apprized, by order of Lord Ellenborough, that General Pollock



could not move before October. On the 4th July, and the date is remarkable—he was informed of an intended movement of General Pollock on Pesh Bolak, and subsequently in advance. This communication was accompanied by a copy of the letter addressed to General Pollock on the 1st June; the letter lamenting that the latter officer had not retired immediately after his arrival at Jelalabad, and foretelling evil results from his stay; and the following reason is assigned for the transmission of this copy to General Nott—in order “that you may not be misled into the belief that any change has taken place in the main object of the instructions heretofore furnished to the major-general,”* that object being to get the army away as quickly as possible. On the same day (July 4th) the same steadfastness of purpose is avowed in a letter to General Pollock—“No change has from the first taken place in the Governor-General’s views of the expediency of withdrawing your army at the earliest period consistent with the health and efficiency of the troops; that is, as is now understood, at the beginning of October.”†

Thus it is seen, that from the close of the month of March, or at all events from the commencement of April to the beginning of July, the instructions of the Governor-General were directed to one object—that of facilitating the retirement of the armies in Affghanistan—with little regard to national honour, and with none to the safety of the prisoners detained by the enemy.

At length, the dawn of a change appears. How was it brought about? Was it effected by any process of reasoning within the mind of the Governor-General, by the operation of new and unlooked-for events, or by some other cause? Certainly not by either of the two causes above re-

* Papers, page 326.

† Papers, page 327.



ferred to. His lordship, it may be presumed, meditated on the circumstances under which he had to act, but the result was only to wed him more closely to his favourite plan of bringing back the armies in Affghanistan as early as possible. The current of events had been chequered; evil had been succeeded by good, but the Governor-General was unaffected; his views, on his own authority, were unchanged. True it is, that he continued to talk, at intervals, of "striking a blow at the enemy," and if the enemy could have been defeated by words, the Governor-General was not the man to spare them. But, at least until the month of July, he contemplated nothing beyond desultory and unconnected attacks—mere "chuppaos;"* "you may make your strength severely felt by sallies of this description, should they be practicable," it is observed in the letter to General Pollock, June 1st, "and create a strong desire on the part of the enemy"—for what? "to induce you to leave the country." Oh most lame and impotent conclusion! And is this the language of a British Governor-General of India? Let not the shades of Clive and Cornwallis and Wellesley and Hastings hear it!

But to the reasons of the change. There were men who felt that, to abandon Affghanistan without some manifestation of military power, without some effort to recover the British subjects, treacherously kidnapped into captivity, would be a national disgrace. Such men were General Pollock and General Nott. The latter officer, on first learning that an intention was entertained of retiring from Jelalabad as soon as the garrison were relieved, remonstrated. The intention, it should in justice to Lord Ellenborough be observed, was entertained before his arrival, and therefore

* A chuppao is an attack generally made by night, and for plunder: a surprise; a foray.



he is accountable only for adopting it. In this part of his conduct, as in those parts which present a fairer appearance, he has no pretensions to the blame or the praise due to originality of thought. General Nott remonstrated, representing the evil effects likely to result from quitting Affghanistan under circumstances which could not fail to leave behind us an impression that retirement was the consequence of weakness. The letter conveying this remonstrance was dated the 24th March. On the 18th April, General Nott again delivered his opinion on the question, and in a manner worthy of his character. Although he had then ground for concluding that the offer of advice hostile to retreat would not be very favourably received, he did not hesitate to avow his conviction that the difficulties of prosecuting the war to a more honourable conclusion had been greatly over-rated, and that "unnecessary alarm had been created respecting the position of" the troops in Affghanistan. In a passage in the former of these letters the question of immediate retirement is discussed in so just and forcible a manner, that it is due to the gallant officer to quote it. "If Government intend to recover, even temporarily and for the saving of our national honour, their lost position in this country, even if doubtful of the policy that it may be deemed expedient to pursue, I earnestly hope, that before any immediate retrograde step is made, in either direction, our whole position in Affghanistan will be attentively viewed; and that the effect which a hasty retirement would certainly and instantly have on the whole of Beloochistan, and even on the navigation of the Indus, will be taken into consideration. At the present time the impression of our military strength among the people of this country, though weakened by the occurrences at Kabool, is not destroyed; but if we now retire, and it should again become necessary



to advance, we shall labour under many disadvantages, the most serious of which, in my opinion, will be, a distrust of their strength among our soldiers, which any admission of weakness is so well calculated to induce; and in what other light could a withdrawal from Jelalabad or Kandahar be viewed? If retirement should become necessary, it should take place simultaneously and at a proper season. If Government should select Kandahar as the point whence future operations against Kabool are to be directed, still the retention of a position at Jelalabad, in considerable force, will be of the most essential service in all future contemplated operations. In the sanguine hope that some unforeseen circumstances may have occurred to postpone the execution of the Government order for the evacuation of Jelalabad, I have thought it incumbent on me to address this letter to you.* Now here it will be seen that General Nott looked to future operations against Kabool; he deemed them necessary to the vindication of his country's honour, and the retention of a position at Jelalabad in considerable force he regarded as essential to success. He did not abandon all hope of again visiting Kabool and deem retirement the only course open, as did the Governor-General, nor did he propose to run headlong for Kabool without provisions or means of carriage, a step which the Governor-General thought General Pollock might possibly have hazarded. His advice was to stand fast, retaining all the advantages which were possessed, and looking forward to employ them usefully to aid in pressing forward to Kabool when the proper time arrived. In his letter of the 18th of April, General Nott says, "Perhaps it is not within my province to observe, that, in my humble opinion, an unnecessary alarm has been created regarding

* Papers, pages 245, 246.



the position of our troops in this country, and of the strength and power of the enemy we have to contend with. This enemy cannot face our troops in the field with any chance of success, however superior they may be in numbers, provided those precautions are strictly observed, which war, between a small body of disciplined soldiers and a vast crowd of untrained, unorganized, and half-civilized people, constantly renders necessary. True, the British troops suffered a dreadful disaster at Kabool, and it is not for me to presume to point out why this happened, however evident I may conceive the reasons, and the long train of military and political events which led to the sad catastrophe."* After receiving the orders to retire at once from Kandahar, General Nott was obviously in expectation that a better spirit might come over the mind of the Governor-General, and that delay might be beneficial in affording time for the transmission of counter orders. Writing to General Pollock, on the 30th May, he says, "I have withdrawn the garrison of Kelat-i-Ghiljie; the order left me no discretion; the same order applies in the same positive manner to Kandahar; however, it will take some time to arrange, and before I can possibly carry it into effect, there will be ample time for the Government, should they deem it advisable, to send me other orders. I shall be prepared to ADVANCE or retire agreeably to the pleasure of Government."†

Such was the language, such the views and hopes of General Nott. What were those of General Pollock? To ascertain them it is requisite to refer to a letter from the general dated the 13th May, the fate of which was somewhat extraordinary, it having, by a very remarkable accident, strayed into a wrong bundle of papers, from which

* Papers, page 247.

† Papers, pages 313, 314.



retirement it did not emerge till the pertinacious and troublesome inquiries of some members of Parliament had reached Hindostan. This letter was written after the receipt by General Pollock of the Governor-General's letter, advertng to the possibility of the general having advanced to Kabool, and also after the receipt of the letter of the Commander-in-Chief, enforcing the general views of Lord Ellenborough as to the necessity for retreat. Referring to the former communication, General Pollock says, "I trust that I am not wrong in considering this letter as leaving to me discretionary powers; and coming as it does from the supreme power in India, I venture to delay for some days acting up to the instructions communicated in his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief's letter, dated 29th ultimo." The general, it will be seen, thus eagerly caught at Lord Ellenborough's allusion to the possibility of his having advanced, and construed it into a permission to delay acting up to the instructions of a later date which he had received from another quarter, and which directed him, except under certain specified circumstances, to retire. General Pollock, after advertng to the reason of his not having advanced towards Kabool, thus goes on: "With regard to our withdrawal at the present moment, I fear that it would have the very worst effect; it would be construed into a defeat, and our character as a powerful nation would be entirely lost in this part of the world. It is true that the garrison at Jelalabad has been saved, which it would not have been had a force not been sent to its relief; but the relief of that garrison is only one object; there still remain others which we cannot disregard. I ALLUDE TO THE RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS." General Pollock then alludes to the negotiations in progress respecting the prisoners, and remarks, "If while these communications were in progress, I



were to retire, it would be supposed that panic had seized us. I therefore think that our remaining in this vicinity (or perhaps a few marches in advance) is essential to uphold the character of the British nation; and in like manner General Nott might hold his post, at all events, till a more favourable season." Lord Ellenborough had expressed much anxiety respecting the health of the troops; and undoubtedly this was a most important consideration. General Pollock thus answers: "I have no reason yet to complain that the troops are more unhealthy than they were at Agra. If I am to march to Peshawur, the climate is certainly not preferable; and here I can in one or two marches find a better climate, and I should be able to dictate better terms than I could at Peshawur." To the dread of being attacked and beaten, General Pollock was as insensible as to that of climate, but he felt deeply the necessity of the co-operation with General Nott. He says: "I cannot imagine any force being sent from Kabool which I could not successfully oppose, but the advance on Kabool would require that General Nott should act in concert, and advance also. I therefore cannot help regretting that he should be directed to retire, which, without some demonstration of our power, he will find some difficulty in doing."* Thus thought General Pollock; thus did he express himself strictly in accordance with the views of General Nott, though without concert: but with what a wide difference from those entertained and avowed by the Governor-General!

It has been intimated that this letter of General Pollock met with some remarkable adventures. In the Blue Book laid before Parliament it was not to be found, but its existence was ascertained from a reference made to it in another letter, which did appear. The Marquess of Lansdowne,

* Afghanistan supplementary paper, presented to Parliament 1843.



In the House of Lords, and Lord Palmerston, in the House of Commons, called for its production, but her Majesty's ministers answered that they had it not, and knew nothing about it—that they had caused search to be made for it at the East-India House, and that there also the return was *non-inventus*. This appeared strange, but there was no remedy. Neither Court nor City could furnish copy of the letter, though evidently an important one, and by what means it had failed to reach the authorities at home was but matter for fruitless conjecture. At last the Secret Committee received a letter from the Governor-General, giving the following account of the matter—the spontaneous tender of his lordship in consequence of reading the “debates in Parliament.”* “The original despatch of the 13th May never reached the office, and must have been lost in transit. The duplicate was received and acknowledged on the 11th of July. It is the practice of the Secretary's office to keep the unreported papers on all important subjects for each month together, and to forward copies of them to the Secret Committee by the monthly overland mail. The despatch in question was inadvertently put up in its proper place in the May bundle of reported papers, instead of being left for a time, as it should have been, amongst the unreported papers of July. Hence when the July papers were copied for transmission to the Secret Committee, this despatch was omitted.”† Such, according to the old rhyme,

“Is the history
Of this wonderful mystery.”

This is the explanation given “on authority.” Really Indian affairs are strange matters. The paper in question

* The letter of the Governor-General and that of General Pollock, then first forwarded, were laid before Parliament, and printed.

† Afghanistan Supplementary Paper.



gets from a place where it should be, to a place where it evidently should not be (though Lord Ellenborough calls it "the proper place"), with as much facility as we have seen a clause escape out of one Act of Parliament and creep into another. This wonderful transposition is worth looking into on account of its curiosity. "The original despatch never reached the office, and must have been lost in transit." Here we are led to ask what place it was that the despatch never reached?—"the office," but what office? Does Lord Ellenborough mean that it never reached his hands? that it was intercepted by the Affghans, whose vigilance thus occasioned such an infinity of trouble to various parties—to the Marquess of Lansdowne and Lord Palmerston in asking questions; to the Queen's Ministers in declaring themselves unable to answer them; to the clerks of the Board of Commissioners and of the East-India Company in looking for the copy of a paper of which copy never arrived; and, lastly, to Lord Ellenborough, in giving the account of the transaction above quoted? Is this his lordship's meaning, or does he mean that after he had received and read it, the despatch was lost in the course of transmission to some office where it was to be deposited? Surely, where explanation was the object, a little more clearness might have been attained. But the original despatch was lost—when, where, how—whether before or after Lord Ellenborough had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with its contents, does not appear. Now for the duplicate. "The duplicate was received and acknowledged on the 11th July;" here we are at sea again. It is not quite apparent whether both the receipt and acknowledgment are to be assigned to the 11th July, or the latter only. Was the letter acknowledged on the same day on which it was received, or some time afterwards? If on the



day it was received, there seems to have been marvellous haste in acknowledging a letter which had then become stale, and which with reference to a change which had come over the policy of the Governor-General did not call for any extraordinary promptness. Yet, with reference to this change of policy, we cannot but perceive how flattering it is to the sagacity of Lord Ellenborough, that, before he was in possession of the letter of General Pollock (assuming that he did not receive it till the 11th July), he had become a convert to the opinions therein maintained, so far as to allow a practical trial to be made of their soundness. But we must proceed with the explanation :—It seems that “it is the practice of the Secretary’s office to keep the unreported papers, on all important subjects, together, and to forward copies of them to the Secret Committee by the Monthly Overland Mail.” Well, this “practice” appears a very natural and reasonable one, but it is to be presumed that the papers thus kept together are placed with reference to the month in which they are *received*—not according to the dates they bear. If a letter, dated in November, 1843, should happen, from any cause, not to be received till November, 1844, it would (it is to be supposed) be placed with the papers of the latter month, not of the former. How extraordinary then was it, that a letter received in July (if it were not received till then) should be transferred, “inadvertently,” to the month of May, with which it had no connection but in respect of date! What a strange inadvertency this must have been—to carry back the paper from the current month under which it ought to have been copied for transmission home to a past month—the papers of which had, as it seems, been copied and transmitted previously, or else how did this particular paper escape the process? If, indeed, the original had been received in



May, as it might have been, and after being perused by Lord Ellenborough had been handed over by his Lordship for deposit among the papers of the month, the duplicate might properly have been put there too, and this would seem to have been the case, for Lord Ellenborough says that such was its "proper place;" but then how are we to account for his lordship's apparent ignorance of the contents of this letter? Besides, as the original had never been received at "the office," whether received by Lord Ellenborough or not, those whose duty it was to put up the papers in their proper places must have known this, and as they at least knew nothing of the first copy of the despatch, that copy never having come into their hands, this second copy became virtually the original. They knew no other, and they could not conclude that a paper which had never come into "the office" had been previously copied therein for transmission to England. The explanation, in fact, explains nothing. The matter is still wrapt in mystery, and should any successor of the elder D'Israeli, in emulation of that agreeable writer's "Curiosities of Literature," make a collection of the "Curiosities of Statesmanship," the narrative of the wonderful events which befel General Pollock's letter, and their consequences in the British Parliament and elsewhere, will well deserve a place.

To proceed with the correspondence of General Pollock. That officer, it will be remembered, was unable, from want of the means of carriage, to move from Jelalabad, either in advance as he would have wished, or in retreat, as desired by the Governor-General. In a letter dated the 20th May, he had suggested that he should be authorized to remain at Jelalabad till the autumn, as supplies were plentiful, and the situation quite as healthy as Peshawur.* This was

* Papers, page 296.



answered on behalf of Lord Ellenborough by the letter of the 1st of June, already referred to, expressive of disappointment that the retreat of the army did not take place immediately after the forcing of the Khyber Pass, and the relief of Jelalabad, when, in his lordship's opinion, it "would have had the appearance of a military operation successfully accomplished, and even triumphantly achieved."* This view of the matter is remarkable enough, but it is not the most singular feature in this singular letter, which, to use the language of a learned lord, affords matter for "much pondering." The authority solicited for retaining the army of Jelalabad is not formally and distinctly given, neither is it refused. His lordship only talks "about it and about it." It is assumed in the following passage (already quoted), that the army will remain, "since circumstances seem to compel you to remain there [at Jelalabad] till October;" and shortly after, it is observed, "you have already full powers to do every thing you may deem necessary, for the comfort of your troops and for their efficiency."* This hesitating, rambling mode of treating such a subject is strange enough in a state paper. But there are things yet more strange. The Governor-General compels us to go back to the famous letter from General Pollock of the 13th May, which emerged from darkness only at the call of two potent magicians, yeleft Lansdowne and Palmerston. His lordship acknowledges General Pollock's letter of the 20th May, but he says not one word of the letter of the 13th (the modest, retiring letter, that kept out of the way). Perhaps he had not received it. This supposition will, indeed, account for his not discussing its contents, but will it account for the absence of all allusion to it? It was evident that it was a most important letter.

* Papers, page 297.



But perhaps Lord Ellenborough knew nothing about it—he was ignorant of such a letter ever having been written. Not so, for General Pollock, in the letter which was so fortunate as to obtain an answer (that of the 20th May), says, “I have already, in my letter dated the 13th instant, entered on the subject,”* that subject being nothing less than the withdrawal of the army from Jelalabad to Peshawur, and yet this letter receives no more notice than if it had been a complimentary note inquiring after his lordship’s health—possibly not so much. Whether his lordship had received the letter or not, his silence is alike inexplicable. If he had received it, how came he not to acknowledge the receipt—if he had not, how came he to pass over the mishap so calmly? His lordship must answer—no one else can. The despatch to the Secret Committee reporting this correspondence throws no light upon the affair, but seems to make it more mysterious. In an early part of the despatch, General Pollock’s want of carriage is noticed, and it is observed, “the season is now, however, too far advanced to make it probable that Major-General Pollock will be able to commence a retrograde movement for some months.” In a subsequent part, one of the letters of General Pollock is thus noticed: “On the 20th May, the Major-General (Pollock), in reply to the letter addressed to him on the 4th, again represented the difficulty under which he laboured in procuring camels at Jelalabad, and under the circumstances stated, requested that he might be permitted to defer his retrograde movement until the month of October or November next. But you will perceive elsewhere,† that circumstances connected with the disorganization of the Sikh troops in the rear of our

* Papers, page 296.

† This refers to a letter on the subject, addressed by order of the Governor-General to the Commander-in Chief.



army in Affghanistan, make me more earnestly desire the speedy return of that army to the Sutlej; and that in order to enable Major-General Pollock to meet any difficulties in procuring carriage and supplies, treasure to the amount of ten lacs has been directed to be sent to Jelalabad.* From this statement, had it stood alone, what could the Secret Committee and the Board of Commissioners have concluded? Obviously that General Pollock's request had been refused—that he had been peremptorily ordered to return. Could they have thought that even the desponding acquiescence “since circumstances seem to compel you to remain” had been given; and taking the statement in connection with the passage first quoted, what could they make of it? Nothing consistent or intelligible; the whole seems a piece of studied mystification.

But now the curtain must rise upon a new scene in the strange drama before us—a scene, in the language of melodramatic managers, replete with striking effects. On the 4th of July we have seen that the Governor-General caused a letter to be written to General Nott cautioning him against concluding from General Pollock's movements, that any change had taken place in the main object of the instructions issued to the latter officer, those instructions having been invariably directed to his retirement at as early a period as possible. We have seen that on that same 4th of July General Pollock was also addressed in a similar strain.† But on that very same 4th of July, the two generals were addressed in two other letters which may be regarded as unexampled specimens of political chicanery. Men may have seen something like them before, but nothing so good of the kind. The principal letter, that to General Nott, is indeed a master-piece, and the greatest adepts in that crooked science which disregards means, and looks but

* Papers, page 263.

† See page 57.



to ends, and those selfish ends, may hail Lord Ellenborough as a worthy brother. The Jesuits immortalized by Pascal might be delighted with him—Talleyrand give him a fraternal embrace, and Machievelli, as belonging to a graver and less excitable nation, bestow on him a gracious smile of approval. Lord Ellenborough had always held out the retirement of the army as the chief object of his policy, and had strenuously urged that such retirement should be as early as possible. Does he continue to hold the same opinion still on this same 4th of July? He does—for he says so in the two brief and simple letters addressed on that day by his orders to the two generals; nay, more, he says the same in the second and more elaborate letter of that date to General Nott, the Jesuitical letter just introduced to the notice of the reader. Listen to him: “Nothing has occurred to induce me to change my first opinion, that the measure, commanded by considerations of political and military prudence, is to bring back the armies now in Affghanistan at the earliest period at which their retirement can be effected consistently with the health and efficiency of the troops, into positions wherein they may have easy and certain communication with India; and to this extent the instructions you have received remain unaltered.”* “To this extent!”—What extent? To bring back the armies to proximity with India as soon as possible. There is no limitation here—it is, in the more expressive than elegant phraseology of our brother across the Atlantic, “going the whole hog.” Get back the troops as soon as you can is the substance; albeit, dilated in diplomatic fashion, it occupies more space than these simple words. “But,” his Lordship commences his next sentence—Touchstone proves that there is great virtue in an “if,” and a voice from Allaha-

* See page 328.

bad demonstrates—practically, too, the best of all modes of demonstration—the virtue of a “but.” “But the improved position of your army, with sufficient means of carriage for as large a force as it is necessary to move in Affghanistan, induces me now to leave to your option the line by which you shall withdraw your troops from that country.” This reads well; the general, as a military man, and acquainted with the localities, might undoubtedly be a better judge upon such a matter than the most richly gifted Governor-General not thus qualified. Lord Ellenborough proceeds to speak of the line by Quetta and Sukkur, which he pronounces eligible—and so for mere retreat it might be. He then passes to another line, and the description of it almost takes away the breath of the reader. The line is by Ghuznee, Kabool, and Jelalabad! This—let all attention be given—this is laid down as a line of retirement from Kandahar to India, and being laid down by such eminent authority, it is not to be disputed that it is such a line, though certainly not the nearest, nor the most direct. It is as though a man at Gloucester should say, “I’ll retire to London, and I think the best line will be by Birmingham and Manchester.” Well, let us admit that General Nott, in going from Kandahar to Ghuznee, and from Ghuznee to Kabool, is to be considered as retiring upon India. It is hard, very hard, to receive, but it is nothing compared with what must yet be submitted to. General Nott’s line is marked out, but what is to become of General Pollock? He, too, must retire, and his presence has long been required in Peshawur, with all convenient speed (perhaps the qualifying epithet might have been omitted). Of course, now that he is provided with the means of carriage, he is at once to take the retrograde step, the necessity for which has been so unceasingly rung in his unwilling ears. Yes, General Pol-



lock is to retire, but not *immediately*, to Peshawur. He is to vary his line of march—slightly,—by a deviation in the direction of Kabool! Perhaps he may reach that place, memorable from the atrocities of which it was the scene, perhaps he may not reach quite so far, as the purpose of his *retiring* in this direction is represented as being to support General Nott—but towards Kabool is his course. Retire from Jelalabad towards India by Kabool! To adopt the mode of illustration before resorted to, this is as though a man at Northampton should talk of retiring to London by way of York. Every mile he traverses carries him away from the place that he says he is going to, nor has he the pretence afforded by a movement somewhat oblique to set his conscience at rest. He is going away from the place that he professes to be anxious to reach, in a manner most direct, palpable, and undisguised, that can be conceived. He does not cast even a sidelong glance towards the avowed point of his destination; he turns his back upon it, and must know what he is about. But there is a result, which evidently follows, from the mode of speaking adopted by Lord Ellenborough on this occasion, of which, perhaps, even he was not aware. The marches of General Nott and of General Pollock to Kabool were marches made in retirement—that is settled—well then, the march of Lord Keane was the same,—we are accustomed to speak of this as an advance, but it is now clear that we have been wrong,—General Pollock and General Nott marched to Kabool, and these marches were steps in retirement. Lord Keane made a similar march, and, therefore, his lordship must also have been retiring; though, so blindly infatuated have we always been, that we have regarded his march as an advance. It is useless to say that the two Generals, Pollock and Nott, did not mean to remain; that they were only to perform



certain acts, and then to evacuate the country. This does not convert an advance into a retreat; and, moreover, this was precisely what was contemplated in the case of Lord Keane and his army. They were not to remain; they were to fix Shah Shoojah on the throne, and then to withdraw. But stifling for a time—if we can—the laugh of derision which such perversion of language cannot fail to raise, let us ask, why was this contemptible juggling with words resorted to? The answer is plain—to save the infallibility of Lord Ellenborough. He had been for months saying that there was no course but retreat, and he continued to say so when forced by a regard to his reputation to yield—not to the more mature dictates of his own judgment—but to the counsels of others, and to change his policy. He thought the change might be masked—so he goes on still preaching retreat, but giving a new gloss to the old text. Retreat was still the word—the decree for its accomplishment had gone forth—but—the line of retreat was open—and what an extraordinary line it was has been already shewn. But to forget for a moment—if possible—the astounding audacity of this proceeding, let us look at the consistency which marked it. A letter is written to General Nott on the 4th July, telling him that the Governor-General's mind is unaltered, and that he must not conclude otherwise from any movement of General Pollock. Another letter is written on the same day, giving the general permission either to act in accordance with the Governor-General's views which remained unchanged, or to follow his own. The latter letter is not placed upon record, which Lord Ellenborough seems to think a marvellously deep piece of policy. Why was it not placed upon record? Was it to keep its contents entirely secret? Secrecy is a good thing in such cases, but the danger to be apprehended



was not likely to be provoked by the letter giving sanction—coldly and hesitatingly and reluctantly, indeed, but still giving it to a bold and manly course of action; the source of danger was to be found in the timid and cowering instructions for retreat. The generals invariably urge, that the design to retreat should, as far as possible, be concealed from the enemy—that the knowledge of such a design would embolden them, while the apprehension of more vigorous proceedings would keep them in a state of alarm. It was therefore the letters which contained the whining deprecations of any protracted occupation of the country that ought to have been kept especially secret,—but these were brought upon record, while that which allowed the generals to prosecute the war to an honourable conclusion—though with a sword suspended over their heads,—was deemed so dangerous, that for this or some other reason, it was for a time kept back.

So dishonest a paper as the second letter, addressed, on the 4th July, 1842, by Lord Ellenborough to General Nott, has rarely seen the light; but dishonesty is not its only characteristic; it is ungenerous to a degree that could not have been expected in a man holding the office of Governor-General of India. Lord Ellenborough casts from himself all responsibility, and throws it upon General Nott. Most judiciously was the burden bestowed; but ought a Governor-General of India thus to relieve himself at the expense of one under his orders? His lordship knew that if the armies in Affghanistan were brought back without making some demonstration of their power, and without some attempt to rescue the prisoners, he should be met by a universal shout of execration from his countrymen at home; but he shrunk from the responsibility of directing any measures necessary for the vindication of the



national honour, so he hit upon the expedient of leaving all to General Nott. He saws and balances through a letter of considerable length, and at last comes to no conclusion but that of advising nothing. Let the reader judge. After stating that he left to the general's "option" the choice of a line of retreat, he thus proceeds:—"I must desire, however, that in forming your decision upon this most important question, you will attend to the following considerations:—In the direction of Quetta and Sukkur, there is no enemy to oppose you: at each place, occupied by detachments, you will find provisions, and probably as you descend the passes, you will have increased means of carriage. The operation is one admitting of no doubt as to its success. If you determine upon moving upon Ghuznee, Kabool, and Jelalabad, you will require for the transport of provisions a much larger amount of carriage; and you will be practically without communications from the time of your leaving Kandahar. Dependent entirely upon the courage of your army, and upon your own ability in directing it, I should not have any doubt as to the success of the operation; but whether you will be able to obtain provisions for your troops, during the whole march, and forage for your animals, may be a matter of reasonable doubt. Yet upon this your success will turn. You must remember that it was not the superior courage of the Affghans, but want, and the inclemency of the season, which led to the destruction of the army at Kabool; and you must feel as I do, that the loss of another army, from whatever cause it might arise, might be fatal to our Government in India. I do not undervalue the aid which our Government in India would receive from the successful execution by your army of a march through Ghuznee and Kabool, over the scenes of our late disasters. I know all the effect which it



would have upon the minds of our soldiers, of our allies, of our enemies in Asia, and of our countrymen, and of all foreign nations in Europe. It is an object of just ambition, which no one more than myself would rejoice to see effected; but I see that failure in the attempt is certain and irretrievable ruin; and I would endeavour to inspire you with the necessary caution, and make you feel that, great as are the objects to be obtained by success, the risk is great also.* Now this language is substantially—"I have set before you the advantages and disadvantages of every conceivable course—do as you please, but take care that what you do is the best that can possibly be done." Let us mark the generosity of this proceeding—suppose that General Nott had participated in the more than girlish timidity of Lord Ellenborough, and had said—"I can get back in safety to Sukkur, so I will run no risk by trying to reach Kabool," he then would have incurred all the odium attendant on so inglorious an abandonment of Affghanistan. It would have been said—"you had permission to go on, and you did not." The Governor-General would thus have been exonerated; and now that he has found men more courageous than himself—men who dared to perform what he did not even dare to recommend, shall he enjoy any portion of the praise due to their noble conduct? Justice forbids it. What, give the prize to one who never entered the lists, or even divide it between the gallant soldiers to whose counsel the movement is to be attributed, as is its success to their arms—divide it between these distinguished men and "a certain lord, neat, trimly drest," whose dislike "to those vile guns" was so great that he thought it better to fly than to fight! Honour, never-dying honour, rest on the heroes who rescued the British name in Affghanistan from the contempt



into which it had fallen! but let not another, presuming upon the accident of his having at the time held the highest office in the government of British India, be allowed to step in, and rob them of any portion of the glory which is theirs, and theirs alone.

Is there on record any parallel to the conduct of Lord Ellenborough? Yes, one instance occurs. The readers of Roderick Random will remember, that while that erratic person is serving as a surgeon's mate on board a man-of-war, his superior, one Dr. Macshane, proposes to amputate a sailor's leg, in a case where Roderick and one of his comrades do not think the operation necessary. The doctor, shocked at the contumacy of his assistants, at first talks big, and declares that he is not accountable to them for his practice; but not feeling quite secure in his own judgment, and not liking to bear the responsibility of operating in opposition to theirs, he, after slight consideration, hits upon the expedient of turning the case over to his mates, and holding them accountable for the result. Just so did Lord Ellenborough. He gives orders, against which remonstrance is made by those who are to execute them. He persists for a while, and then, in conformity with the precedent afforded by the case of Dr. Macshane, he lets his troublesome advisers do as they please, but saddles the concession with a complete transfer of all responsibility from himself. Jack Ratlin, the wounded sailor, recovered under the hands of the two mates—no thanks to Dr. Macshane. The honour of England was vindicated in Afghanistan—but no thanks to Lord Ellenborough. He renounced all claim to praise by renouncing all responsibility. He would have nothing to do with the march to Kabool. Like the sceptical Philosopher Marphurius, in *Le Mariage Forcé*, he said, "*Je m'en lave les mains,*" though with far



better luck ; Molière's hero received a hearty thrashing for his indifference ;—

“ But yet, as fortune, by the self-same ways
She humbles many, some delights to raise,”

Lord Ellenborough, by a like manifestation, gains an Earl's coronet, and a Grand Cross of the Bath.

Yet indifferent as was Lord Ellenborough to some things, which appealed powerfully to the feelings of men inferior in rank to the Governor-General of India, it must not be supposed that he was on all subjects equally philosophical. He was not such “ a dish of skimmed-milk ” but that there were matters capable of moving him, and the letter to General Nott affords an instance. Anticipating that the general would be so hot-headed as to advance upon Ghuznee and Kabool—to *retreat* by way of these places it should have been said—anticipating this movement, Lord Ellenborough thus instructs the gallant officer upon a very important point relating to his conduct at the former place. “ You will bring away from the tomb of Mahmood of Ghuznee his club which hangs over it, and you will bring away the gates of his tomb, which are the gates of the temple of Somnauth.”* Let the defamers of Lord Ellenborough now stand forth and say, if they dare, that he is without enthusiasm. The charge is false. His enthusiasm may be of extraordinary character—it may require extraordinary occasions to call it forth—but it is clear that it may be called forth. Though it may slumber long, it exists. True, that the reparation of the damaged honour of Great Britain did not provoke it ; true, that it was proof against the claims of the brave men, delicate women, and innocent children who were in captivity among the Affghans ; but it is raised to boiling-heat by the thoughts of a mouldy old club and a pair of



totten gates. No, it would be wrong to charge Lord Ellenborough with being deficient in generous enthusiasm, but the feeling is in him of a singular kind. The club, alas ! eluded the grasp of the victors of Ghuznee ; but the gates—thrice happy chance ! were taken ; a fact as well known as John Gilpin's ride to Ware and back again.

“ I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know.”

And Lord Ellenborough took good care that all the world should know the story of the gates of Somnauth. The Hindoo princes, he thought, would be delighted with it, and he rushed to electrify them with the good news as eagerly as ancient Pistol to communicate to Sir John Falstaff the news of the accession to the throne of his old boon companion, Henry the Fifth.

“ Sir John, I am thy Pistol and thy friend,
And helter-skelter have I rode to thee,
And tidings do I bring, and lucky joy,
And golden times, and happy news of price.”

But ancient Pistol never uttered such fustian as is to be found in a certain Indian state paper. Who has forgotten the famous proclamation which threw Europe, Asia, and America, into apoplectic fits of laughter, except when the risible propensity was subdued by rising feelings of disgust or apprehension ? That a Christian nobleman should have dictated such a proclamation and sent it forth, with the stamp of his authority, is indeed calculated to excite impressions of deep regret, not less than of surprise. But that any man, except the concoctor of a low American newspaper—one of the fraternity transatlantically denominated *Slangwhangers*—could have written such a paper, would have exceeded belief were not the fact before us. If there be in existence any state paper with which it may fitly be

compared, it must have emanated from the cabinet of King Chrononhotonthologos. But to this sounding prelude what succeeded? The parading of the gates was to delight Lord Ellenborough's "brothers and friends,"—so he styled them—the Hindoo princes and chiefs. Did it answer the purpose? Far from it. His lordship's enthusiasm was shared by none. No man in India but himself cared for these gates, or deemed them worth a thought. To him they furnished a stand on which to hang the flowers of Bedlam eloquence, and there their importance ended. They slumber in obscurity, no one knows where. Certainly they have not been honoured with a triumphal progress into Guzerat, as Lord Ellenborough proposed, and it seems that if they had, there is no temple for them!

The folly of this unparalleled proclamation is obvious enough—the political danger attending its issue is not less apparent. His lordship had a keen scent for danger when British honour was to be vindicated and British prisoners rescued. How came his apprehensions to be lulled into insensibility when he prepared this extraordinary paper? Did his lordship think that in this proclamation he should carry with him the feelings of the Mahomedan subjects of the British Crown? Did it never occur to him that the almost divine honours claimed for a trumpery piece of carpenter's work might be offensive to those who, though aliens from the Christian fold, have yet a deep horror of idolatry, and of all that ministers to it? Did he overlook the fact, that the capture of these gates, if a triumph for the Hindoos, was a triumph over the Mahomedans, or did he think that there was no danger in irritating the latter? Did he forget how proud and excitable is the Mahomedan character—that those by whom the gates of Sonnauth were carried to Ghuznee



were followers of Mahomed, and that the original capture of the gates, like their recapture, was less a national than a religious cause of triumph? Did he forget that thousands of Mahomedans were serving in the British armies, and that it was scarcely worth while to offend them for the sake of trumpeting the march of the gates, of which the tomb of Mahmood the Destroyer had been despoiled, even though the tomb his lordship assured his "brothers and friends 'looked' upon the ruins of Ghuznee,"—an extraordinary proceeding on the part of the tomb. Did he forget HIS OWN declaration—surely he could not forget *that* whatever else might slip from his memory, that the war had "assumed a religious as well as national character?"* or did he disregard the possible consequences of disgusting a host of bold, reckless, uncalculating men, whose "brothers and friends" in Afghanistan professed, like themselves, the creed of Mahomed? True, no harm has followed. The Mahomedan population of India have cast aside their ordinary gravity, and, like all the world beside, laughed at the mad effusion which the Governor-General thought would please everybody, and found to please nobody. But because no mischief has ensued, are we to acquit the man who provoked it? A burning brand may be thrown into a mass of combustibles, and it may happen that the mass does not take fire, but we do not thereupon conclude that the application of the brand was a prudent or even an innocent act. Lord Ellenborough's proclamation has turned out only a good jest, but it might have been no jest at all. There would have been nothing like a jest in a widely-spread Mahomedan revolt. We might have been satisfied, as we are now, that Lord Ellenborough did not intend to produce such an out-

* Letter to Sir Jasper Nicolls, 15th March, 1842. Papers, page 167.



break—that his lordship, in fact, meant nothing by his proclamation—that it was a mere flourish of words, as unmeaning as a flourish of trumpets; but had an insurrection followed, it would have consoled us little to recollect that it had no more dignified origin than the passion of a Governor-General for writing turgid nonsense.

There was another proclamation issued a few months before, something in the same strain with the Somnauth paper. One passage is very characteristic of the author. "Disasters unparalleled in their extent, unless by the errors in which they originated, and the treachery by which they were completed, have, in one short campaign, been avenged upon every scene of past misfortune." Now did it become the Governor-General of India thus publicly to cast a stigma on his predecessor, whoever he might have been? It is not necessary to defend the policy of Lord Auckland—many, and among them some of the highest authorities on Indian affairs, condemn that policy—but, whether it were right or wrong, Lord Ellenborough had no right to sit in judgment upon it—no official right; he might hold his own opinion, he might express that opinion to his friends, or after he had quitted office, not before—he might have diffused it by means of the press; but as Governor-General of India, Lord Ellenborough had no right publicly to criticise his predecessor. The bad taste of the proceeding is aggravated by the character of the party attacked. The administration of Lord Auckland terminated amid clouds; but who is there of any party who will deny to his lordship the character of an upright, conscientious, and intelligent functionary? Moreover, Lord Auckland was eminently a modest and unassuming statesman: Oh! how unlike, in this respect, to his successor.

Towards the conclusion of this proclamation, the first in



order of time, though the second noticed, are two intimations of very singular character viewed in connection with that which has followed. The first of them is to the effect that "the rivers of the Punjab and the Indus" are to "be placed between a British army and an enemy approaching from the West." The Indus, therefore, is to be one of the boundaries of British territory and occupation. The sentence immediately preceding the passage above quoted commences thus:—"Content with the limits nature appears to have assigned to its empire, the Government of India will devote all its efforts to the establishment and maintenance of general PEACE." This last word brings us to the second point, which is prominently put forward in the sentence with which the proclamation concludes:—"Sincerely attached to peace, for the sake of the benefits it confers upon the people, the Governor-General is resolved that PEACE shall be observed." Here are two things pronounced distinctly; first, that Lord Ellenborough would regard the Indus as a natural boundary of the British Empire in the East, and secondly, that his policy should be pacific—

"The lady doth protest too much, methinks,
Oh! but she'll keep her word."

Let us see how the Governor-General kept his. Peace had been his unceasing song. He had sung it after dinner at the London Tavern when about to proceed to India, and he continued to encore himself upon all fitting occasions, and some unfitting ones, after he arrived in that country. He would have purchased peace with Affghanistan, even though national dishonour were the price. He afterwards became more warlike. The military had gained laurels in Affghanistan, a portion of which he transferred to his own brows; but while they were ripening, a series of events were in progress in Sinde, which, in their termination,



illustrated, in a most extraordinary manner, both the consistency of his lordship's professions with his actions, and the pacific character of his policy.

Sinde had been for many years under a government of an extraordinary character. It was divided into three states, Hyderabad, Khyrpoor, and Meerpoor, subject to rulers called Ameers, some of whom exercised the powers of sovereignty in undivided tenancy. Of these states, Hyderabad was the chief. The East-India Company long maintained some commercial intercourse with Sinde, but no political connection subsisted between the Company's government and that of any of the states of Sinde till the year 1809, when, it being an important object to keep the French from gaining any footing in India, a treaty was concluded, by which the rulers of Hyderabad bound themselves not to admit that people to settle in their country. In 1820, another treaty was concluded, by which all Europeans and Americans were to be excluded from settling in the dominions of Sinde. In 1832, it being an object with the British Government to open the navigation of the Indus, another treaty was concluded, by which that object was attained, subject to three conditions—the exclusion of the transit of military stores by the river as well as by the roads of Sinde, the exclusion of armed vessels, and the prohibition of English merchants settling in the country. By another treaty with Khyrpoor, the passage of the river was conceded upon the same terms as might be agreed upon with the Government of Hyderabad. A supplementary treaty, having reference especially to the tolls to be levied, was concluded with the Hyderabad Government very soon after the former treaty; and in 1834, a commercial treaty, in conformity with a provision in the supplementary one, was entered into with the same state, and extended to



Khyrpoor, as previously agreed upon. In 1838, another treaty was formed, by which the British Government undertook to use its good offices to adjust differences existing between the Ameers and Runjeet Singh, the Sikh ruler, who meditated the extension of his conquests in the direction of Sind. By this treaty, also, the Ameers agreed, for the first time, to receive permanently a British minister to reside at Hyderabad, or elsewhere within their dominions, as he might deem expedient.

Sinde was formerly a dependency of the Mogul empire. About the middle of the last century it became subject to Kabool, but from the weakness of the Government of that country, the dependency was little more than nominal. When the British Government resolved to support the claims of Shah Shoojah, and reinstate him in possession of his dominions, it was deemed necessary to settle the relation of Sind with Kabool, and accordingly, by an article in the Tripartite treaty, to which the British Government, Runjeet Singh, and Shoojah-ool-Moolk were parties, it was provided that, on the payment, by the Ameers, to Shoojah-ool-Moolk of a sum to be fixed under the mediation of the British Government (part of which was to be paid by Shoojah to Runjeet Singh), all the claims of the ruler of Kabool upon Sind, whether of supremacy or for tribute, were to be relinquished, and the country was to continue to belong to the Ameers and their successors in perpetuity.

The conclusion of this treaty, and the mode in which their interests were affected by it, were communicated to the Ameers by the British minister at Hyderabad, who was instructed, also, to announce the approach of the army intended to reseat Shah Shoojah on the throne of Kabool. A long course of diplomatic proceedings, varied by sundry hostile acts on the part of the British Government, too

well known to require detail, here followed. These ended in the conclusion of new treaties, the effect of which was to add the Ameers to the number of princes over whom the British Government held control by the tenure of a subsidiary alliance. Thus matters stood in February, 1842, when Lord Ellenborough arrived to take the reins of government in India.

It is not offering his lordship any injustice to say that almost from the period of his entering upon the duties of his office, he seems to have contemplated the reduction of Sind to the condition of a British province, in name as well as in fact. On the 6th May, 1842, he writes to the political agent in that country thus: "The Governor-General is *led to think* that you *may* have seen reason to doubt the fidelity of some one or more of the Ameers of Sind."^{*} Accordingly, with reference to what his lordship had been "*led to think*" *might* have occurred, he transmitted a letter, to be addressed to any one or more of the Ameers who might incur suspicion. This letter, which breathes gunpowder in every line, thus concludes: "On the day on which you shall be faithless to the British Government, sovereignty will have passed from you; your dominions will be given to others" (to whom?—we shall shortly see), "and in your destitution, all India will see that the British Government will not pardon an injury received from one it believes to be its friend."[†] In the letter of instruction to the political agent, this passage is referred to as "no idle threat, intended only to alarm, but a declaration of the Governor-General's fixed determination to punish, cost what it may, the first chief who may prove faithless, by the confiscation of his dominions."[‡]

* Correspondence relating to Sind, 1836, 1843. Printed in conformity with a resolution of the General Court of Proprietors of East-India Stock, 17th November, 1843. Page 347. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.



Proceeding onward, we find another letter addressed by order of his lordship to the political agent in Sindé, under date the 22nd May. The British, as is well known, had, on advancing upon Affghanistan, taken possession of certain towns and fortresses belonging to the Ameers of Sindé. Whether this were justifiable or not, this is not the place to inquire; but this much is quite certain without any inquiry, that we had possessed ourselves of these places avowedly for military purposes, and that our retention of them was professedly only temporary. In the letter last referred to, the political agent in Sindé is thus instructed: "In any future negotiation with the Ameers of Khyrpoor, you will therefore bear in mind that it is the wish of the Governor-General to possess the island of Bukkur and the town of Sukkur, with such an ample *arrondissement* as may give every facility for the maintenance of a good police within the town, and for the formation of commercial establishments therein; regard being had likewise to the changing character of the Indus, and the necessity of providing for every variation in the course of that river which the localities make it possible to foresee. The island of Bukkur would be considered as a citadel and arsenal of the town of Sukkur, and should be rendered easily defensible by a small force."* If advantage should be taken of an expression in a previous part of this letter, "his lordship feels that it will be necessary, *at least until the affairs of Affghanistan shall assume a more settled and satisfactory form*, to retain a position on the Indus, and to have the means of acting upon both banks"—if advantage be taken of the above qualification to say that Lord Ellenborough meant to retain possession of certain parts of Sindé only for a limited period, an answer is furnished by himself in the following passage from the latter part of his letter. "The

* Correspondence, page 350.



Governor-General would consider that it would be a most desirable arrangement if, in lieu of all tribute payable, under treaty or otherwise, by the Ameers of Sind and of Khyrpoor, such cessions of territory as may be necessary were made to us at Kurrachee, the island of Bukkur, and the town of Sukkur, and all claims to tribute payable by the Ameers to us, or to any other power, were, after such cessions, to be cancelled, in consideration of the establishment of the perpetual freedom of trade upon the Indus, and of such other provisions for the freedom of transit through their respective territories as it might appear expedient to make." Thus it is obvious that even at this early period of his administration Lord Ellenborough contemplated permanent territorial acquisition in Sind.

On the 4th of June we have another letter to the political agent in Sind, in which his lordship is represented as "resolved to keep every thing within the Lower Indus in his hands." In this letter he inquires "whether the territories under Meer Roostum Khan be in such a position as to make it easy to annex a portion thereof to the dominions of the Khan of Bhawulpore, whose dominions his lordship is desirous of increasing, in reward for his own uniform fidelity and that of his ancestors."* Here we find Lord Ellenborough treating the dominions of the Ameers as though they were his own—not only assigning as much as he thought fit to the Government of which he was the representative and head, but proposing to carve them out for the benefit of others, provided that they lay conveniently for the purpose.

Shortly after this, the reader of the Sind correspondence is treated with a specimen of his lordship's usual vacillation. A letter addressed to the political agent on the 10th of

* Correspondence, page 370.



July concludes thus: "After all, it will be a matter for consideration, before the final instructions shall be issued to you, whether any probable benefit to be ever derived from the treaty could compensate for the annual expenditure which would be brought upon the Government of India by the maintenance of a large force at Sukkur and Kurachee."* On the 22nd May, the Governor-General had been most anxious to retain possession of Kurachee, Bukkur, and Sukkur. But between that date and the 22nd July, "consideration like an angel came," and he began to doubt whether these places were worth the expense of keeping.

A new actor, and one destined to play a very important part, now appears on the stage. This is Sir Charles Napier. This functionary was not only to hold the chief military command in Sind and Beloochistan, but within those limits was to "exercise entire authority over all political and civil officers." Such are the instructions of the Governor-General, dated the 26th August. They conclude thus: "It may be convenient that you should at once be informed that, if the Ameers, or any one of them, should act hostilely, or evince hostile designs against our army, it is my fixed resolution never to forgive the breach of faith, and to exact a penalty which shall be a warning to every chief in India. On the other hand, it is my intention to seize the first opportunity of bestowing substantial benefits upon the Khan of Bhawalpore, as a reward for the constant support which the British Government has received from him and his ancestors."† Here the old spirit again breaks out. The Ameers had as yet not gone the length which would afford a decent pretence for depriving them of their territory; but the eye of Sir Charles Napier was to be kept on them in the hope that they would. The

* Correspondence, page 381.

† Ibid. page 384.



fruit was not quite ripe, but it was to be watched till it could be gathered with some appearance of propriety; and when the much-desired opportunity arrived of stripping the tree, a friend and neighbour was to be thought of, and a good basket-full of the produce handed over to him. These things it was "convenient"—that is the word—that Sir Charles Napier should know. That Sir Charles Napier might be informed of every thing that the Ameers had done of a hostile character, and even of every thing that *might be so construed*, Major Outram was, on 1st September, instructed to "explain to the major-general (Napier) the actual state of things, shewing him what had been done by the Ameers and chiefs, in pursuance of the treaties, and place before him, with *judicial accuracy*, the several acts whereby the Ameers and chiefs may have seemed to depart from the terms or *spirit* of their engagements, and to have evinced hostility or unfriendliness towards the Government of India."* One might suppose that this was an extract from a letter to an attorney, directing him to lay before counsel a statement of facts, for the purpose of framing a criminal indictment. Of these instructions to Major Outram, Sir Charles Napier was advised, in a letter reiterating the Governor-General's determination to inflict signal punishment upon any of the chiefs who might have evinced hostile designs.† Indeed, these denunciations of "signal punishment" occur so frequently in his lordship's communications respecting Sind, as to mark beyond the possibility of mistake the feelings and intentions which were cherished by him.

On the 23rd October, the desire which the Governor-General had long felt, of being munificent at the expense of others, is found prevailing in great activity. In a letter of that date, to Sir Charles Napier, he says, "I am very anxious to be enabled, as the result of any new arrangement with the

* Correspondence, page 385.

† Ibid. page 386.



Ameers, to have at my disposal the Pergunnahs of Bhoong Bhara, and, if possible, Subzulkote likewise, in order to bestow them in free gift upon the Khan of Bhawulpore. No chief in India deserves so well of the British Government as that Khan. He and his family have been faithful for three generations, and I know no measure which would be so conducive to our reputation and influence (certainly there is none that would be so gratifying to myself) as to be enabled to make this gift to him. The cession should be made to us, and then we should give it over to the Khan; and, as there may be some difficulty in the proposed arrangement with the Ameers, it would be better to say nothing to the Khan till the thing is done.* The Governor-General is "very anxious" to get a portion of the property of the Ameers of Sind to give away to a third party, because that third party deserved well of the British Government. Nothing, he thinks, would conduce so much to "our reputation" as to take from John and give to Peter! "The cession should be made to us, and then we should give it over to the Khan!" Let us by threats or cajolery get possession of something that does not belong to us, for the sake of generously bestowing it upon a friend. The exercise of gratitude is as delightful as it is respectable, and it is the more delightful (though perchance not the more respectable) when it can be indulged, not at our own proper cost, but at that of our neighbours. This is the morality of a British Governor-General who flourished in India in the year 1842.

Under the same date, the 23rd October, another letter to Sir Charles Napier occurs, in which his lordship says, "I am inclined to think that the Ameer Nusseer Khan will be so wrong-headed, or so ill-advised, as to persist in refusing to observe the conditions of the treaty, in which case

* Correspondence, page 392.



he must be at once compelled to do so; and if the Government is obliged to incur any expense for the purpose of so compelling him, the least punishment which can be inflicted upon him is that of defraying the expense.* In a letter formerly quoted, we find that his lordship was "led to think" that which was most convenient for his purpose. Now he is "*inclined* to think," an assertion which it cannot be doubted was quite in accordance with fact. It being settled that Ameer Nusseer Khan would oblige the British Government to incur expense, and that he ought to defray it, the master passion of the Governor-General suddenly peeps out again. "But," he continues, "I should prefer depriving him of territory." Territory again! "Still harping on my daughter;" and his lordship proceeds, through a portion of the remainder of his letter and a rather respectable postscript, to offer suggestions for disposing of the territory of which Nusseer Khan was to be deprived with as much coolness as the commissioners under an inclosure act might make allotments to the parties interested. As is frequently the case in regard to right of common, there were some rather complicated questions, which, however, the Governor-General discusses with perfect *sang-froid*.

It cannot be denied that in Sir Charles Napier the Governor-General found an efficient and by no means a scrupulous agent. In a paper of considerable length (so considerable indeed, that its author terms it "an essay rather than a letter"), Sir Charles Napier shews a degree of aptitude for following up the suggestions of his superior which is perfectly astonishing.† After some observations on the expediency of keeping the Ameers strictly to the terms of their treaties, he says, "By treaty, the time for

* Correspondence, page 393.

† See the paper in Correspondence, page 394.



which we may occupy our present camps is unlimited ;”—true, Sir Charles, true ; but surely you are aware that the occupation was always professed to be temporary, though no precise time was fixed for its conclusion. Having always professed an intention to depart as soon as the circumstances which led to your presence shall have ceased, will you stay for ever, because the exact moment for your departure has never been determined ? This would be just what we should look for in a Mahratta visitor—first to get a temporary footing, then to make it permanent ; but from the Government of British India we expect something better. If honour and good faith find no place beside in India, let them at least irradiate the counsels of British statesmen and British soldiers, whether they emanate from Calcutta, from Simla, or from Sukkur. You will not force one party to observe the strict letter of a treaty, and claim for yourself the privilege of violating its spirit, together with an understanding so distinct as to have acquired almost the force of a formal treaty ! Yes, even this is what is recommended. The position that the time for the stay of the British army is not limited, is laid down, not as an idle display of dialectic sagacity, but as a basis on which to rest a most formidable scheme of aggression. Sir Charles Napier’s argument may be stated, in an abridged form, thus :—If we depart, we must soon come back ; therefore we ought to stay. If we stay, our camps will grow into towns, and the inhabitants will engross all the trade of the Indus. These towns will flourish, while the territory of the Ameers will decay. The rival governments will quarrel, and the stronger will swallow up the weaker. This is all very straightforward, and having brought his *sortites* to a conclusion, Sir Charles asks, “ If this reasoning be correct, would it not be better to come to

the results at once?" And he answers, "I think it would be better, if it can be done with honesty." Now this qualification is somewhat embarrassing; but Sir Charles Napier is too experienced a tactician, and too brave a man, to despair. He proves to his own satisfaction that the Ameers deserved all that he proposed to bring upon them, because they were charged with certain acts of apparent hostility, some of which were very questionable in point of fact, while others were of very trifling nature; and further, because they had a passion for hunting, rivalling that of even our William the First. The fact is, that both the Governor-General and the chief military and political functionary in Sind had made up their minds to a particular course; and, this being the case, there was no difficulty in finding reasons to justify it. It is but a new illustration of the old fable of the Lion and the Lamb. The stronger animal wanted a meal, and the casuistry of hunger readily furnished him with pretexts for gratifying his appetite. So Sind was coveted, and a pretext for taking the whole, or a part, was eagerly sought for, and, it is unnecessary to say, not sought in vain. Sir Charles Napier, who, to render him justice, speaks out with most soldierly frankness, says, "I have maintained that we want only a fair pretext to coerce the Ameers."* And again: "They have broken treaties"—as he proposed to break the implied obligation to depart at a proper time—"they have given a pretext;" and the Governor-General, under whom Sir Charles Napier served, was not more slow in laying hold of it than was Sir Charles in advising such a step.

Still some degree of caution was to be observed; greatly as the object was desired, there was danger of going too fast. What instructions Lord Ellenborough carried from

* Correspondence, page 395.



home cannot be known ; but apart from all fear on this head, there were grounds for hesitation sufficient to make even the most quixotic pause. There was the Court of Directors of the East-India Company watching the proceedings of their Governor-General ; there were the Proprietors of East-India Stock ; there was the Press of England ; there was the British Parliament ; and there was the whole body of the British people. The Ameers, too, were not so hostile as they ought to have been. "The Ameers," says Sir Charles Napier, writing to the Governor-General on the 8th of November, "have not committed any overt act ;"* but there was some comfort, inasmuch as it was to be hoped that they would. "If they refuse to listen to reason," he shortly afterwards observes ; "if they persist in sacrificing every thing to their avarice and their shikargahs, or hunting grounds, they must even have their way, and try the force of arms at their peril, if so they are resolved."†

And truly the crisis was approaching. From the time of his arrival in India, the Governor-General had marked out Sindé for a prey. In furtherance of the *denouement* which had long been foreseen and prepared, the existing treaties were voted obsolete and inapplicable to the then state of affairs, and new ones were submitted to the unhappy Ameers, which, it was anticipated, they would reject. This is evident from the letter of Lord Ellenborough to the Secret Committee, of the 19th of November, 1842, wherein he says : "I cannot but apprehend that the Ameers of Hydrabad and Khyrpoor will resist the imposition of the terms I have deemed it just and expedient to demand from them, in consequence of the violations of treaty, and the *acts of intended hostility*, of which *they appear* to have been guilty."‡ Surely this is strange

* Correspondence, p. 476.

† Ibid. p. 476.

‡ Ibid. p. 488.

phraseology. What a confusion of intention and action!

“Acts of intended hostility!” Was it mere intention that was imputed to the Ameers? If so, what is meant by “acts?” Or had they actually manifested their hostility by overt acts? If so, what means the word “intended?” But passing this, how hesitating, qualified, and unsatisfactory, is the mode in which these intentions or actions, or whatever they were, are spoken of! “Acts of intended hostility of which they *appear* to have been guilty.” So then the Governor-General was not quite sure. Appearances indeed were, in his judgment, against the Ameers—there was ground for suspicion—was there not ground for doubt on the other side? Would he visit mere appearance with severe punishment and call this “just and expedient!” This is a revival of “Lydford Law;” hang the accused first, and try him afterwards.

But what sort of terms were those which Lord Ellenborough expected would be rejected by the Ameers? They were terms nearly as offensive as it was possible to frame. Nothing short of the total deprivation of territory and sovereignty could exceed them in this respect. The Ameers were to be relieved of all pecuniary payments, and this article, naturally enough considering who framed them, parades conspicuously in the very front of the drafts of the revised treaties. This is the single sweetener thrown into the bitter potion which the unfortunate Ameers were called upon to swallow. Tribute was to cease, but, in conformity with views long entertained and avowed, large cessions of territory were required—a sacrifice known to be most hateful to the Ameers. With regard to the portions of territory to be held by the English, the Ameers were to be entirely at the mercy of those who demanded them, for the limits were not defined in the draft of treaty, nor were they



to be determined by commissioners chosen by the parties respectively interested, but by the agent of one of them, namely, by Sir Charles Napier ! Was ever such a mode of dealing heard of ? The representative of the British Government in India walks into the country of a power with whom his Government has for some years maintained friendly relations, and which relations are about to be revised—only revised—and says, “I am instructed to take a portion of your territory—I cannot, at present, tell you how much ; I must see how much we want—in the meantime there is a treaty which you are to sign without muttering a word of dislike.” This course of proceeding placed the Ameers in worse than a state of vassalage. The draft of treaty would seem to have been studiously drawn with a view to give to them as much pain as possible—to give the deepest wound to their feelings of self-respect, and to add to their humiliation every ingredient of bitterness of which it was susceptible. They were to relinquish the right of coining money, one of the most valued appendages of sovereignty—the British Government were to coin it for them, and none but the rupee thus specially coined and the Company’s rupee were to circulate in Sind. The very coin which passed from hand to hand among the subjects of the Ameers was to testify to their degradation. Further, they were to supply, at a price to be fixed, fire-wood, for the purpose of steam navigation, in whatever quantities the officers of the British Government might from time to time require ; and failing in this, those officers were to be empowered to cut down wood within a specified distance of the river—an exercise of which power would have had the effect of destroying the shikar-zars, or hunting preserves, in which these princes delighted. Such was the mode in which Lord Ellenborough proposed to treat a power with which he was ostensibly



desirous of maintaining friendly terms. If this treaty were a specimen of his friendship, what must his enmity be? It is worth while to see what account the Governor-General gives of the matter. In a letter to Sir Charles Napier, dated November 4th, he says, "The treaty proposed to be imposed upon Meer Roostum and Meer Nusseer Khans, rests, for its justification, upon the assumption that the letters said to be addressed by Meer Roostum to the Maharajah Shere Sing, and by Meer Nusseer Khan to Beebruck Boogtie, were really written by those chiefs respectively, and that the confidential minister of Meer Roostum did, as is alleged, contrive the escape of the Syud Mahomed Shureef."* Here are Lord Ellenborough's motives as stated by himself. There is his defence—he has chosen his ground and he must stand on it. This was perfectly understood by Sir Charles Napier, who, in a letter to the Governor-General, of the 17th November, says, "The whole proceedings towards the Ameers now depend, as I construe your decision, upon three things:—1st. Is the letter of Meer Nusseer Khan, of Hyderabad, to Beebruck Boogtie, an authentic letter or a forgery? 2nd. Is the letter of Meer Roostum Khan, of Khyrpoor, to the Maharajah Shere Sing, an authentic letter or a forgery? 3rd. Did Futteh Mahomed Ghoree, confidential agent of Meer Roostum Khan, of Khyrpoor, assist in the escape of Mahomed Shureef?"†—These are the three points, and how does the general dispose of them? The first letter, that alleged to be written by Meer Nusseer Khan, of Hyderabad, is about as vague as native letters generally are; but if it were genuine, it would seem to indicate that the Ameer had fomented movements hostile to the British cause, and that he meditated shaking off his connec-

* Correspondence, page 472.

† Ibid. page 486.



tion with British Government.* But its genuineness cannot, as it seems, be proved. The seal, the great evidence of its authenticity, is pronounced, by certain witnesses, to be that of Meer Nusseer Khan ; but then Sir Charles Napier measures the details with a pair of compasses, and it is found that they do not correspond with those of the seal known to be in use by the Ameer. This would seem to discredit the letter, for an inscription upon a seal is not a shifting thing, in which the letters are sometimes of one size and sometimes of another, with variable distances between them. But as the half-starved apothecary, Lampedo, had a remedy, even though soul and body were divorced, so Sir Charles Napier has one for this awkward flaw in the evidence against the Ameers. It “ is accounted for by the circumstance (said to be notorious), that the Ameers have two seals.”† Now it seems that the fact of their having two seals was not positively “notorious”—it was only “said to be” so ;—and thus the rumour of a rumour is the ultimate evidence upon which this charge rests. Was this a sufficient ground for such a proceeding as that which Lord Ellenborough founded upon it—even though strengthened by the declaration of Sir Charles Napier, “that no one has a doubt of the authenticity of the letter ?”‡

The second point relates to the letter of Meer Roostum of Khypoor, referring to a supposed treaty between that prince and the ruler of Lahore. With regard to this letter, Sir Charles Napier says, there are doubts on the mind of Major Outram whether the Ameer was privy to it or not ; but that it certainly was written by his confidential minister, and bore the Ameer’s seal ;§ and he concludes, that Lord

* See Correspondence, page 440. † Ibid. page 486. ‡ Ibid.

§ Mr. Clerk, British Envoy at Lahore, to whom this was, with some other letters, transmitted, doubted of their authenticity. See Correspondence, page 478.



Ellenborough will hold, that Meer Roostum must be responsible for the acts of his minister. He was right in concluding that such would be the decision of the Governor-General, but this system of making the prince responsible for the act of his minister is a reversal of the old doctrine, that the minister is responsible for the acts of the prince. We have seen how one of the Ameers was dealt with as to evidence. Now we have another sentenced to equally severe treatment on account of a letter which there is not the slightest proof that he ever saw.

The third point relates to the escape of an insurgent leader from the custody of the British authorities, and the evidence, if it be worthy of belief (which is not quite certain), proves that the aforesaid confidential minister was in correspondence with him; but, as in the former case, there is nothing to implicate his master.

Such is the evidence collected by Sir Charles Napier, with regard to which he observes: "If I have your lordship's answer, saying, that you consider the above sufficient to act upon, I shall lose no time in proposing your draft of the new treaty to the Ameers."* His lordship did think it sufficient, and Sir Charles was instructed to act.

He did act, and a strange and disgusting combination of vile intrigue and unjustifiable violence marked his course. Meer Roostum, the unhappy chief of Khyrpoor, had a brother, named Meer Ali Morad, who was anxious to supplant him. It seems that, by the established rule of succession, he would have succeeded to this dignity on the death of his brother, though the latter had a son, but he was unwilling to wait. Sir Charles Napier lent his countenance to the designs of Meer Morad Ali, promised him the support of the Governor-General,† and the result was, that the chiefship (the turban it is somewhat affectedly called) was trans-

* See Correspondence, page 486.

† Ibid, page 515.



ferred to the usurping brother. He was desirous of something more; having obtained the chiefship prematurely, he wished to divert the line of succession in favour of his own family. "The rightful heir at Ali Morad's death is his nephew, the son of Meer Roostum."* These words are Sir Charles Napier's. But Ali Morad wished his own son to succeed, and a British officer does not shrink from asking a British Governor-General whether or not this could be accorded. What says the Governor-General? He shall not be misrepresented; he shall speak for himself. "I shall therefore gladly see established the right of primogeniture in the direct line; and this you may, if you deem it advisable, communicate to Meer Ali Morad; and I have little doubt, that once established in the possession of the turban, with our support, he will be able, with the concurrence of a majority of the family, to establish the more natural and reasonable line of succession to the turban, and clothe the measure with the forms of legality; but recognizing, as I do, Meer Ali Morad as the successor to Meer Roostum, according to the present custom, whereby the eldest son of Meer Roostum is superseded, I could not at once recognize the eldest son of Meer Ali Morad as his successor, in contravention of the very principle upon which his father's rights are founded."† Most straightforward and righteous policy! The rights of the heir cannot be invaded openly and immediately, but they shall be undermined—they shall be attacked secretly and by degrees. This is the policy of a British Government in the nineteenth century of the Christian era! Can the annals of the most depraved of native states furnish any thing more crooked, despicable, and base than this?

Chicane requires time—violence is more prompt. Sir Charles Napier had wormed Meer Roostum out of the

* Correspondence, page 511.

† Ibid. page 512.



chiefship, and prevailed on the poor old man ("poor old fool" the general calls him *) to surrender himself to the usurper of his rights.† Lord Ellenborough approved the

* See Correspondence, page 509.

† Sir Charles Napier subsequently endeavoured to shew that he had nothing to do with the transfer of the turban. In a paper drawn by him and which appears in the Supplementary Correspondence relating to Sind, pp. 114, 115, he says, "when I heard that he [Meer Roostum] had resigned the turban to Ali Morad I disapproved of it, and Mr. Brown will recollect my sending Ali Morad's vakeel back to him with this message. I even recommended him to return the turban and merely act as his brother's lieutenant." Again in a letter to the Governor-General in Council (page 116), he says, "I assuredly did not press the abdication of the turban by Meer Roostum, nor did I ever advise it." Sir Charles Napier, however, admits (page 114) that he ever advised Meer Roostum to seek the "protection" of his brother and be guided by him, though he boasts as follows:—"I gave Meer Roostum the option and invitation of coming to my camp and putting himself under my protection." He says further, "by my advice, which, let the reader observe, was not given till it was asked, I secured to Meer Roostum the honourable and powerful protection of the British Government. This he did not choose to accept—he went to his brother."

With reference to these statements, nothing more is necessary than to quote Sir Charles Napier's words from the first volume of Correspondence relating to Sind. At page 510, we find him reporting a proposed escape of Meer Roostum to his (Sir C. N.'s) camp, on which he observes, "I DID NOT LIKE THIS, AS IT WOULD HAVE EMBARRASSED ME VERY MUCH HOW TO ACT, BUT THE IDEA STRUCK ME AT ONCE THAT HE MIGHT GO TO ALI MORAD, WHO MIGHT INDUCE HIM (AS A FAMILY ARRANGEMENT) TO RESIGN THE TURBAN TO HIM. * * * I therefore secretly wrote, to Roostum and Ali Morad, and about one o'clock this morning I had an express from Ali Morad to say, that his brother is safe with him." Again, at page 515, Sir Charles Napier writing to the Governor-General, after adverting to a particular view which he entertained as to the policy of the Ameers, says, "This made me venture to PROMISE ALI MORAD YOUR LORDSHIP'S SUPPORT IN HAVING THE TURBAN, which your Lordship has approved of. The next step was

step, and on the day which among his countrymen is eminently one of peace and good-will, recorded his approval. On Christmas-day, 1842, he wrote to Sir Charles Napier, "I entirely approve of all you have done and express your intention of doing."* But the course of events did not run smooth. The degradation of Meer Roostum, according to Sir Charles Napier, "burst upon his family and followers like a bomb-shell." Alarmed at what they witnessed, and not knowing what to expect next, they fled towards Emaun-ghur, a fortress situate about a hundred miles within the great sandy desert separating Sinde from Jessulmair. What did the British general? He determined to follow them with an armed force, in order to prove, as he says, "that neither their deserts nor their negotiations can protect them from the British troops;"† —be it remembered, we were at peace with the Khyrpoor state—"war has not been declared,"‡ observes Sir Charles Napier; "nor," he continues, "is it necessary to declare it." The people of Sinde, it seems, were not entitled to the benefit of any of those principles which have been established for the regulation of hostile proceedings between nations, and which serve to distinguish civilized warfare from mere brigandism. The general is fond of calling them barbarians, and he seems to have treated them as something even lower than barbarians. To the beasts of the forest—animals *feræ naturæ*,—the sportsman allows what is called "law;" the unhappy Sindians were allowed none. Sir Charles Napier marched; he arrived at Emaun-ghur, and on arriving, coolly determined to "blow it down."§ He

to secure him the exercise of its power now, even during his brother's life. This I was so fortunate to succeed in BY PERSUADING MEER ROOSTUM TO PLACE HIMSELF IN ALI MORAD'S HANDS."

* Correspondence, page 512.

† Ibid. page 516.

‡ Ibid. page 515.

§ Ibid. page 528.



was fortified in this determination by reflecting that the fortress belonged to Ali Morad, who consented to its destruction. It is, however, by no means clear that it belonged either to Ali Morad or to the man whom he had manœuvred out of the turban; the real owner seems to have been Meer Mahomed Khan. But, waiving this point, how came it to belong to Ali Morad, if belong to him it did? This question it is unnecessary to answer here, for the reader will not have forgotten. Twenty thousand pounds of powder were found in the fortress. This was employed in its destruction; Emaun-ghur became a heap of ruins; and this was the act of an ally during a period of peace. During a period of peace did this same ally take forcible possession of the districts of Subzulcote and Bhoongbara, and give them over to the Nawaub of Bhaulpore, as long contemplated; and then came a conference between Major Outram and the Ameers, reported most dramatically in the Blue Book,* in which, though the commissioner maintained a bold front, relying on the army that was rapidly approaching, the Ameers had clearly the advantage in regard to fact and argument. They referred to the last treaty concluded with them, by which the British stood pledged never to covet any portion of the territory or property of the Ameers,—but in vain. Nusseer Khan denied the letters which formed the ground for one of the charges, and called for their production; but this too was vain—they were with the Governor-General. He referred to the case with which seals are forged, and reminded the commissioner that he had himself called for the punishment of a person who had forged his. The commissioner answered that the handwriting had been identified. The Amcer repeated his disclaimer of any knowledge of the letter, and demanded, “Why was not the paper shewn to me?” Ay, why? Does he obtain a satisfactory

* Correspondence, pages 534, *et seq.*



answer? Yes—if the following be satisfactory. “These are points which it is not for me to discuss!” No, discussion was not the object, truth was not the object, right was not the object—but the wrenching from the Ameers of power and territory. Even this might perhaps have been accomplished at once, but for a false move on the part of Sir Charles Napier which it was now too late to retract. This was the treatment which Meer Roostum had received. “Why was he deposed?” demanded the Ameers, and the answer was, that he resigned of his own free will! What says “the poor old fool”* to this? “By the general’s own direction I sought refuge with Ali Morad (here he produced the letter directing Meer Roostum to place himself under Meer Ali Morad’s protection, and to be guided by his advice), who placed me under restraint, and made use of my seal, and compelled me to do as he thought proper. *Would I resign my birthright of my own free will?*”† Thus much we learn from the report of the British commissioner—much more we might know had we a report on the other side. This appears from his own statement—“Lest my memory should have failed me, I read the above to Captain Brown, who accompanied me. He says *it embraces every thing that was said on my part, but that much which was said by the Ameers in defence of themselves, and especially on behalf of Meer Roostum Khan, is omitted; that I did not consider necessary to enter more in detail.*”‡

Why should more than one side be heard—especially as the commissioner declined discussion, and told the Ameers—“The question is whether or not you accept the new treaty?”§

On the 9th Feb. they did accept the treaty, by allowing

* See Correspondence, page 103.

† Ibid. page 535.

‡ Ibid. page 536.

§ Ibid. page 535.



their seals to be affixed to a written pledge to that effect.

On the 12th, the majority personally applied their seals to the treaty itself. On that day, Major Outram thus wrote to Sir Charles Napier:—"These fools are in the utmost alarm in consequence of the continued progress of your troops towards Hyderabad, notwithstanding their acceptance of the treaty, which they hoped would have caused you to stop. If you come beyond Halla (if so far) they will be impelled by their fears to assemble their rabble, with a view to defend themselves and their families, in the idea that we are determined to destroy them, notwithstanding their submission."* The event shewed that the Ameers were not such "fools" as Major Outram thought them. Sir Charles Napier answered, "I shall march to Syudabad tomorrow and next day to Halla, and attack every body of armed men I meet."† Major Outram, however, judged rightly as to the probability of resistance being offered, should the British general continue to advance. The scandalous wrong done to Meer Roostum was working like leaven in the mind of the Beloochees, and the Ameers expressed to the British commissioner their apprehensions that they should not be able to control them. On the 15th, the British Residency was attacked, and on the 18th, Sir Charles Napier achieved the brilliant victory of Meancee. It would be useless to pursue the subject further; the result is known; the Ameers became prisoners, and their territory the prize of the English, if that can be called prize which has hitherto been only a source of disease to our brave troops, and a heavy burden on the Indian finances.

Almost as useless would it be to discuss the conduct of the Governor-General and his chosen agent. The facts

* Supplementary Correspondence relative to Sind, pages 35, 36.

† Ibid. page 40.



speak for themselves. Yet one or two questions must be asked. How far are the means by which Lord Ellenborough pursued the conquest of Sind consistent with his vapouring declarations of desire for peace? And how far is the annexation of Sind to the British territory consistent with his position, that the Indus was one of the natural boundaries of India?

Of the justice of the entire proceeding not a word need be said. The rulers of Sind had always been suspicious of us; they seem to have had a presentiment that our alliance boded them no good. We forced our friendship—so called—upon them. We dragged from them one concession after another. We overran their country with our armies, and finally we took the greater part of their territories, and gave the rest away. And then we talk of treachery and ill-feeling on their part. Could there be any other than ill-feeling? What says the Governor-General himself?—"That they may have had hostile feelings there can be no doubt; it would be impossible to believe that they could entertain friendly feelings."* It certainly would—
—we had injured them too deeply to confide in them—too deeply it seems to forgive them.

The cant about the misgovernment of the country under the Ameers, and the improvement which will attend our administration, is altogether beside the question. Supposing it all true in point of fact, what then? Are we to go about in the spirit of knight-errantry to redress the grievances and avenge the wrongs of all the oppressed people in the world?—and if not, why is Sind selected? We might find employment in this way nearer home. What think they who thus talk of sending an army to Poland, to recover it from the yoke of the Emperor Nicholas? What say they

* Supplementary Correspondence, page 1.



to an attempt for delivering Austrian Italy from the foreign rule under which it has been brought without the consent of its people? Lord Ellenborough inferred that the Ameers suffered no wrong in being dethroned, because "Foreigners in Sind, they had only held their power by the sword, and by the sword they have lost it."* Why not apply this in Europe? Is it because its advocates dare not, or because their sympathies are capricious—that haters of tyranny in Asia, especially when any thing is to be gained by putting it down, they care nothing for its existence in Europe?

And now that Europe has been mentioned, let us see how the acquisition of Sind was regarded at home. The House of Lords passed highly complimentary resolutions, acknowledging the services of Sir Charles Napier in the military operations, and those of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates, both European and Native, serving under him. The House of Commons passed similar resolutions. The Court of Directors and the East-India Company assembled in General Court, followed the example. But while the stream of laudation was thus flowing from every quarter upon the general and his troops, how was it, that not a single rill was directed to slake the Governor-General's burning thirst for fame? Do honour to the hands, and pass over the head! This is not usual. Lord Ellenborough, however ill he might deserve the compliment, was not passed over at the conclusion of the war in Affghanistan. He was thanked by Lords and Commons—coldly enough indeed, but still he was thanked—"for the ability and judgment with which the resources of the British Empire had been applied by him." It has been said, his lordship was entitled to the praise of a good

* Supplementary Correspondence, page 101.



commissary, and the parliamentary resolution in his favour amounts to this. To this extent too the Court of Directors and the Proprietors of East-India stock concurred in praising his lordship. But why are Lords and Commons, and Directors and Proprietors, alike silent with regard to Sindé? Above all, why are Lord Ellenborough's friends silent? Why do they not challenge that, which never was withheld before under similar circumstances? Alas! alas! his lordship's reputation "dies," and his friends "make no sign." Bitter, most bitter, must have been the duty imposed by Parliament upon his lordship of conveying to the army those thanks, in which he was not permitted to have even the smallest share.

Affghanistan and Sindé furnish the field upon which Lord Ellenborough's reputation is to be established, if established it can be. On his policy in minor matters there is not room to dwell, but his conduct in regard to the Mahratta state, subject to the House of Scindia, is too extraordinary to be altogether passed over. In 1803, the British Government concluded a treaty of peace with Scindia. In 1804 this measure was followed up by the conclusion of a treaty of alliance and mutual defence. This was near the close of the administration of the Marquis Wellesley. The Marquis Cornwallis, who succeeded to the administration of the government, disapproved of the latter treaty, which, indeed, had been virtually annulled by the conduct of Scindia himself, who, after it was concluded, had pursued a course of hostility against the British Government, in coalition with another Mahratta chief, Holkar, had held the officers and dependents of the British residency in durance, had plundered their camp, and committed many other acts of violence. A new defensive treaty of amity and alliance was concluded in 1805. By this treaty, the earlier of the



two treaties above referred to—the treaty of peace of 1803—was recognized, and every part of it not contravening the new treaty of 1805 was declared to be binding. But no notice was taken of the treaty of alliance and mutual defence of 1804; that was passed over, and was obviously regarded as defunct. In 1817, another treaty was concluded, the immediate object of which was the suppression of the Pindarrie freebooters. This treaty refers to the treaty of peace—that of 1803, and to the treaty of defence, amity, and alliance—that of 1805; and it is declared that the provisions of those two treaties, so far as they were not affected by the treaty of 1817, shall remain in full force. An engagement (not sufficiently important to be called a treaty) relating to the maintenance of a body of auxiliary horse, and their payment, was made in 1820, and thus matters rested till the year 1843, when Junkojee Rao Scindia died. That chief left no son, but his nearest male relative, a boy about eight years of age, was adopted by the Ranee (the widow of the deceased prince), and raised to the throne. The years of the Ranee, however, did not greatly outnumber those of her adopted son. She was under thirteen, and though this is a far riper age in Asia than in Europe, it was obviously necessary to commit the government to some one better qualified by age, as well as sex, for its management. A regent was accordingly appointed under the immediate influence of the British Government, but in the conflict of intrigues which prevailed at Gwalior, as at all native courts, he fell, after retaining his post only about three months—the authority which had set him up wanting resolution to maintain him. Every thing done by Lord Ellenborough was by fits, and, as might have been expected, the cold fit was succeeded by a hot one. After a time, a



military force was assembled, and the Governor-General accompanied its advance towards the river Chumbul. Here his lordship's usual obstinate wrongheadedness continued to govern him. He was desirous of enforcing the conclusion of a new treaty, and in all probability he might have effected his object without bloodshed, could he have been content to postpone crossing the Chumbul, a measure repeatedly pressed upon him by the British Resident at Gwalior, but to no purpose. His lordship resolved to cross the river, and he did cross it. The result, as is known, was, that the British army may almost be said to have been surprised by the enemy, and though the Governor-General's object was attained, it was not without some very severe fighting. It seems as though Lord Ellenborough's evil genius was always with him, and that whenever he did any thing not wrong in itself, he was sure to make it wrong by some adventitious absurdity. Passing over the minor follies of the Gwalior expedition—the wooing “golden opinions,” by the personal distribution of golden mohurs on the field of battle, after the fashion of the hero of a Minerva press romance—passing over this and other pretty sentimentalities of the like nature—let us look at the ground taken for the proceedings in which these were interesting episodes. The interference of the British Government was rested on the “treaty of Boorhampoor”—the treaty of 1804—which had never been acted upon, which in fact was a nullity from the beginning, and all reference to which had been studiously excluded from the engagements subsequently formed. Yet, upon this obsolete treaty, which for thirty years had been looked upon, and justly, as a dead letter—which was a waste sheep-skin, and nothing more, does Lord Ellenborough ground his policy;* and in the

* See Proclamation, 20th Dec. 1843.



treaty concluded with Scindia on the 13th January, 1844, this said treaty of Boorhampoor, though it had been substantially disavowed by later engagements between the two states, is formally revived and declared to be binding. Either Lord Ellenborough was ignorant of the state of the engagements existing between the British Government and Scindia, or, knowing them, he, from mere wilfulness, recalled into active existence and operation a treaty long before consigned to the worms, and by the revival of which no good object could be attained, though some embarrassment might possibly result from it. Let Lord Ellenborough's friends choose on which horn his lordship shall be impaled. If they choose the latter, they will have another task before them—to reconcile Lord Ellenborough's disregard of treaties in Sind, whenever they stood in his way, with his extreme reverence at Gwalior for every thing bearing the name of a treaty, whether in force or not in force, obsolete or operative, dead or alive.

We have now traced Lord Ellenborough through the more important acts of his government. We have seen him quailing before the difficulties which confronted him in Afghanistan, week after week, and month after month, calling on the generals to retire, leaving the prisoners to the tender mercies of the enemy, and the name of Great Britain to become a bye-word and a scoff. We have seen him, when prevailed upon, with great difficulty, to suffer the officers commanding to make an effort to avert these fearful results, meanly shaking off all responsibility, and like an adept in the science of betting, making up his book so as to have a chance of winning something, while he should be secure, as he supposed, from the possibility of loss—so shuffling his cards, that whichever might happen to turn up, he should be safe. We have seen, that for the final triumph which



crowned the British arms in Affghanistan, not one jot of praise is due to his lordship, except so much as may be claimed for affording the means, a quantum meted out both by Parliament and the East-India Company with a stinted precision, which places the honour on an equality with the noted Cambridge distinction of the "wooden spoon." We have seen his mad proclamation about the gates of Sornauth, and have glanced at the frightful consequences which might have followed this frenzied ebullition of vanity and folly. We have given a passing notice to the scarcely less foolish proclamation in which he reviled the policy of his predecessor ; declared the Indus one of the natural boundaries of British India, and, as he had before done in England, pronounced peace to be the main object of his administration. We have observed how this limitation and this boast were illustrated by his lordship's conduct in regard to Sind. We have seen him there intent not on peace but on conquest. We have followed him through the various steps of his aggressive policy, till we have found the reputation of the British nation for honour and good faith tarnished as deeply as would have been the military character of our country had the dictates of his lordship's judgment been allowed free scope in Affghanistan. We have seen him sometimes ordering, sometimes sanctioning and confirming by his after approbation, a series of measures utterly unjust in themselves, and calculated to render the British Government an object of hatred and suspicion to every native state throughout the East. Who shall trust to a British alliance while the memory of Sind and Lord Ellenborough's policy there endures ? When that great man, whose glory will be to future ages the landmark of our time—when the Duke of Wellington, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, during his distinguished service in India, was remonstrating against



what he conceived to be an undue extension of an article in a treaty which he had concluded with Scindia, he said, "I WOULD SACRIFICE GWALIOR, OR EVERY FRONTIER OF INDIA, TEN TIMES OVER, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE OUR CREDIT FOR SCRUPULOUS GOOD FAITH." Shortly afterwards he asks: "What brought me through many difficulties in the war and the negotiations for peace? THE BRITISH GOOD FAITH, AND NOTHING ELSE."* And where is that faith now? Wrecked on the sands of Sinde, by the recklessness of the man to whose keeping it was intrusted. Lord Ellenborough seems, indeed, to lay claim to some forbearance because he had no very definite instructions for his guidance; † but did he want instructions to induce him to act with common justice and honour? Was good faith in his eyes a thing to be maintained or not, according to circumstances, with reference to which he was to look for instructions? Instructions to observe good faith!! When a traveller, reputed to be an honest, respectable man, is about to proceed on a journey, would any one deem it necessary to say to him, "Now, mind how you conduct yourself; do not pick a fellow-passenger's pocket in the railway carriage, nor knock down and plunder any solitary traveller that you may meet in an evening walk." On matters of policy, his lordship might look for instructions—on matters where plain honesty was a sufficient guide, he surely might be expected to be "a law unto himself." We have seen that however reasonable this expectation, it was not fulfilled—but that pusillanimity inconceivable in an English nobleman in regard to Affghanistan was succeeded by a course of tyranny and oppression in Sinde,

* Letter to Major Malcolm, 17th March, 1804 (Wellington Despatches, Edition 1837, vol. iii. page 168).

† See Supplementary Correspondence, page 100.



from which the unsophisticated mind of an English labourer would recoil. Lastly, we have seen that even in a very ordinary matter, that of dealing with the affairs of Scindia, his lordship manifested so lamentable a degree of incompetency as evinced him to be utterly unfitted for the high office which he so unworthily filled. Here, as in Sindé, he had recourse to violence, when every object which he could lawfully seek might have been attained by skilful negotiation. Incompetency to an extent almost inconceivable—despondency under difficulties—braggadocio swaggering when there are none—cowering fear when danger seems to threaten—reckless disregard of justice and good faith when the feeble are to be coerced—indiscretion extreme and uncontrollable, with scarcely a lucid interval—indiscretion associated with, but not constrained by, a considerable portion of that low and unstatesmanlike quality, cunning—indiscretion so monstrous, that men lift up their hands in astonishment at its manifestations, and wonder whether he who has perpetrated such things can be in his right mind—these are the qualifications of Lord Ellenborough for the office of Governor-General of India, as developed throughout the period during which he abused that most important office, and they are crowned by arrogance so unbounded that it would be ludicrous even in a Cæsar or a Napoleon. Lord Ellenborough was recalled; shall we ask why? The only question will be, how was it that this step was not taken earlier? To this only a conjectural answer can be given. We may ascribe something to the forbearance of the Court of Directors, founded on a hope that their wild and wandering Governor-General might settle down into a state of mind better befitting his position—something to the fact that the more important political correspondence is known in the first instance to those Directors only who form the Secret



Committee, and that they are under the obligation of an oath of secrecy—something to the desire of the Court not to embarrass her Majesty's Government. But at least no one can fairly say that the step was taken too soon. The evidence before the public is amply, and more than amply, sufficient to justify it; there may be much more of which the public are ignorant; there may even be reasons for the recall of which they have no suspicion. But whether there be or not, the Court of Directors stand acquitted of having exercised their power capriciously or unjustly. Nor in the absence of all evidence ought it to be concluded that they exercised it violently or suddenly. We are not to suppose that the Court met one day, and passed a resolution of recall without any previous notice to her Majesty's ministers of their feeling towards the Governor-General. We are in perfect ignorance as to the fact in this respect; but as the Court of Directors are, and always have been, cautious, almost to a fault, we cannot believe that on so important an occasion they cast aside this their peculiar characteristic.

Lord Ellenborough was recalled, and the last scene of his varied performances was equal to any that preceded it. Some military officers belonging, it is understood, to both services—the Queen's and the Company's—thought fit to soothe his lordship's wounded feelings by inviting him to an entertainment given in his honour. What view military men may take of this step we know not; but it is yet within the memory of living men, how civilians regarded the design of some officers of the army to express an opinion favourable to their commander-in-chief, when his conduct had been subjected to accusation. What said the late Mr. Whitbread? He said—"Sir, general officers ought to know that they owe obedience to the state, and that they have no more right to assume the functions of a



deliberative body than the privates of the army or navy.”*

The Secretary-at-War, who was connected with the proceedings of the officers, came forward anxiously to declare that those proceedings “had no reference whatever to the circumstances of the present moment, or to what was now passing in that house.”† Mr. Canning, a cabinet minister, spoke more directly to the point, admitting that the proceeding of the officers “could not be approved of,”‡ and that it was calculated to injure the illustrious individual whom it was intended to serve. On a subsequent day, the subject was again adverted to, and Mr. Canning, repeating his former expression of disapprobation, added that “if there did exist an attempt on the part of any military officers to protect the Duke of York against the House of Commons, a more culpable idea never entered into the head of man.”§ No one ventured to defend the meditated proceedings. Ministerialists and oppositionists united in the opinion that it was most improper. Apply this universal judgment of the House of Commons to the conduct of the officers at Calcutta. The two cases are not precisely parallel, but the points of difference tell against the Indian admirers of the disconsolate Governor-General. The Duke of York was himself a soldier—Lord Ellenborough is none. The Duke of York’s conduct was under inquiry by the House of Commons; the conduct of Lord Ellenborough had been inquired into by the Court of Directors, and condemned in a manner the most formal, authoritative, and severe. The officers who proposed to bear testimony to the merits of the Duke of York were not servants of the House of Commons; they were bound to respect both Houses of Parlia-

* Hansard’s Debates, vol. xiii. page 700.

† Hansard, vol. xiii. page 707.

‡ Hansard, *ut supra*.

§ Hansard, vol. xiii. page 744.

ment, but they were servants of the Crown. A large portion of those who rushed forward to condole with Lord Ellenborough are directly and immediately servants of the Court of Directors, and all were acting under a Government which derives its authority from that Court.

Of the conduct of Lord Ellenborough's hosts, however, let military men judge; but what shall be said of that of his lordship in accepting the invitation? Is his appetite for flattery so inordinate that he cannot restrain it even under circumstances where a regard for others, if not a regard for his own dignity and consistency, might have been expected to induce him to forbear? So it appears; for, regardless of the embarrassment which he might possibly occasion to those whose cheers he was begging, his lordship, still writhing under the punishment which had just descended upon him, sought, amidst blazing lights, and smoking dishes, and flowing wines, and prolonged hurras, to assume an impotent air of defiance towards the authority whose just displeasure he had incurred. And there his lordship panegyricized the army, as if the army of India needed any praise from him; "I shall soon be far from you," said his lordship—according to the *Indian News*, 4th October, 1844—"I shall soon be far from you, but my heart remains with the army, and wherever I may be and as long as I live I shall be its friend"—as if it could be of the slightest consequence whether he were its friend or its enemy. He did not mention that he left part of the army in a state of mutiny—the crime having its origin in his measures. As his lordship is somewhat given to the sentimental, we must not criticise the declaration that his heart remained with the army—but why with the army alone? could he not spare one morsel of sentiment for the Indian millions whom he had been sent to govern, and who were now to lose him—



or did he think that they would benefit by the change?

Then his lordship talked, it seems, of "two years of victories without a single check,"—so says the report, but surely it cannot be correct; where would have been part of those victories, if his lordship had not for once given up his own judgment to that of others? "Two years of victories without a single check," he says. He forgets—not without a single check; there was a check to the career of the armies in Affghanistan given at the outset, and by his lordship himself—something like what Malthus calls "a preventive check;" it was happily removed, and then began the course of victory of which his lordship boasts, as if all were owing to him. But the exhibition made by his lordship is so truly lamentable, that pity takes place of indignation in contemplating it. He had lost one of the highest and most honourable posts to which a British subject can aspire, but he had the satisfaction of being for one evening again a lion, of walking up a flight of steps bedizened with lamps and laurels to partake of a dinner where he was the "observed of all observers," of seeing a transparency representing a besieged town, and of reading the softly soothing sentence—"Ellenborough, farewell!" and let us hope that for three hours he was happy.

Yet, even for the sake of such a dinner, and such a transparency, and such an inscription, and such cheers, it is not to be imagined that any future Governor-General will follow the example of Lord Ellenborough. His name will be a beacon suggestive of danger. Should any of his successors be likely to fall into errors like his, the recollection of his fate may give timely warning to eschew them. In this respect, though rarely exercised, the power of recall by the Court of Directors is a most valuable security for the good government of India. The Court are never likely to exercise



It without very sufficient cause; their discretion and moderation have been shewn by the infrequency with which they have resorted to it, as have their firmness and sound judgment, by not shrinking from its use when justly called for.

As for the idle babble about depriving the Court of this power, it is not worth a moment's notice. The idea of committing a power of any kind to any person or number of persons, and then upon the first occasion of its being exercised turning round in great astonishment and great wrath, and depriving them of it, is too ludicrous for discussion; it can provoke nothing but laughter. To say that it is anomalous that the Court should possess this power, is nothing—the entire government of India is anomalous according to the notions of scholastic legislators. No philosopher in his closet would ever have framed such a plan of government as that to which India is subject, and under which it prospers. It has grown up under the pressure of circumstances, like that of Great Britain, and though widely different in construction, is equally well adapted to answer its purpose. The value of a form of government is to be determined with reference not to symmetrical proportion, but to practical utility. If the Court of Directors are fit to appoint a Governor-General, surely they are fit to decide upon his removal. The two powers seem in common sense to go together. The right of choosing an agent involves the right of dismissing him when he ceases to give satisfaction to his principal.

But there is another consideration. Under the Act 3rd and 4th William IV., cap. 85, the members of the East-India Company gave up a vast amount of property, and suffered another portion to remain at interest, chargeable on the revenues of India, on certain conditions. One of these conditions is, that they shall retain, through their representatives, the Court of Directors, the administration



of the government of India. The mode in which the government is to be carried on is laid down in the Act by which the respective rights of the various parties interested are defined, and the limitations under which they are to be exercised prescribed. Among the rights expressly recognized as appertaining to the Court of Directors, is that of recalling any Governor-General, or other officer in India (except appointed by the Crown), and this right is to be exercised without control of any kind. Here is a most important security for the proprietors of East-India stock. The safety of their dividends is involved in the prosperity of India, and the permanence of its connection with this country. They elect the persons through whom the government of India is carried on, and those elected are endowed with very large powers, among the most important of which is the right of removing any public servant in India, from the Governor-General downwards. This is the chief, the most efficient—the only efficient security which the Indian stockholder enjoys. So long as it is possessed, the instructions of his representatives, the Court of Directors, cannot be set at nought with impunity.

And does any one talk of taking this power away? What, get possession of people's property under a solemn agreement that they shall have a certain security, and then tear the security from them! Their dividends indeed may still be secured nominally upon the revenues of India, but their control over India through those who represent them is virtually at an end when you deprive the Court of Directors of the power of putting a stop to misgovernment in that country, and substantially the security is void.

“ You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house.”

What would be said of a mortgagor who, after agreeing that the management of the mortgaged estate should be



vested in certain persons to be named by the mortgagee, should seek to get rid of the obligation, and at the same time to keep the money? The legislature indeed may do this—that is, they have the physical power of doing it, as they have of doing many other things which no one in his wildest imaginings ever supposes they will do. They may deprive the great Captain of our country of the estate bestowed on him by a nation's gratitude, and consign his honoured age to penury. They may apply the sponge to the national debt—burn the books, and shut up that part of the Bank of England devoted to its management. They may—all the estates of the realm concurring—abolish the two Houses of Parliament, and convert the Government into a despotic monarchy; or, the Crown consenting, they may establish a republic. Any of these things they *may* do—but no one expects that they will. Neither will they take away that power which is a security at once to the proprietors of East-India stock for their property, to the people of India for good government, and to those of England for the safety of England's noblest dependency. We are not inquiring what a repudiating legislature might do, but what the legislature of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland will do; and of this much we may rest assured—that having deliberately made a solemn compact, they will keep it.



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H. MacLagan

THE
SCINDE POLICY.



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THE

SCINDE POLICY:

A FEW COMMENTS

ON

MAJOR-GENERAL W. F. P. NAPIER'S

DEFENCE

OF

LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S GOVERNMENT.

Nul n'aura de l'esprit, hors nous et nos amis.

MOLIERE.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1845.



THE
SCINDE POLICY.

THE name of Napier is one which claims attention, and commands respect; for it is borne by a family, the several members of which have been much before the public with credit to themselves in their different capacities. Most of them have been distinguished by their talents, and equally remarkable for their good fortune in having those talents duly appreciated and amply rewarded.

To the successful general and the victorious admiral, the meed of public approbation and national recompense has been awarded with no sparing hand, and in no niggardly spirit; and to the talented historian of his country's Peninsular glories, a large measure of commendation has been extended, although tempered, it is true, by the expression in different quarters



of dissent from his opinions, and even denial of his statements.

The literary reputation of Major-General W. F. P. Napier, the author of the "History of the Peninsular War," if not such as to command undivided approbation, was still of a high order.

Many applauded, without discrimination, his literary labours; others, while admitting the merits of the author, deplored what they deemed to indicate the partiality of the partisan: but all accorded a ready acknowledgment of the talents of the writer; and even those who disputed his statements, or denied his facts, ascribed his errors to the blindness of over-zeal, rather than to any intentional obliquity of vision, and if they differed with the historian, they gave all credit to the officer and the gentleman.

The work now before the public, the "History of the Conquest of Scinde," Part I., is a striking illustration of the extent to which a mind possessing a high order of talent will deteriorate under the influence of party prejudice and personal feeling.

The *cacoëthes scribendi* has once more laid hold of the gallant General, and led him to take the (literary) field in a bad cause and in a bad spirit; and if his motives escape condemnation, it will be because the public will readily ascribe the ill-judged proceeding to the excusable desire



of vindicating the professional character of a brother, rather than to the wish to disparage the measures and wound the feelings and reputation of parties who are not on the spot to defend themselves.

All who have read the "History of the Peninsular War" must have seen with regret that an author gifted naturally with great power of language, may be led by the foolish taste for what is vulgarly termed fine writing, to forget that, unless it be indulged with much judgment, vigour and richness of expression are apt to degenerate into verbosity and redundancy.

The "Conquest of Scinde" is indeed a melancholy proof that literary vices, like those of our moral nature, are aggravated by age.

It is not, however, the bombast of the author's style which would have called for censure, had his ambition been limited to the innocent display of his powers in that particular. He might have indited page after page of the "phraseology sailing in ballast" with which the work abounds, but for the danger to be apprehended, that an undue weight might attach to opinions and dicta enunciated with such an *ad captandum* display of rhetoric, and that the public might be so misled by the glitter of a meretricious and inflated style, as to accept unsupported assertion for conclusive evidence, and receive grandiloquent



denunciations against men and measures, as an authoritative condemnation of policy or principle.

Had General Napier been content to clothe in fustian the character of his gallant brother, and confined his laboured effusion to the simple object of protecting the Governor of Scinde from what he considered calumny and misrepresentation, the motive would have commanded respect, however much the manner might have excited ridicule; the amiable partiality, too, which induces him (*risum teneatis, amici?*) to draw a parallel between his gallant and aged relative and the "Roman Paulus who conquered Macedon in a single battle at the same period of life" (!) and to trumpet forth the wide-spread fame of the different members of his family—even such mistaken and misplaced eulogy would have been forgiven: and though the public would have shrugged its shoulders, yet the foolish vanity of the proceeding would have been considered as partly counterbalanced by the *fraternal* affection so touchingly displayed, and whatever might have been thought of the author's head, his heart would have been shown to be worthy of respect.

In the pamphlet before us, however, the display of rhodomontade is not only indulged in for the pardonable purpose of investing with a delusive halo of glory the character of his



immediate relatives, and from them of reflecting its effulgence on his own comparatively unobtrusive name, but it is made the vehicle of violent political sentiments,—of coarse personalities and unsparing abuse of the conduct and objects of parties, of whose motives and actions he individually has had no opportunity of judging but such as is enjoyed by all other of Her Majesty's subjects who are like himself far removed from the scene of action,—of startling, unscrupulous, and unsupported assertions, the truth of which the public are expected to take on trust,—of offensive and uncalled-for vituperation of a distinguished Body, who, by their decision, disinterestedness, and dignified independence, have secured the approbation of all high-minded men,—and above all, of fulsome adulation of one, whose conduct has been the theme of general condemnation, except with the peculiar clique whom chance has made the instruments of his insane policy, whose vanity has been flattered by his countenance, whose objects have been promoted by his agency, and in whose distempered judgment, warped by their personal predilections and private interests, military success, no matter what the cause, is national glory, and the reckless acquisition of territory and prize-money the legitimate object of the statesman and the philanthropist.



The author of the proclamation regarding the Somnauth Gates is evidently not only the *Magnus Apollo*, but the model, of our gallant General, by whom his Lordship's ambitious style has been closely imitated. As is usual, however, the copy lacks the piquancy of the original ; but the one is as unworthy of the historian, as the other is unbecoming in the statesman and the man of sense.

Whatever claims the Ex-Governor General may have on the gratitude of General Napier and his family, it is to be feared that this mode of evincing that most commendable feeling will be viewed with anything but satisfaction by his Lordship. The bold and manly tone of impeachment conveyed in the pages of a recent pamphlet*, — the instances of incompetency and irrefragable proofs of inconsistency and disingenuousness which those pages so unanswerably demonstrate, — must all have appeared to his Lordship in a measure harmless as compared with the weak advocacy of his imprudent ally. The taunts of an open enemy may be retorted, and the sarcasms of a declared opponent partially disregarded, from the belief that the recollection of the source from which they spring will lessen their force in the minds of others : but when the weakness of

* "India and Lord Ellenborough."



his cause is exposed by its professed defender, — when the self-constituted advocate betrays by the meagreness of his arguments, the imprudence of his assertions, and the loss of his temper, how desperate is the task he has undertaken, — then indeed may his Lordship exclaim with bitterness, as he has good reason to do, “ Preserve me from my friends, and I will take care of my enemies.”

In the prefatory notice attached to the work, the public is informed that the portion now before them is the first of three distinct parts, and is now published separately, “ with the object of rebutting the factious accusations made against a successful general, in the hope of wounding through him the nobleman under whose auspices he conquered a great and rich kingdom, and relieved a numerous people from a miserable state of slavery.”

This is a startling announcement, it will be confessed : but as the gallant General thus openly throws down the gauntlet in vindication of the policy in question, he must, if he wish to preserve, *sans peur et sans reproche*, his character, whether for literary intrepidity or veracity, be prepared to defend as well as to defy, — to prove as well as to assert.

We do not propose to accompany General Napier in the discursive review which he takes



of the state and prospects of India prior to the period at which the events occurred with which the names of Ellenborough and Napier are connected. Scinde is our theme, as it professes to be that of General Napier; but, unlike him, we shall confine ourselves to the object professed, viz. to prove that the iniquitous conquest of Scinde is, in spite of all the special pleading to the contrary, the result of the acts of the government of which Lord Ellenborough was the head, and Sir Charles Napier the instrument, and to manifest briefly the shallowness of the pretext by which it is sought to shift upon others the odium justly attaching to that government, for measures of unexampled aggression, tyranny, and oppression.

At the same time, however, that we decline to enter on the merits of Sir Charles Napier's model government of Cephalonia, of which the public know nothing and for which they care nothing, and which are so unnecessarily thrust into notice *apropos de bottes*, or to follow the General in his one-sided analysis of the origin, progress, and results, of the Affghanistan campaign, it is impossible to pass *sub silentio* over certain statements and assertions hazarded with incredible recklessness, but which require more than the mere weight of the gallant General's character, high though it may stand, to substantiate satisfactorily.



The first announcement which frightens the reader "out of his propriety" is the following.

"It was at this moment, that for the salvation of India (!) Lord Ellenborough came, to curb the nepotism of the Directors, to repress the jobbing tribe, to reduce the editors of newspapers from a governing to a reporting class, and to raise the spirit of the army, sinking under insult and the domineering influence of grasping civilians, who snatched the soldier's share and calumniated him through a hireling press."

Will it be credited that the foregoing passage, the purport and object of which is to heap every species of aggravating insult on the Court of Directors and the civil service of India, is nothing but empty and frothy declamation, unsupported by one corroborative fact,—unpalliated by one extenuating pretext? The "nepotism of the Directors," the oppression "and insult offered to the army," the process by which the "soldier's share" was snatched by the "grasping civilians," and the connexion of the civilians with the "hireling press,"—all are alike assumed, and asserted with the air of a man who has his pocket filled with "damning proof," and is prepared to stake his character on his correctness. Let it then be so,—let the General adduce but *one* well-authenticated fact to justify these sweeping



assertions,—let him condescend for once to prove his charges, as well as to prefer them,—let him show, by descending to particulars, that his character for veracity does *not* depend on his vagueness, and that his zeal does not so far outrun his prudence as to betray him into statements which he is not prepared to substantiate,—let him, we say, prove one, only one, of the charges here made, and he shall stand justified in the eyes of the public. The alternative is obvious!

Among sundry other statements intended to tell against the “system” in India, we are informed that “the sepoy’s musket is of an ancient “pattern and unnecessarily clumsy and heavy; “for that strange economy prevails in India as “elsewhere, which spares a pound in the cost of “the soldier’s weapon, to be repaid by the loss “of the soldier himself, although he never goes “into battle for less than a hundred pounds.”

Circumlocution with so unscrupulous an opponent would be absurd punctilio: we therefore do not hesitate to say that the gallant General is evidently wholly ignorant on the question regarding which he is so gratuitously enlightening the public.

The sepoy’s musket is *not* of an “ancient “pattern;” and the assertion that the life of the soldier is sacrificed to a desire for economy in



the provision of his arms is wholly without foundation. The musket of the sepoy is *precisely the same* as the musket of the *European soldier* in India. The supply of muskets is forwarded from this country, and they are delivered to the European and native troops indiscriminately in India. They are manufactured by the best makers, and instead of their being ancient in pattern, the modern percussion musket has been for a long time in course of introduction throughout India, and is daily in process of substitution for the flint locks long in use.

The above are undeniable facts, well known to every military man who has served in India, and we challenge General Napier to disprove them.

The assertion that the sepoy "never goes into battle for less than 100%" is equally preposterous. The statement, if true regarding Queen's soldiers, is notoriously incorrect as applied to the native soldier.

We believe the General has never been in India. It is a pity, since he has no local experience, that he should trust his character for veracity in such unsafe hands as those of informants who would appear to take a pleasure in misleading and exposing him. The display of unjustifiable ignorance, even in what may appear



to be trifles, is calculated, he may rest assured, to damage both his cause and his reputation.

There is one other statement, which, if founded in fact, is still so calculated to mislead, as to require notice.

We are informed, that, "Deeply impressed
" with the danger menacing India from within
" and from without, Sir Charles Napier hastened
" to offer Lord Ellenborough his opinions upon
" the military operations, and gave him a general
" plan of campaign for the second Affghan in-
" vasion." "What influence this
" memoir had upon Lord Ellenborough's judg-
" ment, or whether it merely coincided with his
" own previously formed opinions and plans, is
" known only to himself; but the leading points
" were in union with the after operations of Nott
" and Pollock, and with that abatement of the
" political agency which gave so much offence in
" India to those who profited by the nuisance."

This attempt to claim for Sir C. Napier some portion of the well-merited laurels which grace the brows of the gallant Pollock, and adorn the grave of the equally gallant and lamented Nott, is, to say the least of it, in bad taste. The degree of "influence which the memoir had
" upon Lord Ellenborough," may be gathered from a perusal of the pamphlet before referred to, or from the Parliamentary Papers themselves,



where it is undeniably shown, that the second invasion of Affghanistan was undertaken *in spite* of Lord Ellenborough, instead of by his instructions, although it now appears that he was at the time in possession of a detailed "cut and dry" plan of operations from the master hand of the modern "Paulus." We much fear that the desire to elevate the character of Sir C. Napier (which needs no such injudicious efforts) must here have clashed a little with the General's patronage of Lord Ellenborough, who, on this occasion at least, would appear not duly to have appreciated the advantage to be derived from the advice proffered by such an experienced and able Commander.

It is difficult, nay, almost impossible, from such a chaos of *verbiage*, to reduce the opinions and statements of the writer to a shape admitting of a condensed notice, whether for refutation or denial: but divested of the Minerva Press heroics which encumber every sentence,—of the high-flown encomiums on the valour, professional skill, and private worth of his gallant brother, which, with a sort of personal vanity, "once removed," he reiterates page after page *usque ad nauseam*,—and weeded of the scurrilous personalities which at every turn deface the work and damage the author,—the case which it is sought to establish appears to be this:—viz.

That the conquest of Scinde by Lord Ellenborough was a necessary consequence of the Affghanistan campaign under Lord Auckland,—that motives of policy connected with the latter measure induced the formation of treaties between Lord Auckland's government and the Ameers, for the purpose of promoting the views, and of facilitating the measures, of government, and that similar motives at a later period led to a departure from the provisions of those treaties, to a compulsory adoption by the Ameers of measures repugnant to their feelings and wishes, and to the consequent sacrifice of their interests to our own ends ; and that Lord Auckland being haunted by the hydra-headed bugbear of Russian influence, Russian intrigues, and Russian intentions, for the purpose of counteracting imaginary dangers, existing only in his own disordered fancy, conceived an impracticable and insane project, which eventuated in the Affghan war, and to the ultimate failure of which everything that has subsequently occurred is to be ascribed as its inevitable result. That the invasion of Affghanistan was unjustifiable and immoral in principle, ill-arranged, and worse executed in its details, visionary and delusive in its objects, and abortive and ruinous in its results. That the subsequent policy of Lord Auckland's government in Scinde, grew out of the proceedings



in Affghanistan,—was unjust and oppressive, and reflected disgrace on its originators and promoters. That the Ellenborough government had no alternative but to carry out the policy of its predecessor, and that the conduct pursued towards the Ameers, the hostile attitude assumed from the first, the coercive measures adopted, the harsh and exacting treaties forced upon their acceptance, and the ultimate ruin entailed upon them, were the natural and inevitable sequence of former mismanagement and dishonest government.

The above, it will be seen by those who have time to seek the tangible points in the labyrinth of discursive declamation composing the chief portion of General Napier's book, are the broad facts which he is desirous of establishing.

There is no intention in these pages to undertake the vindication of Lord Auckland's acts, further than may be necessary to guard him from a responsibility justly due to his successor; nor is it proposed to advocate his Lordship's opinions, or enter the lists in defence of the policy which dictated the invasion of Affghanistan. The promoters of that policy, whoever they may have been, have lived to see its disastrous results, and no doubt to repent the precipitancy with which it was adopted; and few, we should conceive, are now to be found who



would stand up in defence of it, or attempt to advocate its expediency on any rational or equitable grounds. The flood of execration poured upon it and its originators by the General, is therefore hardly necessary for the purposes of his argument, shallow though it be. The Affghanistan policy has been proved, alas! too fatally proved, to have been founded in lamentable error—it has no defenders—he is therefore fighting with a shadow, and throwing away powder and shot.

But it is no reason that because the government under whose auspices these disastrous measures were undertaken must be held responsible for them, an unfair, illiberal, and disingenuous attempt to fix upon them the iniquity of subsequent measures, with which they are not chargeable, should be countenanced or even tolerated.

As a set-off against the defects and responsibilities of the Auckland administration, we are *palled* with eulogiums of the acts of the government of him who came "*to save India.*" In those were to be traced the sound and comprehensive views! the calm judgment! the pure motives! and the wisdom and forethought! characterising the master-mind, and marking at once the patriot and the statesman!—qualities developed in measures nobly conceived by his



Lordship, and matchlessly executed by the renowned warrior who is, we are told, so fortunate as to combine in his single person, the wisdom of Nestor, the valour of Achilles, and the prudence of Ulysses, — the fierceness of the lion, and the meekness of the lamb! — the gifted possessor of the ardour of youth, the vigour of manhood, and the matured judgment of old age!!

In truth, if all we are told is to be credited, Sir Charles Napier is, as Mrs. Malaprop expresses it, "like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once."

What a pity that the well-earned reputation of a gallant soldier should be damaged by the over zeal of his officious defender, and his laurels made to shake on his brow by such an ill-judged attempt to prove *too much*!

It is curious and edifying to read the laboured exposition of what the Ellenborough champion deems to have been the policy and ulterior views of the Auckland administration in reference to Scinde, and to note the glaring inconsistency with which he holds up that policy and its originators to execration, for the injustice, oppression, and extortion inflicted on the much injured Ameers, and in the same breath proceeds to justify the subsequent ruin, confiscation, and devastation of their country by the government of Lord



Ellenborough, on the ground of the political turpitude and remorseless tyranny which characterised them.

It is also curious to follow the course of the uncandid and illogical reasoning intended to establish the untenable positions which he assumes — to mark the easy assurance by which he arrives at unjustifiable conclusions from erroneous premises, and deduces wrong inferences from assumed facts.

It is true that Lord Ellenborough followed up the line of policy commenced by his predecessor,— that on arriving at his government “for the salvation of India,” he issued a manifesto “intended “as a warning to future governor-generals,” in which, with consummate arrogance and characteristic bad taste, he animadverts in discourteous language on the acts of that predecessor, — that in the same extraordinary state document he breathes nothing but the spirit of peace, and with the view of marking his pious horror of the grasping spirit of acquisition manifested by the former government, as well as his conviction of the impolicy of extending our territory (Satan reproving sin!), he declares the Indus to be the “*natural boundary*” of the British dominions in India. It is also true that the crowning act of Lord Ellenborough’s government was to pass that “*natural boundary*,” in defiance of the



principle so ostentatiously laid down in the above memorable order — memorable for the clap-trap announcements it contained, in which the line of policy enunciated was intended, by the force of contrast, to operate as a condemnation of that of Lord Auckland, and memorable as a record of professions disregarded, intentions unfulfilled, and principles violated. It is quite true that having crossed the "natural boundary," Lord Ellenborough took forcible possession of the territory of those towards whom the policy of Lord Auckland is declared to have been iniquitous and oppressive, — that the Ameers have been driven with ignominy from their hereditary possessions, their property plundered, their treaties violated, their armies slaughtered, and themselves made prisoners.

All this and much more is true and undeniable, for it is matter of history; but then it is all to be attributed to the nefarious policy which characterised the Auckland administration!

The conquest of Scinde, we are told, (and the expression is deemed so happy, as to be worthy of constant repetition,) is "the tail of the Affghan storm;" it was the inevitable consequence of the invasion of Affghanistan! Lord Auckland's government, says the historian, acted with duplicity and injustice to the Ameers; but it would have been beneath the dignity of Lord Ellen-

borough's government, and highly impolitic, to redress their grievances, or do them justice. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to carry out the iniquitous policy to the full. The Ameers, it is true, had great reason to complain. They had been cajoled and misled, and the British government had broken faith with them in promoting views of their own, through the instrumentality of the arch-diplomatist Colonel Pottinger, which had no ground of justification except *expediency*.

"To accord the character of good faith and "forbearance to these negotiations," exclaims the General, in speaking of those conducted by Colonel Pottinger, "is impossible. Palliation of "their immorality on the score of their necessity "is the utmost that can be asked, and that but "faintly by the most resolute partisans. Can "even that be justly conceded?"

How gratifying is this spontaneous outbreak of generous indignation at the sight of so much tyranny and oppression! We cannot doubt that Lord Ellenborough, like this faithful chronicler of the glories of his administration, was ever ready to censure and deplore the iniquities practised by his misguided predecessor; but, it is alleged that he could of course do nothing to counteract this policy; although the same feeling of jealous regard for the character of a



previous government did not, it appears, prevent his indecently stigmatising the acts of that government ere he was himself well seated in the saddle of authority. "What!" again exclaims the General with another burst of fervid eloquence, "what though Lord Auckland's policy "had been unjust and wicked and foolish towards "these nations, — was Lord Ellenborough in the "very crisis of evil and danger nicely to weigh "the oppressions of his predecessors, and setting "aside all the combinations flowing from that "predecessor's diplomacy, and all the mischief "springing from his unwise military enterprises, "— was he who had undertaken to save the Indian empire to bend before victorious Barbarians, — to deprecate their wrath, to cheer them "in their dreadful career by acknowledging their "anger to be legitimate?"

Thus, when the object is to condemn the policy and blacken the character of Lord Auckland, we are emphatically reminded that "not "even considerations of expediency can justify" the adoption of immoral or dishonest measures; and we should hail with becoming satisfaction this undeniable and commendable doctrine, whatever be the motive with which it is propounded: but, alas! a few pages on we find, as has been shown, the somewhat contradictory position



boldly assumed, that motives of expediency fully justify the adoption, ratification, and even more extended development of the same immoral and dishonest plans.

One government is accused of compassing the downfall of the Ameers, in defiance of national faith and honour, from motives of mere *expediency*, and the succeeding government, though fully alive to the iniquities of its predecessor, is compelled, from motives of *expediency*, to complete the nefarious work of destruction!

The word "*expediency*," it is well known, has ever been made by all governments the pretext for acts admitting of neither excuse nor defence; it has from time immemorial been the parent of every species of abuse and injustice,—a protecting shield held up by the dishonest minister to conceal his motives and shelter his measures, guarding the one from exposure, and the other from defeat.

See its effect in the instance under review, where we find the doctrine laid down that the national honour, dignity, and good faith, could not be maintained by the performance of an act of justice, lest the motive should be suspected; but that a course of policy stigmatised as dishonourable in the highest degree is to be upheld, and the principle of that policy carried out to an extent never contemplated by its origi-



nators, lest by its reversal the national dignity and character for unity of purpose should be impaired.

The shallowness and sophistry of this species of argument hardly require exposure. It is unworthy of Lord Ellenborough's cause, bad as that cause is proved to be by its employment: it is still more unworthy of the knowledge, experience, and admitted talent, of the advocate, and is only another striking proof how far his zeal oversteps his discretion.

The public at large, and in particular that portion of it whose good opinion is of any value to Lord Ellenborough, as a statesman, or to General Napier, as a historian and a man of sense, will not be hoodwinked by such an awkward attempt to conceal the real motives of the conquest and annexation of Scinde, and to trace to a noble desire jealously to guard the councils of the nation from the suspicion of vacillation or pusillanimity, measures but too evidently ascribable to the combined influence on those who are responsible, of a yearning for territorial acquisition with a view to ulterior objects on the one part, and thirst for military glory on the other.

On what principle of honesty or equity can a line of policy, declared to be wrong and theoretically condemned by Lord Ellenborough,



be subsequently promoted and adopted by him?

Admitting for the sake of argument, that the Ameers of Scinde had evinced a factious and unsafe spirit, that they gave indications of a desire to evade the performance of their engagements, and even manifested symptoms of positive disaffection and treachery, does such a state of things justify Lord Ellenborough in disregarding the avowed principles of his government, and, except for the temporary object of compelling the Ameers to submit to such terms as in honour and honesty we had a right to impose, in passing the national boundary within which we have heard it announced *ex cathedrâ* that the interests and security of our Indian possessions required that we should be strictly confined. Or setting aside the prudence or imprudence of a departure from the line marked out by nature as the limit of our territories, did the conduct proved, or what is still more, did the conduct *charged* against the Ameers justify the sweeping and devastating operations against them, by which they have been ruined, and their country as a nation annihilated!

We conscientiously and emphatically answer, No! and appeal to documents laid before the Parliament, and the public, as a triumphant corroboration of the assertion.

The Ameers undoubtedly evinced, in the first



Instance, mistrust of the intentions of Lord Auckland's government and of its sincerity, and a restlessness under measures adopted for the sole purpose of turning them to our own advantage. Be it not, however, forgotten that the immorality and political dishonesty of those measures are loudly proclaimed, for his own objects, by him whose hand has since crushed the Ameers. They gave symptoms undoubtedly significant of a *desire* to resist the oppression and exaction of a foreign power. But was there no alternative for us—no *juste milieu* between dishonourable concession on the one hand, and greedy and criminal aggression, ending in their destruction, on the other? Were there no means by which the dignity of Great Britain could be maintained, without entailing ruin and confiscation on the Ameers? Might not terms sufficient to protect our interests, and to ensure the due observance of all existing treaties have been imposed, even at the point of the sword, without that sword being stained in a doubtful, not to say unrighteous cause? Or if the weakness, or folly, or treachery of the Ameers rendered a recourse to arms unavoidable for their chastisement, were not mercy and moderation compatible with victory? Could we not show our power, without proving our thirst for plunder? Most assuredly such a course, con-



sidering how far from being justifiable and unimpeachable the whole of our Scindian policy had been, would have been the proper one. Supposing the full amount of turpitude alleged against the Ameers to have really characterised their conduct, and to have been clearly proved, we should still, even in the view taken by Lord Ellenborough himself of their previously existing and admitted grounds of grievance, have not been justified in our proceedings with regard to them. But when it is borne in mind that the truth or falsehood of the charges, on which they were tried, found guilty, and executed with such indecent haste, is matter of disputed certainty,—nay more, that much of the evidence received against them rests on proof so defective that all who read the papers with the view of judging for themselves cannot fail to pause and ponder on the awful responsibility entailed on those by whom they were condemned,—then it may fairly be assumed that neither sound policy nor public virtue guided the councils in which such measures of bloodshed and spoliation originated.

Had the more temperate and conciliatory line of policy been followed towards the Ameers by the government, and the military operations been conducted with the view to their correction, rather than to their destruction,—justified as such a course would have been by the admitted



fact of their having just ground for complaint against the Auckland government,—the reputation of Lord Ellenborough would have escaped the greatest stain attaching to it throughout the short, eventful, and sanguinary period, during which he held the reins of government, in the course of which, by a curious counteraction of the most praiseworthy intentions, the man who came for the “salvation of India,” and for the avowed purpose of “retrieving its finances,” was the means of culpably squandering the resources in the prosecution of his warlike designs, and of shedding oceans of blood, and causing endless misery by his policy.

He would further have been spared the inconsistent act of annexing “for ever” to the British dominions, a large, as yet unproductive, and unhealthy tract of country, *beyond the limits* which nature and his Lordship’s wisdom had previously assigned to our territories and to our grasping propensities,—a country offering no advantages as a boundary, compared with the “Indus,” and the retention of which cannot fail eventually to embroil us with the Lahore government, and probably to lead ultimately to the necessity, for our own defence and preservation, of adding still further to our already overgrown possessions by the conquest and annexation of the country of the Sikhs.



We should also have been spared the misery of witnessing the ravages of sickness and death in the ranks of the gallant army, which we are obliged to maintain there, in order to "hold our own;"—sickness and death the result of the pestilential character of the climate, which has rendered Scinde, as yet, little less than a widespread burying-ground for the flower of the Anglo-Indian army.

All these results would have been avoided: but then Sir Charles Napier would have been deprived of the opportunity of making his *coup d'essai* in an independent command, and of showing that with "no experience as a commander-in-chief" he could at sixty-three win a battle in a style to "rival the wonders of Poitiers and Agincourt"!

It has already been said that the object of these pages is not to enter into the merits or expediency of the policy of Lord Auckland's government. Such policy, as regards Scinde, may have been unjustifiable; and the responsibility justly attaching to it must be borne by that government; but the use of the *tu quoque* argument by Lord Ellenborough's defenders cannot be tolerated, or the principle for one moment conceded, that a government is bound by the acts of its predecessors, or that any consideration can justify the promotion, continua-



tion, or even tacit sanction of measures bad in themselves, or acts of glaring tyranny and oppression.

The danger of such a doctrine was never more strikingly developed than in the case of the Ameers of Scinde.

We shall not attempt to enter into an elaborate detail of the case, or to dissect the voluminous papers which have been laid before the public; it would be travelling out of the record to do so. We consider that the truth of our position, — the only one which we profess to establish, — may be satisfactorily shown out of the mouth of General Napier himself, viz. that Lord Ellenborough's government is answerable, and is alone answerable, for whatever odium may attach to the conquest of Scinde and its annexation to the British dominions, and that no degree of turpitude *alleged* or *proved* against Lord Auckland's government could, by any possibility, justify the adoption towards the Ameers of measures of coercion not imperatively called for by their own acts, — that the necessity for firmly adhering to the policy of Lord Auckland's government, and for appearing to sustain and enforce the equity of previous treaties and negotiations, could only apply in a case in which a conviction existed, that such treaties and negotiations were the result of a sound and enlightened policy, —

and that Lord Ellenborough, being, as he professes to have been, strongly impressed on his arrival in India with the conviction that the course adopted towards the Ameers had been characterised by bad faith and an extortionate spirit, it was his duty, by a temperate and conciliatory course towards those whom he considered to have been outraged and oppressed, and by such concession as might have been consistent with the national honour, to seek to remedy the bad effects of the system he so much deplored, rather than to aggravate, as it is clearly proved he did, the bad feeling subsisting in the minds of the Ameers, by adding extortion to extortion, and seeking to impose, at the point of the sword, treaties far more onerous and humiliating than those imposed on them by his predecessor, and which had been characterised by him in terms which, if true, would have justified any degree of resistance on the part of the Ameers.

A few words will dispose of the case prior to the arrival in India of Lord Ellenborough, with whose proceedings we have alone to do.

The views entertained by the previous government in reference to Affghanistan, rendered, or were considered by them to render it necessary that certain engagements should be entered into

with the Ameers of Scinde. The conduct of these arrangements was entrusted to Colonel Pottinger, a name *primâ facie* vouching for the integrity of purpose, as it undoubtedly did for the diplomatic skill which would in his hands characterise the negotiation.

The result was the ratification of a treaty in 1838 between the British Government and the principal Ameers, offensive and defensive, by which their territories were placed under British protection; their independence and absolute authority in their own dominions acknowledged; and themselves bound to contribute towards the cost of maintaining a British Subsidiary Force in their territories. A British Resident was to be appointed; negotiations with foreign states, unless with the sanction of the Indian government, were prohibited, and an auxiliary force was to be provided, when required for defence, besides other minor stipulations — the whole being declared binding “on all succeeding Governors-General of India, and upon the Ameers and their heirs for ever.”

We have seen the terms of generous indignation in which General Napier has characterised the negotiations leading to this treaty. We are not its defenders: it may or it may not have been a necessary preliminary to the contem-



plated operations in Affghanistan, and an integral part of the policy in which they originated. We are not the defenders of that policy, as we have already shown: both are questions which, whatever reference they may have to the general subject with which the Affghanistan and Scindian policy of Lord Auckland's government is mixed up, have no bearing on the present discussion as raised by General Napier, namely, whether Lord Auckland's government, or Lord Ellenborough's, is answerable for the subsequent destruction of the Ameers, and the spoliation of their country.

To this point must the gallant General be kept — no withdrawal — no evasion. It is his position: to confute it is our object.

To the careful and laborious reader who will take the trouble to sift the published parliamentary papers within every one's reach, it is only necessary to point out that their perusal will amply repay the labour, and afford a mass of conclusive and unanswerable evidence of the motives and objects by which Lord Ellenborough was guided, and of the spirit which actuated the gallant Commander under his orders, whose injudicious relative is so eager that he should be considered as a *particeps criminis*, and share the odium with his noble master.

To the general reader, the recent admirable



and well reasoned pamphlet *, to which allusion has before been made, will afford a concise epitome of the official papers in question ; and the quotations and extracts so appositely introduced from documents speaking the sentiments of both Lord Ellenborough and Sir C. Napier, will to any reasoning mind offer abundant and indisputable evidence of the grasping spirit of acquisition and aggression in which the conquest of Scinde had its origin.

It would be impertinent and presuming to attempt to reiterate the well established proofs adduced in the work in question, and moreover foreign to our plan, as it is with the statements of General Napier that we have to deal, and with the facts as they appear, or are made to appear, in his supposed vindication of other parties.

The advent to power of Lord Ellenborough in 1842 is thus characteristically described by General Napier, and is here transcribed as a fair illustration of a style so admirably calculated to startle by its assumed enthusiasm, and to take the careless reader by storm, from the species of *slap-dash* assertion in which the author deals so largely. It will be seen that the real motives of the respective governments of both Lord Auckland and Lord Ellenborough are at once laid bare

* "India and Lord Ellenborough."

with a degree of impartiality which cannot fail to carry conviction : —

“ Lord Ellenborough saw clearly and struck
“ boldly. But how widely different was his mode
“ from that of Lord Auckland ! As widely dif-
“ ferent as their achievements. Look at Scinde !
“ There the one invariably covered rapacity with
“ professions of friendship, a velvet glove on an
“ iron hand. With Lord Ellenborough the tongue
“ spake no deceit, and the hand was bared at once
“ in all its sinewy strength, a warning to keep men
“ from provoking its deadly stroke. Let the world
“ compare Colonel Pottinger’s instructions from
“ Lord Auckland with the following from Lord
“ Ellenborough to Major Outram ; remembering
“ always that the former had no international
“ right of meddling with the Ameers, whereas the
“ latter stood on treaties acknowledged and acted
“ on for three years : that the first was instigated
“ by rapacity ministering to an insane aggressive
“ policy ; the second stimulated by the lofty am-
“ bition of saving India from ruin.”

Notwithstanding the deep sense entertained by Lord Ellenborough of the iniquity of the conduct of the previous government towards the Ameers, it will be seen that the line of policy adopted towards them from the first was to assume their guilt in a manner most unjustifiable and uncalled-for. A striking illustration of this fact is to be



found in the letter to Colonel Outram referred to in the preceding extract, in which Lord Ellenborough says, that he is "*led to think Colonel Outram may have seen reason to doubt the fidelity of one or more of the Ameers of Scinde,*" and forwards letters addressed to each of them couched in the most threatening and intimidating language, warning them of the fatal consequences attending the contingent, and as yet unknown, acts of treachery so hypothetically alluded to above.

The communication in question is termed by Lord Ellenborough's counsel a "frank, resolute declaration, which was the guide of his conduct in *commencing* the Scindian war." We doubt much whether it will be generally considered such as became the Governor-General to address to parties having, as he professed to think, just ground of complaint against the British government, — who had committed as yet no ostensible act calling for interference on our part, — and whose conjectural offence consisted in a *probable* or *possible* want of fidelity to treaties deemed by his Lordship to have been unjustifiable, and which are described by General Napier as in the highest degree "immoral," and as "an impudent attempt to steal away their country."

It will be observed, and it is a point well



worthy of remark, that the grounds on which Lord Ellenborough was "led to think" that Colonel Outram might "see reason to doubt one "or more of the Ameers," do not transpire. If his Lordship had any real or valid ground for his suspicions, why such circumlocution?—if he had not, and was only endeavouring to pave the way for the suspicions which he was *desirous of entertaining* of the fidelity of the Ameers, what language can adequately characterise such an unstatesmanlike and disingenuous mode of proceeding?

This view of the case is not a little strengthened by the fact that Colonel Outram, the political agent, withheld the warning letters to the Ameers. Had there been any very strong grounds for suspecting them, there can be no doubt that this intelligent officer would not have taken such a step; and yet the suspicion that from the very first his Lordship had conceived the intention of drawing the sword on Scinde, and of carrying out the views he subsequently realised, forces itself at every page upon the mind of the reader of the documents relied on for his justification.

Unfortunately, the real grievances and just causes for discontent possessed by the Ameers rendered it but too likely that dissatisfaction, and even disaffection, would spring up amongst them;

and strong grounds were subsequently found to exist for accusing them of infractions of the articles of the treaties entered into by Lord Auckland, and even of hostile intentions in reference to the British authority.

Let us, however, hear the terms in which General Napier speaks of these symptoms of disaffection on their part : —

“ Though the confederacy and its menacing
 “ was only an ebullition, it was only one of many
 “ springing from a fixed resolution to throw off
 “ the yoke of Lord Auckland — and such ebulli-
 “ tions became more frequent and more violent
 “ as the state of affairs in Affghanistan or other
 “ places became more or less favourable for the
 “ British. *Can any man blame the Ameers justly*
 “ *for this resolution, having retrospect to the ag-*
 “ *gressive, unfair policy which imposed the treaties?*
 “ *Assuredly not !* ”

Strange language this, for the intrepid defender, *per fas aut nefas*, of the men by whom these very Ameers have been ignominiously driven from their possessions, and sacrificed on the pretext of punishing them for their non-adherence to these nefarious treaties.

But the General, unfortunately for his own consistency, is on the horns of a dilemma.

He has two points to establish, — the iniquity



of Lord Auckland's government, and the integrity of Lord Ellenborough's.

If he were to deny the justice of the Ameers' complaints, and consider that they were fairly bound to maintain the treaties entered into with Lord Auckland, he would be doing away with their alleged grievance, which is such a godsend as a handle for vituperating his Lordship; while, if he admits the grounds of their dissatisfaction, and considers that the treatment they had received affords a palliation for their offence, he is taking the ground from under Lord Ellenborough's feet, and *ipso facto* condemning the policy which could visit with such signal vengeance political offences in defence of which such extenuating circumstances can be stated. Fortunately for our side of the question, he has chosen the latter alternative, and no more striking proof of the weakness of the cause can be given than such a fact.

Lord Ellenborough found that Colonel Outram's views in reference to Scinde were of a less warlike character than was required — that that gallant and distinguished functionary was not made of very malleable material, and that it would be impossible for him to prosecute any line of policy in opposition to the feelings and opinions of a gentleman whose long and intimate association with the country so well qualified



him as an arbiter in a case in which his Lordship knew nothing. He therefore dismissed him from the post he had filled with so much credit to himself, of Political Agent. "He had offended Lord Ellenborough," says the historian, "by pertinaciously urging upon him, contrary to prudence and reason, his own views and opinions; it was offensive, and he was dismissed. Sir Charles Napier, a better man for war or policy, and of a surer judgment in what constitutes greatness, was then desired to take the entire charge of Scinde and its affairs."

Of the above statement, as far as regards Colonel Outram, there may be some difference of opinion; but of the truth and good taste of the disinterested testimony borne to the merits of the "Admirable Crichton" under whose talented auspices the Ameers have been so fortunate as to be sacrificed, there cannot be two opinions.

We are told that Lord Ellenborough threw upon Sir Charles Napier "the moral responsibility of any action to which he might be provoked by his report;" and, with a degree of unction and solemnity which would be most impressive were it not caricature, we are then informed of the "awful charge upon the conscience of Sir Charles from his confiding superior." It is matter of very great satisfaction



to find that Sir Charles Napier is aware of the responsibility which attaches to him as the adviser of Lord Ellenborough in these grave matters, as it no doubt must be to Lord Ellenborough to find any individual desirous of sharing the discredit so generally attaching to him for the proceedings in question.

The course of events is soon traced from the period of the dismissal of Colonel Outram and the entrance of Sir Charles Napier upon his united duties as Military Commander and Political Agent, for which latter avocations his fitness may fairly be considered as somewhat doubtful, when General Napier is (no doubt inadvertently) betrayed into the admission that he knew nothing of former treaties,—or *consequently* of the state of existing political relations in the country over which he was called upon to exercise the entire political and military authority. He was, however, known to be a brave and gallant soldier, ever ready for the field—qualities at such a juncture much more acceptable than the higher order of talent and greater discretion of his tried and distinguished predecessor.

It was once said by General Paoli, the great Corsican general, in reference to the talents of Bonaparte, whose god-father he was, that “a *very little* common sense and a *great deal* of *rashness* were all that were required to make a



“successful general.” The truth of the axiom is strikingly exemplified in the career of Sir Charles Napier in Scinde, and no doubt was fully appreciated by Lord Ellenborough in selecting him as the promoter of his views.

Sir Charles immediately proceeded to record and address to the Governor-General a long and elaborate statement of his peculiar views in reference to Scinde and the position of affairs in that country.

That the spirit of this document was in every way calculated to promote the feeling of dissatisfaction felt or professed at head-quarters towards the Ameers, may be fairly asserted. It is a document which will be found in the parliamentary papers; but to those who may be unable to see it, it may perhaps suffice, as corroborative testimony as to the tendency of all Sir Charles Napier's proceedings, to quote the words of his brother, who admits, with a degree of *naïveté* little to be expected from such a quarter, that “*for a man seeking occasion to war, it furnished ample undeniable justification for drawing the sword.*” The above is only one of many instances in which the *cloven foot* is shown, and in which Sir Charles Napier, as if to prove that there is more of the straightforward soldier about him, than of the wily diplomatist,—albeit he was entrusted with high political functions,—is at no

pains to conceal the anxiety felt to establish a *casus belli* with the Ameers.

In one letter he states, "It is not for me to "consider how we came to occupy Scinde." In another, in reference to the existing state of affairs, he says, "Such a state of political relations cannot last; the more powerful government will, at no distant period, swallow up the "weaker. *Would it not be better to come to the "result at once? (!)* I think it would be better "if it can be done *honestly.*" *Sed quære de hoc.*

Again he declares that "we only want a *pretext* "to coerce the Ameers."

Surely these sentiments coming from so high an authority, of whom it is said by General Napier, that, "he now became arbiter of peace "and war, and in his hands were life and death "for thousands," need no comment. It is impossible to read them, corroborative as they are of the warlike spirit indicated by the minacious aspect assumed towards the Ameers from the first, without feeling a moral conviction that the desire to pick a quarrel was the *primum mobile* of the whole policy of Lord Ellenborough and Sir Charles Napier.

We are forcibly reminded of the scene in Sheridan's play of "The Rivals" where Sir Lucius O' Trigger, having no legitimate or creditable excuse for a breach of the peace, and like Lord

Ellenborough "seeking occasion for war," and being, moreover, like Sir Charles Napier, of opinion, that a "*fair pretext*" was alone required, endeavours to obtain his object in the following ingenious mode:—

Sir Lucius.—With regard to that matter, Captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Capt. Absolute.—Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant; because, Sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir L.—That's no reason; for give me leave to tell you that a man may think an untruth as well as speak one.

Capt. A.—Very true, Sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir L.—Then, Sir, you differ in opinion with me, which comes to the same thing.

We fear that not all the denunciations thundered at the heads of those who presume to question the principle or policy which actuated Sir Charles Napier or the distinguished Nobleman "who saved a people from a miserable state of "slavery," will protect the government of India from the charge of having sought the *excuse* for coercing the Ameers, rather than the opportunity of adjusting matters on terms less exacting to them, and of having seized with alacrity the first plausible occasion of visiting them with extreme punishment.

The following extracts of two letters from Major Outram to Sir Charles Napier, which



appear in the printed parliamentary papers, are here introduced, as they are most important in establishing our position; the first as showing the feelings of the Scindians generally towards those who were evincing such a disinterested desire to deliver them from "slavery," and also as indicating the friendly conduct of the Ameers; and the latter as evidencing the feelings with which Major Outram viewed the onward hostile movements of Sir Charles Napier, which we are told were only the result of necessity and a due regard for our own safety.

Extract of a letter from Major Outram to Sir Charles Napier, dated February 13th, 1843 :—

" From what I saw yesterday of the spirit of
" the people, it appears to me that the Ameers are
" now execrated for their dastardly submission
" (as they consider it) to what they style robbery.
" For the first time since I came to Scinde in an
" official capacity, I was received last night by a
" dense crowd (on emerging from the fort after
" leaving the Durbar); shouts expressive of de-
" testation of the British, and a particular cry in
" which the whole populace joined as in chorus,
" the meaning of which I could not make out at
" the time, but which I have since ascertained was
" an appeal to their saint against the Feringhees.
" Although the Durbars and streets of the fort



“ were densely crowded, the Ameers’ officers kept
“ such a vigilant look out, that no evidence of the
“ popular feeling was permitted ; but in passing
“ through the city it could not be restrained ; and
“ had we not been guarded by a numerous body
“ of horse, headed by some of the most influential
“ Belooch chiefs, I dare say the mob would have
“ proceeded to violence : as it was, a stone was
“ thrown which struck Wells ; but being quite
“ dark in the shade of the gateway, he could not
“ see by whom : this I was not aware of till we
“ got home, and I have taken no notice of it to
“ the Durbar, as it is quite evident the *Government*
“ *did its utmost to protect us*, as was shown by the
“ escort refusing to go back after clearing the
“ city, where heretofore I had always dismissed
“ it, saying that they had strict orders to accom-
“ pany us the whole way. In fact the Ameers had
“ reason to fear that their Beloochees might at-
“ tempt mischief, having been engaged the whole
“ day in paying off and dismissing those who had
“ flocked to the city since the night before last,
“ *on hearing the continued advance of your troops.*”

Extract of a letter from the same, dated Feb-
ruary 12th, 1843 : —

“ These fools are in the utmost alarm, in con-
“ sequence of the continued progress of your
“ troops towards Hydrabad notwithstanding their



“acceptance of the treaty, which they hoped
“would have caused you to stop. If you come
“beyond Halla (if so far) I fear they will be im-
“pelled by their fears to assemble their rabble
“with a view to defend themselves and their
“families, *in the idea that we are determined to de-*
“*stroy them notwithstanding their submission.* I
“do hope, therefore, that you may not consider it
“necessary to bring the troops any further in this
“direction, for I fear it may drive the Ameers to
“act contrary to your orders to disperse their
“troops (or rather not to assemble them, for they
“were all dispersed yesterday), and thus compel
“us to quarrel with them.”

The rest is well known. Treaties of the most harsh and exacting character, far exceeding in stringency any previous treaty, and entailing the cession of much territory, were forced upon them at the point of the sword. The battles of Meanee and Hydrabad ensued; and however glorious those events may have been as military achievements, the policy of which they were the result will, in spite of all its zealous but ill-judged defenders, long be viewed as in the highest degree derogatory, not to say as disastrous, to the character of our eastern government.

We have now nearly completed our task; but there are still some points in reference to which a few observations appear to be called for.



It is a matter of grave and painful reflection, that General Napier should deliberately send forth to the world, with the sanction of his high name and authority, statements which he is not in a position either to prove or to justify.

Far be it from our intention to accuse him of wilful and deliberate misrepresentation for the purpose of strengthening his own case and weakening that of those on whom he is animadverting ; but while acquitting him of all intention of giving currency to charges the most atrocious, and mis-statements the most incredible, we cannot hold him innocent of most reprehensible indiscretion (to use the mildest term)—indiscretion which might not unreasonably entail upon him consequences little short of what is due to the inventors of the calumnies.

We know not whether General Napier has any imaginary injury to himself on the part of the Court of Directors to avenge, or whether it is merely that, like a good advocate, he has placed himself in the position of his client, and is writing under the influence of the disappointed ambition, baffled vanity, and ill-suppressed mortification, under which Lord Ellenborough suffers in consequence of the manly and independent act of the Court, by which his Lordship's career of mischief has been summarily and finally checked.

It is but too evident, however, that he has lent



a willing ear to the foulest calumnies against the Court of Directors at home, and the members of their Civil Service in India, and has placed himself, by his eagerness in retailing and circulating those calumnies, in a most unenviable position; for if he have proof of their correctness, he owed it to himself and to the public, to whose credulity he is appealing, to prove by facts and data that he is not simply throwing such accusations into the scale as idle ballast and make-weights to strengthen his argument; and if he have *no* proof, nor any corroborative testimony to support his assertions, beyond the idle gossip of a private letter, great indeed is his responsibility, and proportionate should be the measure of public reprobation which conduct so reprehensible would entail. "Lord Ellenborough found," says General Napier, "the finances embarrassed, the civil and "political service infested with men greedy of "gain, gorged with insolence, disdaining work, and "intimately connected with the infamous press of "India, which they supplied with official secrets, "receiving in return shameful and shameless "support; for, thus combining, they thought "to control the Governor-General, and turn the "resources of the state to their sordid profit."

Is it conceivable that such a statement as the foregoing should be risked, recklessly imputing to a Service of talented, honourable, and high-



mind^d gentlemen, every species of atrocious turpitude, peculation, breach of official confidence, and combination for the worst and most sordid purposes against the government to which they have sworn fidelity?—and that it should be risked too, without one tittle of evidence to support it, with a degree of arrogance ill becoming one who is relying on the veracity of others, and is himself, personally, wholly unacquainted with the nature, the character, or the constitution of the Service which he thus assists in vilifying as a class?

It cannot surely be the General's intention to rely for his justification on the private letter from Sir Charles Napier, which is found in the Appendix to the book, and in which these unjustifiable charges are made!

It is deeply to be regretted that Sir Charles Napier should have allowed his mind to receive impressions so derogatory to the character of a highly distinguished branch of the Company's Service; it is still more to be regretted that he should have committed the indiscretion of putting on record such observations as the following:—

“I see that all sorts of attacks are made upon Lord Ellenborough's policy in England, as well as here. As regards India, the cause is this. Lord Ellenborough has put an end to a wasteful expenditure of the public money by certain



“ civil servants of the state, who were *rioting in*
“ *the plunder of the Treasury* ; at least such is the
“ general opinion. These men are all intimate
“ with the editors of newspapers, and many of
“ them engaged with them ; they therefore fill
“ the columns of the newspapers with every sort
“ of gross abuse of Lord Ellenborough’s pro-
“ ceedings. But men begin to see through this,
“ and justly to estimate Lord Ellenborough’s
“ excellent government, in despite of these
“ jackalls driven by him from their prey.”

And these are the opinions hazarded by an officer of rank, holding a high and important command under the East India Company, in reference to the highest and most responsible branch of the public service, with whose merits, distinguished services and high character as a class, since the days of Clive and Warren Hastings, he could not fail to be well acquainted. That a Service the very constitution of which may emphatically be said to be a guarantee for its integrity,—a Service which has been the nursery of nearly all the distinguished public servants through whose statesmanship and diplomatic talents India has been raised to its present pinnacle of civilisation and prosperity,—a Service boasting among its brightest ornaments the names of Mountstuart Elphinstone, Bayly, Metcalfe, Edmonstone, Jenkins, Tucker and



Prinsep, and others innumerable, whose brilliant and useful public services have reflected honour alike on themselves and their country—that such a Service should find the breath of calumny contaminating its fair fame in the shape of accusations of venality and dishonesty so general as to preclude refutation, is indeed lamentable. But while the Civil Service of India, in its integrity, may defy the “Whisper of a Faction” and rise superior to all the calumnies which malignity, envy, or ignorance may invent or circulate, it surely cannot be allowed that charges so grave should be put forth by one whose position is calculated to give them a fictitious stamp, or that such a stigma should attach to any class of honourable men.

It is the duty of General Napier to come forward boldly with his proof, if he have any, and not to rely on the vagueness of his accusations for his immunity. If he have no proof to offer but the idle statements of another, possibly hazarded in ill-judged reliance on his discretion, he will have much public reprobation to bear for having so lightly ventured assertions so derogatory to an honourable and distinguished body of public servants.

The present is a further striking instance how much cause Sir Charles Napier, like the ex-Governor General, has to regret that the vin-



dication of his character has devolved on one whose intemperate zeal is so calculated to produce the very opposite effect from the one desired. If the grave and sweeping charges against the Civil Service were conveyed under the supposed security of a private letter, and were merely the retail gossip of idle rumours, the offspring of anonymous malevolence (a surmise borne out by the qualifying expression "at least so is the general opinion," and by the slender claims of the extract to literary merit), what must be his feelings in seeing such incidental expressions exposed to the glare of public criticism, and to the universal ban of public condemnation! But, on the other hand, if, indeed, the publication of these slanders is hazarded with his authority and concurrence, without one iota of proof or testimony of any sort to justify the imputations they convey, Sir Charles Napier will find that not even the daring advocacy of his gallant brother will hold him acquitted in the eyes of the world of an act of the most flagrant impropriety—perfectly unjustifiable in reference to those whom he attacks,—and of so glaring a degree of indiscretion, as regards himself, as fully to justify the opinion entertained by many, that his selection by Lord Ellenborough for the duties entrusted to him was one of the many illustrations of that Nobleman's want of judgment.



The indiscriminate manner in which every one entertaining views or opinions in opposition to Lord Ellenborough's policy is vituperated in the pages of the work under review, renders the idea of noticing such attacks in detail quite absurd. It is, however, impossible to refrain from drawing attention to one instance, evidencing such bad taste on the part of the author, as to merit the fullest exposure. We refer to the terms in which the long and useful career of Mr. Ross Bell, the Political Agent in Scinde, is described.

"About the middle of 1841, died Mr. Ross
"Bell. He had been Political Agent governing
"Upper Scinde, and Beloochistan, with un-
"bounded power, but under his sway many in-
"surrections had occurred amongst the tribes of
"Booghtees and Murrees, occasioned, it is said, by
"his grinding oppression accompanied with acts
"of particular and of general treachery, followed
"by military execution, bloody and desolating,
"involving whole districts in ruin. He was in
"constant dispute with the military officers, and
"he has been described as a man of vigorous
"talent, resolute, unhesitating, devoid of public
"morality, unscrupulous, and vindictive ; of
"domineering pride, and such luxurious pomp,
"that 700 camels, taken from the public service,
"were required to carry his personal baggage.



“ That his conduct was neither wise nor just
“ seems a correct inference from the deplorable
“ results of his administration; but Lord Auck-
“ land approved of it, and regretted his loss.
“ The story of the camels is certainly an exag-
“ gerated statement, and the *general charges have*
“ *been principally promulgated by the ‘Bombay*
“ *Times,*’ whose word for praise or blame is gene-
“ rally false, and always despicable.”

It is worthy of remark that the above asser-
tion regarding the camels is fully explained in a
statement which is appended from an officer
who was Mr. Ross Bell’s assistant, from which it
appears that the number specified was neither
unusual nor unnecessary under the circumstances
in which they were employed; but while the
accusation is ostentatiously put forward in the
text the *refutation* lies *perdu* in the Appendix!

As regards the remaining serious, and it is to
be hoped, libellous charges against the memory
of a distinguished public servant who died in the
performance of the arduous duties of an important
and responsible office, we can only regret that even
the *grave* is not secure from the animosity of the
gallant historian, and that he should have lent
his name to the promulgation and circulation of
statements of the sort, although professing to be
alive to the fact that they are derived from a



source characterised by himself as "*generally false, and always despicable.*"

The living objects of his personalities may be left to their own resources for vindicating their honour or veracity when impugned.

The names of Pottinger and Outram need no champions, and these gallant officers may smile at such impotent attempts to disparage them in public estimation.

As regards the Press of India, the abuse of which offers so fine a field for the display of General Napier's peculiar talent, it may, for aught we know, be all that is profligate, venal, and corrupt; but the ferocity of the excitable General's *tirades* against newspaper editors and contributors leads to the suspicion that, if he have no old score on his own account to pay off, he is showing his sense of favours conferred on his family by the Indian press. He may however safely be left in their hands: they are well able to defend themselves; and though we doubt the existence of any other man, so powerful in personalities — so eloquent in anathemas — so happy in the enviable facility of stringing together, with matchless fluency and unparalleled intemperance, every species of aggravating and insulting observation — we are still led to believe that the account between the



historian and the newspapers will eventually be balanced.

We now take our leave of Major-General Napier and his "History of the Conquest of Scinde."

As regards the British public, we believe that the historian will find that not even the name of Napier will be able to invest with an unmerited popularity, a work conceived in so objectionable a spirit, and executed in so reprehensible a tone. He should bear in mind that when a case is weak, the judicious advocate will be sparing of his personalities, and guarded in his assertions, lest by indulging in the former, he should excite mistrust of the soundness of the cause which they are intended to serve, and lest by indiscretion in the latter, he should provoke investigation into the authenticity of his facts.

By pouring the "vials of his wrath" on the devoted heads of all those of whose policy he disapproves, and by exhausting in reference to them his vocabulary of vituperation, he has overlooked their claims to the courtesy and consideration which, among gentlemen, are generally conceded to a political adversary who is not a personal enemy; and we beg him to believe that by the intemperate and undignified course which he has followed, and the over zeal he has displayed, he has damaged the cause of his principal



— weakened the claims of his gallant and distinguished brother to the gratitude and admiration of his country — and justified his being himself ranked among those bigoted historians who give to their facts the colour of their prejudices, and who have neither eyes to discern, nor candour to acknowledge any merit in a political opponent.

London, January, 1845.

THE END.



61 Part-III
NOTES AS003 CSL

ON

THE RELATIONS OF BRITISH INDIA

WITH

SOME OF THE COUNTRIES WEST OF
THE INDUS.

LONDON:

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CSL

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Part - III

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE compiler of the following pages is responsible only for the reasoning which they contain. The facts, resting on the authority of Public and Parliamentary Documents, must be presumed to possess the highest degree of accuracy that can be attained. The object of the "Notes" is, to place before the public, within the smallest possible compass, a fair and impartial view of the position and policy of British India, and to save the general reader, desirous of obtaining information on the subject, the task of wading through vast masses of irrelevant and comparatively unimportant matter, in order to gain it.



CSL

NOTES,

&c. &c.

FORTY years ago the necessity of securing British India from attack on its western frontier, was regarded by the Marquis Wellesley, then Governor-General, as an object of the highest importance. The enemies at that period to be dreaded, were the French, the most active and intriguing nation in Europe, as well as the most hostile to British interests; and Zemaum Shah, the chief of the Affghan state, who annually menaced Hindostan with invasion. To avert the dangers which thus threatened our Indian possessions, the Governor-General laboured to effect an alliance with Persia; first through the means of a native agent, and subsequently by a mission of higher character entrusted to Sir John Malcolm. By that gentleman a treaty was concluded in 1801, by which the Shah engaged to exclude the French from settling in any part of his dominions, and to hold the Affghans in check in the event of their attempting to invade British India.

A very brief period brought a change of circum-



stances, and called for new measures. Zemaun Shah, who from 1793 had never ceased to threaten our frontier, was deposed in the same year in which our treaty with Persia was concluded, and was succeeded on the Affghan throne by a prince too much devoted to indolence and sensuality to admit of his engaging in schemes of foreign aggression. One cause for apprehension was thus removed; but the danger from European enemies was not averted. The Persian sovereign, in 1806, sent a mission to Napoleon, then in the zenith of his power, and two years afterwards received, with great distinction, a French general, who arrived at his court with the declared intention of establishing a connexion which might facilitate Napoleon's views of attacking the English in India.

One result of this faithlessness on the part of Persia, was our first attempt to form an alliance with Affghanistan. Lord Minto dispatched Mr. Elphinston on a mission to Caubul, and a treaty was concluded, by which the Affghan sovereign bound himself to resist any attempts which might be made by the French and ^{Per}Russians to advance through his territories upon India. This treaty was concluded with Shoojah-ool-Moolk, who, by one of those revolutions so common in eastern states, was almost immediately afterwards driven from his throne.



In the mean time, endeavours were made to counteract the baneful influence which the French had acquired in Persia. Sir John Malcolm arrived at Bushire from India, but was denied permission to proceed to the capital, and directed to communicate with the Viceroy, at Shiraz. With this he refused to comply; and having remonstrated without effect, he returned to Calcutta.

Sir Harford Jones, who arrived shortly afterwards as Plenipotentiary direct from the British crown, succeeded in obtaining a somewhat better reception. He advanced to Tehran, and entered into negotiations: these terminated in the conclusion of a preliminary treaty, dated the 12th of March, 1809, by which the King of Persia renewed his engagement not to permit any European force to pass through his country towards India; and his Britannic Majesty was bound to furnish to Persia, in case of invasion from Europe, a subsidy and warlike ammunitions. The French mission was dismissed, and a Persian Ambassador was sent to England.

A treaty founded upon this preliminary arrangement, and designed to carry its provisions into effect, was afterwards entered into by Sir Gore Ouseley; but the British Government having required certain changes, the definitive treaty was not finally concluded until the 25th of November, 1814, when it received the signatures of Messrs. Morier and Ellis, on the part of Great Britain.



In 1828 so much of this treaty as bound the British Government to furnish Persia with an annual subsidy during war with a European power, was annulled. The other articles of the treaty remain unaltered.

The particulars which have been detailed are important, principally as illustrating the line of policy which, from the latter part of the last century, the British Government has deemed it prudent to pursue with reference to the defence of the western frontier of its Indian territories. When invasion was threatened from Affghanistan, and attempts, directed to the same end, were apprehended from France, an alliance with Persia was sought, as affording alike a barrier against European aggression, and the means of diverting Asiatic hostility. But Persia became subject to the very influence which her aid was sought to repel; and the danger threatened from Affghanistan was removed by the succession of a new sovereign. The Governor-General of India then endeavoured to avail himself of the opportunity which appeared to offer, of securing in Affghanistan that which was (for a time at least) lost in Persia. Other changes succeeded. Affghanistan fell into a state of disorder, which rendered the friendship or enmity of its rulers a matter of perfect indifference. French influence declined in Persia, and ours revived; the two countries (England and Persia)



having then a common object, that of resisting the power of Russia. Thirty years have passed since the arrangement of the preliminaries with Persia, and twenty-five since the conclusion of the definitive treaty. It would be strange indeed if no change had taken place during so extended a period; and if the policy which was advisable at its commencement should continue to be, in all respects, the best adapted to the circumstances that mark its conclusion.

Change *has* taken place; and a policy, the same in principle with that heretofore observed, but differing in application, is called for. British India has now nothing to apprehend from France; Affghanistan is weak and divided; but another power manifests views which render an efficiently as necessary for the protection of our western frontier as at any former period. Russia has not only gained a large addition of territory at the expense of Persia, but has succeeded in establishing a paramount influence over the councils of that country. Acting under this influence, Persia has endeavoured to obtain compensation for her losses in the west, by the assertion of old and almost obsolete claims to the eastward. The British Government could not witness these attempts without dissatisfaction. Persia is at present alienated from England; and it is, therefore, far from desirable to bring her nearer to British



India. But Persia, if successful in her attempts against the Affghan states, would conquer, not for herself, but for the power by which she is at present enthralled. Persia is but a name—it is Russia that is substantially interested in the anti-British intrigues which have taken place in Affghanistan—it is by Russia that those intrigues have been directed—it is by Russia that the advantages resulting from their success would be enjoyed.

The only effectual mode of meeting the impending danger, is by erecting and maintaining a united and vigorous government in Affghanistan. It was to this country that the British Government directed its attention when the former defection of Persia rendered it necessary to seek for a new ally; and the recurrence of circumstances not dissimilar, warrants a return to the same course of policy.

It is known that the larger portion of Affghanistan is subject to the brothers of Futteh Khan, the bold and unscrupulous minister of its former sovereign. There were formerly three Governments in the hands of this family, but Peshawer has been overrun by Runjeet Singh, and Candahar and Caubul only remain to them.

To the chiefs of those provinces the British Government tendered its friendship; but the offer was not received in the spirit by which it was dictated. Destitute as the brothers are of mutual



affection or mutual confidence, in one point they unite—in preferring the alliance of Russia to that of England.

From both Candahar and Caubul, applications have been made for aid and support from Russia. At both have agents from that country been received with demonstrations of respect and cordiality.

At Candahar the overtures of the British Government have always been met with evident coldness and dislike. At Caubul the semblance of friendship has been sometimes maintained, but nothing more. At both places the behaviour of the chiefs has been evasive, and their demands unreasonable. This conduct was encouraged by the advice and promises of the emissaries of Russia. Of promises, these persons appear, indeed, to have been most liberal. Money is a commodity in which neither Persia nor Russia can reasonably be supposed to abound. Yet money seems to have been promised with great readiness. A Russian agent, named Vickovitch, is said to have offered to remit to Caubul a given sum annually, to be forwarded to Bokhara, where the Russians had friendly and commercial relations, and from thence to be conveyed to Caubul, in such manner as its ruler might arrange. Similar promises were made at Candahar. One of the Sindars told a British officer that Russia had recommended a reconciliation with Caubul, after



which the Russians would assist the united parties with money to make war on the Sieks, and regain the possessions of which they had been deprived: the Shah of Persia owing Russia a crone and a half of rupees, the latter power would give an order for payment to the Affghan chiefs, the money to be equally divided between Candahar and Caubul, and a similar division to take place of the territories which they might be enabled to recover.

The conquests of Runjeet Singh from Affghanistan, formed one of the most frequent topics of complaint in the intercourse of Dost Mohammed Khan with Sir Alexander Burnes. The latter tendered the good offices of his government to remove the grounds of difference, but this was not satisfactory. At the same time, it is not unworthy of notice, that Peshawer, the seizure of which by Runjeet Singh was represented by Dost Mohammed Khan as the master grievance, did not belong to that chief, but to his brothers; and notwithstanding the indignation which he expressed on their behalf, he manifested in his intercourse with the British agent a perfect readiness to sacrifice their interests, provided his own were sufficiently considered.

Availing themselves of the strong feeling of animosity existing towards Runjeet Singh, neither the Persians nor the Russians were backward in



I shall now merely lay before you a few short extracts from a valuable work, "Modern India," by Mr. Campbell, of the Bengal Civil Service, who writes with a friendly feeling towards the Indian Government.

In alluding to the mode of collecting the rent or land revenue in the Presidency of Bombay, he says, page 373 : " In spite of all grants and liberality, it seems clear that the Bombay revenue system does not succeed, and that the country, generally speaking, is not prosperous."

Of Madras he thus writes, page 360 :—" The Madras men I have talked to, candidly admit that, at the present moment, the state of things is most unsatisfactory,—that the people are wretchedly poor, the land of little value, that the difficulty is to get the people to cultivate it on any terms, and that the cultivation is kept up by forcing, &c."

The picture he draws of the state of Bengal, the Garden of India, is still more disheartening, page 320 :—" The mass of the population (in Bengal) is probably poorer than anywhere else in India."

Alluding to the internal government of the North West Provinces, which are described as the most prosperous of the Indian possessions, he says, page 331,—" The settlement [of the land revenue] has certainly been successful in giving a good market value to landed property." A little further on he informs us what that good market value means, " The average result of sales seems to give about four years purchase on the revenue, which, supposing the net profit to be one-third of the revenue, would be twelve years purchase on the profits," he which



we are to understand, that a landlord, in that fortunate part of the globe, who has a property yielding £1200 per annum, would have to pay £800 to Government, and might estimate the market value of his property at £4800, or in other words, he would have to pay an income tax of 66 per cent !

It is unnecessary that I should enter into any discussion respecting the merits or rather the demerits of the various systems of collecting rents from the cultivators ; for all are admitted to be execrably bad, oppressive and demoralising in the highest degree. But I am most desirous that you should satisfy yourselves that in this fine country, so highly favoured as it is by soil, climate, and population, and under a Government possessed of extraordinary powers, the cultivators, who form nine-tenths of the inhabitants, are in a lamentable state of poverty and depression.

The East India Company and the India Board admit these facts ; but say, " We are as anxious as you are to improve the condition of the people of India and their commerce, perhaps more so, because it is our direct interest to do so. We have better means of judging what is likely to produce that most desirable result than you gentlemen of Liverpool and Manchester. Give us time ; we are placed in a very difficult position, we have many reforms to introduce, but rapid progress in such a work is neither possible nor desirable, if it were possible ; by urging too much speed you may retard rather than hasten the attainment of what we all desire. Careful investigation, great local knowledge, and most mature deliberation are indispensable in matters of so great importance "



adapted to the national habits, which has rendered justice cheap, easy, and accessible to every class. The greatest attention has been paid to public works. An engineering department has been established, consisting of a hundred officers—commissioned and warrant,—and it is charged with the construction of roads, canals, bridges, and viaducts; cantonments, forts, court-houses, and treasuries; jails, and dispensaries. Old canals have been reopened, existing canals repaired, and a new canal has been commenced, at a cost of half a million sterling, 466 miles in length, and adapted to afford irrigation to 650,000 acres, the rent of which is calculated to add £140,000 a year to the revenue of the kingdom. A great high road, from the banks of the Sutledge to Peshawur has been commenced and partly completed, at an expense of a quarter of a million sterling, which, considering the great engineering difficulties in the way, may be considered a monument of scientific enterprise. Other military and commercial roads have been undertaken, of which 1,350 miles have been cleared and constructed, and 853 are now under construction. The estimated cost of all these undertakings exceeds a million sterling. The revenue survey of the whole area of the country is now in progress, the rights of the various classes of landlord and tenant have been in most instances ascertained, and an assessment more lenient than that of Runjeet Sing has been adopted, while all the oppressive cesses which impeded industry and commerce, have been swept away, and the taxation of the country has been established on the most



enlightened principles. Such is the contrast which the most recent of our conquests presents to the oldest; if we have much to regret in reference to Bengal, we have also much to be proud of, in regard to those provinces which have happily enjoyed the full benefit of that maturity which the science of Asiatic administration has now reached. Notwithstanding all these expenses, the Punjab, after paying £779,000 for its military expenditure, yielded a surplus last year of £200,000.

In proceeding down your speech, and selecting for remark, chiefly, though not exclusively, those portions of it which refer to the Presidency with which I am best acquainted, I come to the question of the Salt Revenue. You quoted an article from the *Friend of India*, of the 14th of April last, in which it was stated that there had been a decrease in the sale and consumption of that article in one year, to the extent of twenty-five per cent., and you very naturally concluded that this must be an indication of the declining condition of the people. You have since learned from an article which appeared in the succeeding number of that journal, that the calculation was fundamentally erroneous, the writer having omitted to insert nearly 40,000 tons which had been imported from other ports than those of Great Britain. He stated also, that the falling off had not exceeded seven per cent., which was by no means in excess of the fluctuations to which so large a trade was liable, and that from the latest accounts it appeared that the decrease had been made up. If you will, moreover, turn to the



Russia was Constantine in favour of Nicholas. The grounds of exclusion are not dissimilar; and, if Nicholas be recognised, why should Shoojah be repudiated? As to Dost Mohammed Khan and his brothers, they have no right whatever to any portion of the country which they govern, but that which they may derive from the law of the stronger. By this their claims must be decided; and, if they fall, they will but lose their power by the operation of the law under which they held it.

The altered position in which we are placed, with regard to Persia, is to be lamented; we have, however, the satisfaction of knowing that everything that could be done to avert the breach of friendship has been resorted to. But our advice has been disregarded, our minister has been insulted, and all the influence of Persia in Afghanistan directed against us. In extenuation of part of this conduct it has been urged, that Persia has claims to Herat which it is natural she should seek to enforce. But it is, at least, equally natural, that we should seek to defend our Indian possessions; and the course which Persia is pursuing is fraught with danger to those possessions. A breach of the treaty with Persia has been charged upon us. To this it may be answered, that treaties are not made for eternity; and that when the relative circumstances of nations change, their engagements with each other must also undergo a change. But is it clear



that any breach of the treaty has actually been committed? The alleged breach refers to the ninth article, which declares, that "if war shall be declared between the Affghans and the Persians, the English Government shall not interfere with either party, unless their mediation to effect a peace shall be solicited by both parties." Now when this article was drawn, the state of Affghanistan was altogether different from what it is now. It was not then divided into a number of unconnected states, and consequently a war with one such state (Herat) is an event which was never contemplated. Persia is not, and has not lately been at war with "the Affghans as a nation." Her quarrel has only been with Herat. She is at peace with Candahar and Caubul. But if this article of the treaty will bear such an interpretation as will convict the British Government of a breach of it, other Articles must be interpreted with equal liberality. The Eighth Article provides, that "should the Affghans be at war with the British nation, his Persian Majesty engages to send an army against them, in such force and manner as may be concerted with the English Government." The English Government is at war with the Affghans, or a part of them, as the Persians have been with another part. Will Persia furnish an army to crush her friends at Candahar and Caubul? On violations of the spirit of the treaty it would be needless to dwell. The



First Article declares, that should any European power *wish* to invade India, his Persian Majesty engages to induce the kings and governors of the intermediate countries "to oppose such invasion as much as is in his power, whether by fear of his arms, or by conciliatory measures." Has Persia acted in the spirit of this engagement? Her aid was not to be reserved until an actual attempt at invasion occurred. The mere wish, when ascertained to exist, was, to call forth her friendly interference for the security of her ally. What has been the recent conduct of Persia in this respect? Has she exerted herself to close the gates of British India against aggression, or has she endeavoured to throw them open? The warmest of her advocates will scarcely venture to acquit her upon this ground.

Public engagements must have reference to reciprocal advantage : and when one of the parties is, by any cause, deprived of the power to benefit the other, it is time that the engagements should be modified, to suit the change of circumstances. The particular dangers which led England to seek an intimate connexion with Persia, have passed away, and new ones have arisen, which Persia cannot, or will not, assist in averting. Her entire strength is given in aid of a power, which, at this time is, beyond all others, the object of distrust and apprehension. The consideration for which



we stipulated being withdrawn, it would be unreasonable to hold us punctiliously to engagements which no longer rest on the basis of mutual benefit; and should there be any departure on our side from the strict letter of the treaty, we shall find a justification in the failure of the security which we bargained to obtain. Persia, as an independent state, might be a source of strength to India. Persia, as a Russian province, can only be a source of annoyance and apprehension. Whether Persia will ever shake off the influence of Russia, time only can show. If she should, our connexion with her may again assume its former character of cordiality. But it need not be the less cordial, and it will certainly not be the less safe, on account of our having a powerful and right-minded ally in Affghanistan. The alliance of the strong, like the friendship of the rich, is always sought with avidity. No state has ever displayed a greater degree of levity and political coquetry than Persia; and if it be important to regain her attachment, this can only be effected by convincing her, that we have both the power and the will to protect our friends and to punish our enemies.

Some who deny neither the abstract justice nor the desirableness of restoring Shoojah-ool-Moolk, magnify the difficulties of the attempt, and express serious doubts as to the result. The conclusion



of a warlike expedition can never be predicted with certainty; but there appears no reason to regard the present policy of the Government of India with other feelings than those of satisfaction and hope. Not many years since, Shooja-ool-Moolk, unassisted by the British Government, and without any direct aid from that of Lahore, made an attempt to recover his throne, which, though not finally successful, was as near success as a failing project could be. Nor was the attempt without an average share of difficulty. After encouraging him to proceed, the Sindian chiefs refused him the supplies which he demanded in character of their superior, and maintained their refusal by force. An action was fought, in which Shoojah was victorious, and the Ameers of Sinde were glad to purchase peace by liberal contributions. Shoojah then advanced into the country to which he laid claim, and sanguine hopes of his success were entertained, not only by himself but well informed British officers. The result of a general action was fatal to his progress, and he was obliged again to seek a retreat in the British dominions; but it is certain that he advanced into Candahar without any difficulty beyond the temporary opposition of the Ameers of Sinde, and that he returned without encountering greater obstacles than might be expected by a defeated and exiled prince. The route which was then traversed with so much ease



cannot be expected now to present any insuperable difficulties to superior force directed by incomparably superior skill. In his own territories Shoojah-cool-Moolk may anticipate a friendly reception from a large portion of the people. Neither the rulers of Candahar nor the chiefs of Caubul are popular with their subjects; various sources of dissatisfaction exist. Dost Mohammed Khan is reported to have found it difficult to repress popular commotions; and Mr. Masson, an Englishman, perhaps better acquainted than any other of his countrymen, with the states west of the Indies, represents the wishes of all parties as turning to the restoration of Shoojah. Such are the prospects of the expedition, and they are very far indeed from being discouraging.

The points which are established by a review of the past and present policy of Great Britain towards the states west of the Indies, appear to be the following :—

That for many years both the Government of India and the Government at home have felt the importance of forming alliances to resist aggression from the west.

That the alliance with Persia was sought as a barrier against the designs of France, as a check upon those of Affghanistan when under a hostile ruler, and subsequently as an impediment to the progress of Russia: that the first two objects are



no longer necessary, and that the third cannot be secured by such means.

That as the Government of Lord Minto endeavoured to raise up in Affghanistan an ally to supply the loss of Persia, prudence points to the same course now ; but that as the present rulers of Candahar and Caubul are hostile to British interests, and as a claimant of their power, enjoying the advantage of a superior title, is friendly to those interests, a judicious policy will lead us to take the necessary steps for promoting the abdication of the present authorities, and the restoration of the dethroned monarch ; and that these measures are practicable as well as expedient.

That the Government of India, in pursuing its present course, is not adopting a new and untried line of policy, but one which has received the sanction of the highest authority both in Great Britain and India, and has been acted upon for a series of years with satisfactory results.

THE END.



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INDIA REFORM.

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CSL

INDIA REFORM.

THE

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SINCE 1834.

"Our Indian Government, in its best state, will be a grievance. It is necessary that the correctives should be uncommonly vigorous: the work of men sanguine, warm, and even impassioned. For it is an arduous thing to plead against the abuses of a power which originates from your own country, and which affects those we are used to consider as strangers."—*Burke, in 1783.*

"An intelligent people would not submit to our rule."

Lord Ellenborough, in 1862.

In closing the Parliamentary Session of 1833, King William IV., as usual, reviewed the measures which had been enacted. Amongst them was the Act for providing for the better government of India; and of it his Majesty remarked, "I have the most confident expectation that the system of Government thus established will prove to have been wisely framed for the improvement and happiness of the Natives of India." That Statute is now approaching its termination; and the Prime Minister has announced the intention of the Queen's Cabinet to propose to Parliament the renewal of the Indian Government on the same basis as that which was established in 1833, with some modifications in its details only. The question then arises, was this system of Government as "wisely framed" in 1833, as the King "most confidently expected?" And has it promoted "the improvement and happiness of the Natives of India?" If it have not, the ground for its renewal on the same basis, will be cut from beneath the fact of the responsible advisers of Queen Victoria. For, to renew what has produced unworthy or mischievous results, or has confirmed and aggravated previous evils and disorders in India, is to endanger the integrity of the Empire which it is their duty to strengthen and protect.

The enquiry a/hand, and the issue now raised by the effluxion of the Charter Act cannot be better stated than in the language used by the late King. It denotes, in the simplest terms, the purpose of the Statute—"the improvement and happiness of the natives



of India ;" and by doing so, it enables the country and the legislature to apply to its success or failure, tests of the most infallible description. For there is nothing in this world so patent and certain, and easily ascertainable as good government. Its characteristics are the same everywhere ; it is so plain and palpable in its results, that it can be appreciated by all, regardless of creed or colour. The first step in the enquiry is, therefore, to apply some of the tests of good government to the Government of India, as it has been administered under the system established in 1833.

I. PEACE.

Perhaps the most important of these tests is PEACE. For, without the opportunities and the means afforded by Peace, no system of government can result in the improvement and happiness of a people. Unjust war, all men agree, is the greatest of human crimes ; unwise war the hugest of human blunders. A war, however, is neither necessary nor defensible, because passages from Grotius, Puffendorf, or Vattel can be quoted in its excuse. For the soundest maxims may be rashly and mischievously applied ; and in its operation, government is matter of discretion, of prudence, of wisdom, and foresight. The consequence of one imprudent war may indeed lead to others more excusable. But when peace is the exception, and war the rule of a government ;—when north, south, east and west, it is successively engaged in hostilities—when it never wants quarrels to fight in, enemies to conquer, and territories to annex, men cannot, and will not, believe that such a government is wise, is prudent, is just, is paternal, is unambitious, is economical ; or that it is engaged in promoting the improvement and happiness of its people.

Now since 1834, the Government of India, as established in the preceding year, has, out of the nineteen years that have passed, been for fifteen of them in a state of war. It has been at war with the Affghans, with the Beloochees in Seinde, with the Mahrattas in Gwalior, with the Sikhs in the Punjaub ; it is now at war with the Burmese. And the peculiarity of four out of five of these wars is, that they were not, like many of those which had preceded them in India, internal wars—wars, the excuse and defence of which are that they were needful to subdue enemies who could not be avoided,

and whose countries laid intermingled with our own territories; but external wars—carried on beyond our natural limits and defensible boundaries; adding new and more warlike races to our previously peaceable millions; thereby making our Eastern Empire less homogeneous; advancing our frontiers to unknown difficulties and embarrassments; and subjecting the safety and security of India to the whims, caprices and predatory habits of less civilized neighbours, over whom it is almost impossible to establish any restraining influences, and to whom religious bigotry and love of independence render our rule hateful. Thus, during the last Charter Act, war has not only been the chronic characteristic of the Indian Government; but war of a kind and a danger such as never was before known in India.

These wars were not necessary for the safety,—they have retarded the improvement, and diminished the happiness of the Natives of India, whilst they have exhausted the resources of the Government; but they were the natural result of the system established in 1833; for it wanted the responsibility and the “correctives” which alone keep human rulers at peace. There is now no second opinion concerning the criminality and wickedness of the Affghan war. It was an unprovoked attack on the independence of well-disposed neighbours, and a revolutionary effort to change their ruling dynasty for the supposed benefit of India. But its reverses and disgrace; its cost of eighteen millions sterling, and its loss of an army 12,000 strong, were all thrown away on a Government without responsibility. The Scinde war quickly followed the Affghan war. A desert impassable for an army, and behind which were all our resources, separated and defended British India from Scinde. But the Indian Government resolved to obtain “command over the navigation of the Indus,” and under the delusion that it would lead to a great and profitable commerce with Central Asia, it coerced the Ameers into treaties they could not fulfil, and conditions that were intolerable because disgraceful to them. It deposed them, seized their country and their treasures, became itself the victim of a miserable fraud, and in annexing Scinde gained a large annual pecuniary loss; which is a charge on the industry of the Natives of India. It did more, however, than acquire a worthless state; it committed a great political error. By annexing



Under the Indian Government brought itself into contact with hostile tribes, residing in mountain fastnesses, and laid itself open to constant attack in its front. Worse still, it alarmed the Government of the Punjaub in the very crisis and agonies of its history.

The death of the remarkable Prince, who had so long ruled that country with wisdom, energy, and foresight, was followed by civil war. And at this juncture the Indian Government thrust itself in the way of the contending factions; and by its aggressions on their neighbours, by its collection of troops on their frontiers, and by its occupation of neutral territory, alarmed them for their own safety. The Army in a state of revolt was led to the Sutlej to be slaughtered by the English, and it was not till four severe general actions had been fought on the south bank of the Sutlej in seven weeks, that our army could venture across that river. These battles cost us considerably dearer in the ratio of casualties than the victory of Waterloo. Instead, however, of retiring into its own territories, the Indian Government undertook the administration of a country it had not conquered. Its mismanagement brought on another sanguinary war; the discomfited army again rallied around its leaders, and gave employment to a British force of not less than thirty-five thousand men, during the greater part of a year. At length the military insurrection was put down; the infant Prince punished for our misdeeds by dethronement and banishment; and the Punjaub placed under the sole management of European officers. But has this conquest made India more secure? Not at all. It has only increased the danger. On the Western frontier it is a continuation of that of Scinde; it lies between us and the unforgiving Affghans; and our army in advance (placed in the territory of subordinate but discontented Affghan chiefs) is in a constant state of petty warfare.

What yearly amount of pecuniary burthen our recent territorial acquisitions may have brought on the Indian finances, it is very difficult to discover, so ill made out are the Finance Accounts laid annually before Parliament; but in each case the burthen is undoubtedly great. The revenues of the Punjaub are *assumed*, by the Court of Directors, to be £1,300,000; and the average of its civil charges has already reached £1,120,000; leaving an apparent



surplus of £180,000 per annum. But this is apparent only. For, correspondingly wrote the Court of Directors to the Governor-General in Council, on the 3rd of June, 1852, the £180,000 "include none of the charges of the regular troops, nor the expenses of barrack accommodation." Now the average of military charges throughout India exceeds 56 per cent of the net revenue; and in the Punjab, a newly conquered country, where there is an army, probably 50,000 strong, the military charges can hardly be less than one million sterling; a sum that will make the Punjab a charge and a burden of about £800,000 a year on the general revenues of India.

Equally difficult is it to make out the actual cost of Scinde; its "probable" expense the Directors admit to be £480,000

Deduct Revenue £280,000

Probable charge or loss in Scinde £200,000

So, too, Sattara, which to its own Prince yielded a large surplus; it was annexed in the hope of gain to the general revenue; its annexation has proved a loss.

Its expenses in 1850-1 were £240,623

Its receipts £205,240

Actual loss by Sattara £35,383

"We certainly were not prepared," says the Court to Lord Dalhousie, in reviewing these figures, "to find that the annexation of Sattara would entail a charge upon the general resources of India." Those who knew the system better, were, however, less credulous than the Court of Directors; they were prepared for what has happened.

But scarcely at peace beyond its natural limits on the North-west, the Indian Government has rushed into war beyond its natural limits on the East. A mountainous country separates Bengal from Burmah, across which troops cannot be marched. The Burmese have nothing to do with India. They are not formidable or dangerous. There is no hostile Persia beyond Burmah. There is no Russia to urge a warlike people on to attack India from this side. To go to war with Burmah, the Indian Government is obliged to take to the sea. Yet not only is it engaged in a war with Burmah, costing £120,000 a month and probably far more; but, by annexing Pegu, it indicates its



convention, either of never being at peace, or of going on advancing its frontiers to the borders of Siam. At the close of the war of 1815, England might as rationally have annexed Normandy, as India now annex Pegu. For, as in Europe, England possesses limits which nature itself—which ethnology, geography, history, have all united to assign to it; so also in India. There, too, we have boundaries unmistakably fixed by nature. But, as in the West, so in the East, these are now abandoned; and besides the cost of past wars, and of the present war, the Natives of India will have to bear the burthens of future wars; as inevitable as Kaffir hostilities, unless a thorough change in our system be now adopted.

Applying, then, the test of Peace to the last twenty years, what opportunity, what means, what chances, can a Government, occupied more or less with war for fifteen of those years, have had of working out the improvement and the happiness of the Natives? No man can serve two masters. No Government—above all, no Foreign Government,—can recompense a people for the misery, the cost, and the burthen of war. War requires all the energy, all the mind, all the money, a Government can avail itself of. What war, during the greater part of the currency of the present Charter Act, has had the benefit of in India, the Natives have been deprived of. They have not had the energy, the mind, or the money of the Government applied to their improvement or happiness.

II. FINANCES.

And the effect of this deprivation is to be seen in the state of the Finances of India; PECUNIARY PROSPERITY being the second great test of good government everywhere.

In England a deficit in the Treasury is the most heinous of all Government offences. No Administration can survive for three years a want of equilibrium in our receipts and expenditure, no matter how caused. We regard, too, other countries in Europe as comparatively strong or weak according to their financial position; and we are continually inferring danger to the stability of order in Austria from the disorders of its Treasury. Turn to India, and what, during the



last fourteen years, do we find? Deficit—deficit—deficit. Here it is in detail.

| | DEFICIT. | SURPLUS. |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1838-9 | £381,000 | |
| 1839-40 | 2,138,000 | |
| 1840-1 | 1,754,000 | |
| 1841-2 | 1,771,000 | |
| 1842-3 | 1,346,000 | |
| 1843-4 | 1,440,000 | |
| 1844-5 | 583,000 | |
| 1845-6 | 1,495,376 | |
| 1846-7 | 971,202 | |
| 1847-8 | 1,911,791 | |
| 1848-9 | 1,473,115 | |
| 1849-50 | | £354,187* |
| 1850-1 | 631,173 | |

In the greater part, therefore, of the twenty years of the present Charter Act, the deficit of the India Government has been as chronic as the state of war. In 13 years, it will be seen that it has amounted, in the face of an increasing revenue, to the amazing sum of £15,541,470; all provided for, of course, by loans and debt; agencies adverse to, not promotive of, the improvement and happiness of the people.

When the present system of Government was framed in 1833, the military charges of India were about eight millions sterling, or 49 per cent of its net revenue. Twenty years of anticipated "improvement and happiness" have now almost elapsed, and the military charges now exceed twelve millions sterling, and eat up 56 per cent of the net revenue. In other words, the large cash balances that were in the Treasury in the early part of the year 1838, and the increase of revenue that has concurrently been going on, have not only been absorbed by military charges; but it is those charges which have produced this continuous state of deficit, and which have augmented the Indian debt from £30,000,000, as it stood when the Act passed, to £50,000,000, as it will stand when the Statute, that was to do so much good to India, will expire. Out of twenty years, fifteen years of war; in thirteen years a deficit of 15½ millions sterling; twenty millions sterling added to the debt. These are the first results of the legislation of 1833, which arrest our path in clearing the way for legislation in 1853.

* The surplus this year arises out of the accidental increase of the precarious revenue from the Opium monopoly.



III. MATERIAL IMPROVEMENTS.

Of course, a system of government which in the last twenty years has gone on increasing its military expenditure from eight to twelve millions sterling, and thus adding to its debt, has had little to spend on what are, in such a country as India, the next evidence of good government—PUBLIC WORKS. Lord Auckland, the first Governor-General after the enactment of 1833, commenced his administration by recognising the construction of roads, bridges, harbours, tanks, and irrigation works, as a primary duty of the Indian Government. But, having recognized the duty, his Lordship immediately proceeded to disable himself from discharging it, by beginning that career of warfare which is still going on. So, that out of a revenue exceeding 21 millions sterling, the rate of government expenditure on public works has, according to Mr. Campbell,* been $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, or less than £500,000 a year, spread over a country as large as Europe; for British India contains an area of 1,294,602 square miles. And of this half million, by far the greater part is spent on the favoured and no doubt very important North-Western Provinces. They yield a net-revenue of four and a half millions sterling, and of it have seven and a half per cent spent on improvements. Whilst on Madras, with a net revenue of nearly four millions, only one half per cent is so laid out; though in Madras the land assessment falls far heavier on the cultivators than in any other part of India, though the soil pants for moisture, and though whole rivers of fertilising waters run to waste for want of irrigation works. Bengal contributes more than eight millions sterling net, and receives one per cent back in the construction of roads, &c., and Bombay the same per centage on its net revenue of £2,300,000. Here stands the account for 1849-50; the year in which there was a small surplus.

| | POPULATION. | SQ. MILES. | NET REVENUE. | PUBLIC WORKS. |
|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| BENGAL | 41,000,000 | 225,000 | £ 8,500,000 | £ 92,200 |
| N. W. PROV. | 23,000,000 | 85,000 | 4,500,000 | 348,000 |
| MADRAS | 22,000,000 | 140,000 | 3,779,000 | 14,919 |
| BOMBAY. | 10,405,000 | 120,000 | 2,337,000 | 24,743 |

And of these sums so debited against public works, some portion is, it must be borne in mind, spent on barracks and purely military

* *Modern India.* Mr. Campbell is a writer favourable to the existing Indian administration, but in the statistical papers just put into circulation by the Court of Directors, the total average expenditure on public works, during fourteen years, amounts to the sum of £271,664.



undertakings. The figures, too, include the cost of superintendence ; which has sometimes wasted 70 per cent. of the outlay.

IV. CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

But, in spite of war, deficit, and want of roads, bridges, harbours, and public works,—in spite of this, the CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE may have improved during the last twenty years? Try the Act of 1833, then, by this test. There can be none better or surer. In India, however, it is necessary to recollect, the British Government is more than the Ruler and Governor of the people ; it is their Landlord also. Thus it is doubly bound to them. It has its duties as Proprietor, as well as its obligations as Administrator to perform ; it has Tenants, as well as Subjects to look after, to care for, and to protect ; it acts directly, as well as indirectly on the cultivation and on the cultivators of the soil ; and it is immediately, as well as mediately responsible for its state and their condition. Remembering this, first let us go to our oldest provinces, where there is what is called a permanent land settlement ; permanent, however, only to the middle man ; fluctuating beyond even Irish fluctuation, to the cultivator. In the fertile districts of Lower Bengal," says a thoroughly well-informed writer in the *Calcutta Review*, No. XII.

"So bountifully intersected by noble rivers fed by tributary streams and rivulets, which spread perennial verdure and luxuriance over fields and plains, and constituting links of communication, stimulate and promote the alacrity and bustle of traffic,—there is to be found a community leading a life such as to call forth sympathy and commiseration. The community we allude to, is that of the Bengal Ryot. The name is familiar here as one expressive of an ignorant, degraded, and oppressed race."

To whatever part of Bengal we may go, the Ryot will be found, "to live all his days on rice, and to go covered with a slight cotton cloth." The profits which he makes are consumed in some way or other. The demands upon him are almost endless, and he must meet them one by one. This prevents the creation of capital, and prolongs the longevity of the Mahajani [or usurious money-lending] system. The districts of Bengal are noted for fertility and exuberance of crops ; and if the Ryots could enjoy freedom and security, the country would exhibit a cheering spectacle. But their present condition is miserable, and appears to rouse no fellow feeling, no sympathy, in those by whom they are surrounded. The monthly expense of a Ryot is $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 rupees ;* and if he has a family, it must be proportionately higher. We do not believe that there are in all

* A rupee may be reckoned as 2 shillings of English money.



the districts five in every hundred, whose *whole* annual profits exceed one hundred rupees !

"In many instances the earnings of a Ryot are not sufficient for his family ; and his wife and sons are obliged to betake themselves to some pursuit, and assist him with all they can get. He lives generally upon coarse rice and dhol ; vegetables and fish would be luxuries. His dress consists of a bit of rag and a slender chudder ; his bed is composed of a coarse mat and a pillow ; his habitation, a thatched roof and his property, a plough, two bullocks, one or two lotahs and some *bijadhan*. He toils 'from morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve ;' and despite this he is a haggard, poverty-smitten, wretched creature. This is no exaggeration ; even in ordinary seasons, and under ordinary circumstances, the Ryots may often be seen fasting for days and nights for want of food."

"The inability of the Ryot to better his degraded condition, in which he has been placed by the causes we have named, is increased by his mental debasement. Unprotected, harassed and oppressed, he has been precluded from the genial rays of intellectuality. His mind is veiled in a thick gloom of ignorance."

And the consequence of this condition of the Bengal Ryot, is, to quote the language of the Court of Directors, (3 June, 1852), "there has been a diminution in the total receipts from land in the old provinces of Bengal since 1843-44."

Such are the results of the Zemindary system. Turn next to Madras, where the Ryotwary prevails. There, the India Government does not place the cultivators at the mercy of great speculators in land and farmers of taxes, with power to rack, torment, and sell them off ; and render them the slaves of money-lenders. There, it acts the part of landlord directly ; annually fixing the rent of the minute portions into which the soil is subdivided ; annually collecting these petty sums from its yearly patch-work settlements. And what are the results there ? "The Madras men with whom I have talked," writes Mr. Campbell,* candidly admit that at the present time the state of things is most unsatisfactory—that the people are wretchedly poor, the land of little value ; that the difficulty is to get people to cultivate it on any terms, and that the cultivation is kept up by forcing, by government advances, &c. &c." And what are these, " &c. &c." too common place to name ? Cruelties at which humanity shudders ; and of which the Madras Petition lately presented to Parliament gives the following example as occurring in the year 1850.

"That at the dittum [the fixation of rent] settlement of the previous year, on their [the Ryots] refusal to accept the dittum offered



avowals of hostility to that potentate. An agent of Dost Mohammed Khan wrote to his master from Persia that the Shah would send an Elchee, who, after meeting the Ameer, (Dost Mohammed Khan,) would proceed to Lahore, in order to explain to its ruler, that if he would not restore all the Affghan countries to the Ameer, he must be prepared to receive the Persian army. This communication was made when sanguine expectations were entertained of the speedy fall of Herat, and it was added, that after that event had taken place, money and troops would be sent. M. Vickovitch, the Russian agent already mentioned, offered, on the part of Russia, to repel the attacks of Runjeet Singh; and it appears that he had in his possession letters addressed to that prince, announcing that if he did not withdraw from Peshawer, the Russians would compel him.

The language held with regard to the English, though less violent, was scarcely less hostile. There is no evidence, indeed, that the agents of Russia talked like some of their brethren elsewhere, of dictating the terms of peace in Calcutta; but the rulers of Candahar were enjoined to follow the wishes of the Shah of Persia, and on no account to ally themselves with the English. They were told also, that the English had preceded the Russians by many generations in civilization; but that now the latter had arisen from their sleep,



and were seeking for foreign possessions and alliances; that the English were not a military people, but merely the merchants of Europe. Little care seems to have been taken to conceal the aggressive spirit which led to the employment of Russian agents in Affghanistan. They are represented as avowing, that as the affairs of Turkey and Persia were adjusted, Russia sought an extension of her influence in Toorkistan and Caubul. Such language, as is observed by Sir Alexander Burnes, might deserve little notice, if unsupported by facts: but the facts, to bear out the reports, are not wanting; and by such conduct, (again quoting the words of Sir A. Burnes,) "Russia is casting before us a challenge." That challenge we could not decline, without a compromise both of national interest and national honour. Russia has no legitimate object in Affghanistan: she has no interest to protect there, and no plea for interference. We have an interest of the highest importance; an object justifying the most strenuous efforts. In accepting the Russian challenge, therefore, we have shown no spirit of encroachment, no undue appetite for aggrandizement, no desire to rush needlessly into war. The time has arrived when Affghanistan must be subjected to the influence either of Russia or Great Britain; and the representative of the latter country could not honestly hesitate at such a crisis.



Difficulties there undoubtedly were to be overcome; and among the greatest were those presented by the unsettled state of Afghanistan, and by the unfriendly spirit of its rulers. The division of the country into a number of separate governments, diminished its value as a barrier to British India, because it diminished its strength. The extraordinary system of co-partnery in which Candahar was held, (and Peshawer also, while it continued an independent state,) increased the evil. Still, as we found such a state of things existing, it was determined, without reference to the title of the existing rulers, to attempt to establish with them such relations as should effect the object which it was desired to attain. The attempt was made, and it failed. The Affghan chieftains preferred a Russian to a British alliance. They would rather have directed their arms against the allies of England than against its enemies. In such an emergency, what could we do but what we have done? What course could be less exceptionable, than to aid the most powerful and most faithful of our allies, in restoring to the throne which he formerly occupied, a sovereign who has learned attachment to the British Government, from having found, under its protection, an asylum in the time of adversity?

Of our right to aid Shoojah-ool-Moolk, in resuming his sovereignty, no reasonable doubt can



be entertained : in Europe it would not be questioned, and in the East, where international law is certainly not better understood, nor more rigorously observed, there can be no pretext for increased delicacy. It is not many years since all Europe united in deposing the actual sovereign of France, and assisting a family long exiled from the throne in re-ascending it. It is not necessary to inquire into the policy of this proceeding ; it is enough that it occurred—that the allied powers were satisfied of their right thus to act, and to declare, on entering France, that they would not treat with Napoleon Buonaparte nor with any of his family.

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Lord Dalhousie, however, has reversed this sound policy. According to him, our supremacy, wherever an apology or an excuse can be raised, has to over-ride our treaties, has to interpret their language, and to decide all their difficulties ; and “it is only in this way,” says his admirer, Mr. Campbell, “that we can hope gradually to extinguish the Native States which consume so large a portion of the revenue of the country,” as if they were robbing us of something we were justly entitled to.

Revenue is then the motive for this change. But revenue does not always include profit. “By incorporating Sattara with our possessions we shall increase the revenue of our State,” joyfully, if immorally, anticipated Lord Dalhousie in 1848. “We were not prepared to find that the annexation of Sattara would prove a drain on the general revenues of India,” gravely and sadly replied the Court of Directors, after four years experience of these expectations, in 1852. Nor is the loss to the general revenues of India arising from the absorption of Sattara an exceptional case. The King of Oude was formerly bound to pay us a tribute of £700,000 ; in lieu of it we took from him a territory yielding £1,125,000 ; but, after twenty years possession of it, the revenue was found to have declined at the rate of £10,000 annually ; and this decline, the Court of Directors last year stated, is still going on. So, too, with Coorg—it is a loss ; Scinde is a loss ; the Punjaub a bottomless pit of expense.

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a question of adoption under the law and custom of India. 'Parallels of this sort rather furnish similitudes to illustrate or to adorn, than supply analogies from whence to reason.' But these terms mislead us also, by assuming the existence in India of a system of order, and of regulated right in the relation between one great Emperor and other minor sovereigns, which, I believe, never existed, and certainly not for the last century. On the contrary, any system of rights is entirely at variance with the lawlessness and anarchy which prevailed, when our political connection with India commenced. The only law then recognized was the law of the strongest. On this ground, it seems to me visionary to talk of rights held under the Emperors, or the Mahrattas, and derived by us from them.

"Nevertheless, it is stated that we are lords paramount in relation to Sattara, first, as successors to the Emperors; I have just now shown, however, I think, that there was no paramount sovereignty for us to succeed to. We have conquered a large portion of the territories which the Emperors once possessed, not from them, but from other powers who had seized them. We are thus become the predominant or paramount power in India, and able to throw our weight into the scale of justice and order when any dispute is likely to disturb the general peace. In this sense we may be said to be successors to the Emperors, but not to any constitutional prerogatives, which confer on us rights as lords paramount.

"Again, if we have any claim to succeed to such rights from the Emperor, we must either have obtained them from him by grant or treaty, or have received some formal submission from other sovereigns, or else some implied grant or submission of the kind. If so, where and when did all this occur? But there is no trace to be found of any such grant, or of any such submission; and a mere general rumour or impression, such as is described by the members of the Bombay Government, should not surely be allowed for a moment to affect that great and obvious principle of public law expressed by the writers of Europe, that "one party to a treaty cannot be allowed to introduce subsequent restrictions which he has not expressed."

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to extinguish.' Your army is derived from the peasantry of the country, who have rights; and if those rights are infringed upon, you will no longer have to depend on the fidelity of that army. You have a native army of 250,000 men to support your power, and it is on the fidelity of that army your power rests. But you may rely on it, if you infringe the institutions of the people of India, that army will sympathise with them; for they are part of the population; and in every infringement you may make upon the rights of individuals, you infringe upon the rights of men who are either themselves in the army, or upon their sons, their fathers, or their relatives. Let the fidelity of your army be shaken, and your power is gone."

But there are other reasons against this new theory of subversion, besides the advantage thus authoritatively described as resulting to our own power, and its stability, from the maintenance of Native States. We have, it is true, become the predominant power in India, but our supremacy is not without its correlative obligations and duties. On the contrary, it is a superiority limited and restricted within the stipulations and provisions, and controlled and checked by the words and language of treaties. "I would," wrote General Wellesley, half a century ago, to his more ambitious and peremptory brother, the then Governor-General,—“I would sacrifice Gwalior, or every other frontier in India ten times over, in order to preserve our character for scrupulous good faith.” “What!” he nobly asked of his relative, “what brought me successfully through the last campaign but strict adherence to British good faith; and what success could I hope for in any future operations, if I were to tarnish that faith?” Forty years passed away; but in 1842 Lord Auckland (a great offender in some respects,) still repeated the Great Duke’s language: “In viewing this question,”—the right of the widow of the Rajah of Kishengur to adopt a son without authority from her deceased husband:

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Difficulties there undoubtedly were to be overcome; and among the greatest were those presented by the unsettled state of Afghanistan, and by the unfriendly spirit of its rulers. The division of the country into a number of separate governments, diminished its value as a barrier to British India, because it diminished its strength. The extraordinary system of co-partnery in which Candahar was held, (and Peshawer also, while it continued an independent state,) increased the evil. Still, as we found such a state of things existing, it was determined, without reference to the title of the existing rulers, to attempt to establish with them such relations as should effect the object which it was desired to attain. The attempt was made, and it failed. The Affghan chieftains preferred a Russian to a British alliance. They would rather have directed their arms against the allies of England than against its enemies. In such an emergency, what could we do but what we have done? What course could be less exceptionable, than to aid the most powerful and most faithful of our allies, in restoring to the throne which he formerly occupied, a sovereign who has learned attachment to the British Government, from having found, under its protection, an asylum in the time of adversity?

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the districts five in every hundred, whose *whole* annual profits exceed one hundred rupees !

"In many instances the earnings of a Ryot are not sufficient for his family ; and his wife and sons are obliged to betake themselves to some pursuit, and assist him with all they can get. He lives generally upon coarse rice and dholl ; vegetables and fish would be luxuries. His dress consists of a bit of rag and a slender chudder ; his bed is composed of a coarse mat and a pillow ; his habitation, a thatched roof and his property, a plough, two bullocks, one or two lotahs and some *bijdhan*. He toils 'from morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve ;' and despite this he is a haggard, poverty-smitten, wretched creature. This is no exaggeration ; even in ordinary seasons, and under ordinary circumstances, the Ryots may often be seen fasting for days and nights for want of food."

"The inability of the Ryot to better his degraded condition, in which he has been placed by the causes we have named, is increased by his mental debasement. Unprotected, harassed and oppressed, he has been precluded from the genial rays of intellectuality. His mind is veiled in a thick gloom of ignorance."

And the consequence of this condition of the Bengal Ryot, is, to quote the language of the Court of Directors, (3 June, 1852), "there has been a diminution in the total receipts from land in the old provinces of Bengal since 1843 44."

Such are the results of the Zemindary system. Turn next to Madras, where the Ryotwary prevails. There, the India Government does not place the cultivators at the mercy of great speculators in land and farmers of taxes, with power to rack, torment, and sell them off ; and render them the slaves of money-lenders. There, it acts the part of landlord directly ; annually fixing the rent of the minute portions into which the soil is subdivided ; annually collecting these petty sums from its yearly patch-work settlements. And what are the results there ? "The Madras men with whom I have talked," writes Mr. Campbell,* candidly admit that at the present time the state of things is most unsatisfactory—that the people are wretchedly poor, the land of little value ; that the difficulty is to get people to cultivate it on any terms, and that the cultivation is kept up by forcing, by government advances, &c. &c." And what are these, " &c. &c." too common place to name ? Cruelties at which humanity shudders ; and of which the Madras Petition lately presented to Parliament gives the following example as occurring in the year 1850.

"That at the dittum [the fixation of rent] settlement of the previous year, on their [the Ryots] refusal to accept the dittum offered



avowals of hostility to that potentate. An agent of Dost Mohammed Khan wrote to his master from Persia that the Shah would send an Elchee, who, after meeting the Ameer, (Dost Mohammed Khan,) would proceed to Lahore, in order to explain to its ruler, that if he would not restore all the Affghan countries to the Ameer, he must be prepared to receive the Persian army. This communication was made when sanguine expectations were entertained of the speedy fall of Herat, and it was added, that after that event had taken place, money and troops would be sent. M. Vickovitch, the Russian agent already mentioned, offered, on the part of Russia, to repel the attacks of Runjeet Singh; and it appears that he had in his possession letters addressed to that prince, announcing that if he did not withdraw from Peshawer, the Russians would compel him.

The language held with regard to the English, though less violent, was scarcely less hostile. There is no evidence, indeed, that the agents of Russia talked like some of their brethren elsewhere, of dictating the terms of peace in Calcutta; but the rulers of Candahar were enjoined to follow the wishes of the Shah of Persia, and on no account to ally themselves with the English. They were told, also, that the English had preceded the Russians by many generations in civilization; but that now the latter had arisen from their sleep,



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decided conciliation towards the native princes, chiefs, and people. The former were found the best instruments for conciliating towards the goodwill of their subjects. We managed generally so to combine their interest with our own, that they soon perceived that the success of our Government proved the best source of benefit to themselves, and thus they became, in a manner, constituent elements of our system of Government. The language of Mr. Elphinstone was, "that the British Government is uniformly anxious to promote the prosperity of its adherents, it being a maxim of its policy that the interests of such persons should be as dear to it as its own."

"I attribute to this system the first and more early co-operation of the natives generally in our progress. A perseverance in the same course of moderation and forbearance, a cautious abstaining from interference with the native religion, a scrupulous regard to the maintenance of our honour and good faith, an impartial administration of justice, and, in fact, the general kind and benevolent treatment of all classes, did not fail to win the confidence of the people at large. An immense native army, second to none in efficiency and discipline, and whose attachment and fidelity have stood the test of no ordinary temptations, have also been the fruits of this system. And at length we have the amazing spectacle of a vast country, consisting of 600,000 square miles, and containing upwards of 100 millions of inhabitants, governed through the medium of a handful of Englishmen.

"May it not be fairly questioned whether a system of universal conquest and assumption of territory would have been equally successful? and if so, whether it is prudent, even were it just, to deviate from this successful course? I am the last person to wish to derogate from the importance of 'British bayonets' in India; without them we could have neither gained, or retained, our magnificent empire. I am, however, equally persuaded that a bare dependence upon physical force, either in early or later times, although it might, no doubt, have maintained the security of our factories on the coast, and fully vindicated our national power, yet under it, the civilizing influences of the British rule could never have been extended, and the range of our cannon must have continued to be the boundaries of our territory."

The Hon. Mr. Melville, an East India Director.

"The supreme Government of India has declared that an adoption is of no power or effect until it has 'received the sanction of the sovereign power, with whom it rests to give or to refuse it;' and even Sir George Clerk, who declares himself in favour of recognizing the adoption, admits that an adoption is only valid if sanctioned by the paramount power; viz. the British Government. This seems the chief reason for refusing to sanction the adoption, and I must therefore examine it in some detail.

"In the first place, I think we ought to lay aside the European feudal terms, which run through the papers, of 'lord paramount' and of 'suzerain' and of regarding Settlers as the subjects of the



Mr. Shepherd, an East India Director.

"Our Government is at the head of a system composed of native States, and I would avoid taking what are called rightful occasions of appropriating the territories of native states; on the contrary, I should be disposed, so far as I could, to maintain the native States, and I am satisfied that the maintenance of the native States, and the giving to the subjects of those States the conviction that they were considered permanent parts of the general Government of India, would materially strengthen our authority. I feel satisfied that I never stood so strong with my own army as when I was surrounded by native Princes; they like to see respect shown to their native Princes. These Princes are sovereigns of one-third of the population of Hindostan; and with reference to the future condition of the country, it becomes more important to give them confidence that no systematic attempt will be made to take advantage of the failures of heirs to confiscate their property, or to injure in any respect those sovereigns in the position they at present occupy."

Lord Ellenborough.

"It appears to me to be our interest as well as our duty, to use every means to preserve the allied governments; it is also our interest to keep up the number of independent powers: their territories afford a refuge to all those whose habits of war, intrigue, or degradation, make them incapable of remaining quiet in ours; and the contrast of our Government has a favourable effect on our subjects, who, while they feel the evils they are actually exposed to, are apt to forget the greater ones from which they have been delivered. If the existence of independent powers gives occasional employment to our armies, it is far from being a disadvantage."

Mr. Blythstone.

"The danger that we have most to dread in India lies entirely at home. A well conducted rebellion of our native subjects, or an extensive disaffection of our native troops, is the event by which our power is most likely to be shaken; and the sphere of this danger is necessarily enlarged by every enlargement of our territory. The increase of our subjects, and still more of our native troops, is an increase not of our strength but of our weakness; between them and us there never can be community of feeling. We must always confine foreigners; and the object of that jealousy and dislike, which a foreign rule never ceases to excite. And to these voices from the grave may be added authorities who, happily, are still amongst us, for our instruction and guidance."

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Revenue is then the motive for this change. But revenue does not always include profit. “By incorporating Sattara with our possessions we shall increase the revenue of our State,” joyfully, if immorally, anticipated Lord Dalhousie in 1848. “We were not prepared to find that the annexation of Sattara would prove a drain on the general revenues of India,” gravely and sadly replied the Court of Directors, after four years experience of these expectations, in 1852. Nor is the loss to the general revenues of India arising from the absorption of Sattara an exceptional case. The King of Oude was formerly bound to pay us a tribute of £700,000 ; in lieu of it we took from him a territory yielding £1,125,000 ; but, after twenty years possession of it, the revenue was found to have declined at the rate of £10,000 annually ; and this decline, the Court of Directors last year stated, is still going on. So, too, with Coorg—it is a loss ; Scinde is a loss ; the Panjaub a bottomless pit of expense.

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he entertained: in Europe it would not be questioned, and in the East, where international law is certainly not better understood, nor more rigorously observed, there can be no pretext for increased delicacy. It is not many years since all Europe united in deposing the actual sovereign of France, and assisting a family long exiled from the throne in re-ascending it. It is not necessary to inquire into the policy of this proceeding; it is enough that it occurred—that the allied powers were satisfied of their right thus to act, and to declare, on entering France, that they would not treat with Napoleon Buonaparte nor with any of his family.

In the more recent contests for the thrones of Portugal and Spain, we have seen that the other powers of Europe have not hesitated to recognize the claims of one of the contending parties, and even to afford a certain degree of assistance to uphold them. These are cases of far greater difficulty than that of Affghanistan. Though experienced jurists might have little doubt as to who was the rightful sovereign of either Portugal or Spain, yet, in both cases, the rival was able to set up a colourable claim. It is not so in Affghanistan. Shoojah-ool-Moolk is a member of the royal house, and, on the question of right, none but another member of the same house can be qualified to enter the lists with him. If, in Affghanistan, Kamram be passed over in favour of Shoojah, so in



and were seeking for foreign possessions and alliances; that the English were not a military people, but merely the merchants of Europe. Little care seems to have been taken to conceal the aggressive spirit which led to the employment of Russian agents in Afghanistan. They are represented as avowing, that as the affairs of Turkey and Persia were adjusted, Russia sought an extension of her influence in Toorkistan and Caubul. Such language, as is observed by Sir Alexander Burnes, might deserve little notice, if unsupported by facts: but the facts, to bear out the reports, are not wanting; and by such conduct, (again quoting the words of Sir A. Burnes,) "Russia is casting before us a challenge." That challenge we could not decline, without a compromise both of national interest and national honour. Russia has no legitimate object in Afghanistan: she has no interest to protect there, and no plea for interference. We have an interest of the highest importance; an object justifying the most strenuous efforts. In accepting the Russian challenge, therefore, we have shown no spirit of encroachment, no undue appetite for aggrandizement, no desire to rush needlessly into war. The time has arrived when Afghanistan must be subjected to the influence either of Russia or Great Britain; and the representative of the latter country could not honestly hesitate at such a crisis.



Difficulties there undoubtedly were to be overcome; and among the greatest were those presented by the unsettled state of Affghanistan, and by the unfriendly spirit of its rulers. The division of the country into a number of separate governments, diminished its value as a barrier to British India, because it diminished its strength. The extraordinary system of co-partnery in which Candahar was held, (and Peshawer also, while it continued an independent state,) increased the evil. Still, as we found such a state of things existing, it was determined, without reference to the title of the existing rulers, to attempt to establish with them such relations as should effect the object which it was desired to attain. The attempt was made, and it failed. The Affghan chieftains preferred a Russian to a British alliance. They would rather have directed their arms against the allies of England than against its enemies. In such an emergency, what could we do but what we have done? What course could be less exceptionable, than to aid the most powerful and most faithful of our allies, in restoring to the throne which he formerly occupied, a sovereign who has learned attachment to the British Government, from having found, under its protection, an asylum in the time of adversity?

Of our right to aid Shoojah-ool-Moolk, in resuming his sovereignty, no reasonable doubt can



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and, rejecting the flimsy pretences, thus grasped the substance of justice :—

"I cannot for a moment admit the doctrine that, because the view of policy upon which we may have formed engagements with Native Princes may have been by circumstances materially altered, we are not to act scrupulously up to the terms and spirit of those engagements."

Lord Metcalfe went even further: for he argued that even in a *casus omissus*, native law and practice, and neither our supremacy nor our power, ought to prevail :—

"Where there is a total failure of heirs, it is probably more consistent with right that the people should elect a Sovereign, than that the principality should lapse to the Paramount state, that State, in fact, having no rights in such a case but what it assumes by virtue of its power."

Lord Dalhousie, however, has reversed this sound policy. According to him, our supremacy, wherever an apology or an excuse can be raised, has to over-ride our treaties, has to interpret their language, and to decide all their difficulties; and "it is only in this way," says his admirer, Mr. Campbell, "that we can hope gradually to extinguish the Native States which consume so large a portion of the revenue of the country," as if they were robbing us of something we were justly entitled to.

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conquest of India by the British arms would be, in place of raising *to* *debase the whole people*. There is, perhaps, no example of any conquest, in which the natives have been so completely excluded from all share of the government of their country as British India. Among all the disorders of the native states, the field is open for every man to raise himself, and hence among them, there is a spirit of emulation, of restless enterprise, and independence, far preferable to the servility of our Indian subjects. The existence of independent native states is also useful in drawing off the turbulent and disaffected among our native troops."

Sir John Malcolm.

"I am decidedly of opinion that the tranquillity, not to say the *security of our vast Oriental possessions is involved in the preservation of the native principalities which are dependent upon us for protection*. These are also so obviously at our mercy, so entirely within our grasp, that besides the other and great benefits which we derive from those alliances, their co-existence with our rule is of itself a *source of political strength, the value of which will never be known till it is lost*. They shew the possibility of a native State subsisting even in the heart of our own territories, and their condition mitigates in some degree the bad effects of that too general impression, that our sovereignty is incompatible with the maintenance of native princes and chiefs. * * * * *

I am further convinced, that though our revenue may increase, *the permanence of our power will be hazarded in proportion as the territories of native princes and chiefs fall under our direct rule*. Considering as I do, from all my experience, that it is now our policy to maintain as long as we can all Native States now existing, and through them, and by other means to support and maintain native chiefs and an aristocracy throughout the empire of India; I do think *that every means should be used to avert* what I should consider as one of the greatest calamities, in a political point of view, that could arise to our empire, viz. the whole of India becoming subject to our direct rule. There are none of the latter who can venture to contend against us in the field. They are incapable from their actual condition of any dangerous combinations with each other, and they absorb many elements of sedition and rebellion. It is further to be observed on this part of the subject, that the respect which the natives give to men of high birth, with claims upon their allegiance, contributes greatly to the preservation of the general peace. Such afford an example to their countrymen of submission to the rule of foreigners—they check the rise of those bold military adventurers, with which India has, and ever will abound, but who will never have the field widely opened to their enterprises, until our impolicy has annihilated, or suffered to die of their own act, those high princes and chiefs, who, though diminished in power, have still the hereditary attachment and obedience of millions of those classes, who are from habits and courage alike suited to maintain or to disturb the public peace."



at the expense of the Mahrattas, we increase this evil; we throw out of employment and means of subsistence all who have hitherto managed the revenue, commanded, or served, in the armies, or have plundered the country. These people become additional enemies, at the same time that by the extension of our territory, our means of supporting our government and of defending ourselves are proportionally decreased."

Sir Thomas Munro.

"Even if all India could be brought under the British dominion, it is very questionable whether such a change, either as it regards the natives or ourselves, ought to be desired. One effect of such a conquest would be that the Indian army, having no longer any warlike neighbours to combat, would gradually lose its military habits and discipline, and that the native troops would have leisure to feel their own strength, and for want of other employment to turn it against their European masters. But even if we could be secured against every internal commotion, and could retain the country quietly in subjection, I doubt much *if the condition of the people would be better than under their native princes.* The strength of the British Government enables it to put down every rebellion, to repel every foreign invasion, and to give to its subjects a degree of protection which those of no native power enjoy. Its laws and institutions also afford them a security from domestic oppression unknown in those States; but these advantages are dearly bought. They are purchased by the sacrifice of independence, of national character, and of whatever renders a people respectable. The natives of the British provinces may, without fear, pursue their different occupations, as traders, mecrassadars, or husbandmen, and enjoy the fruits of their labour in tranquillity; but none of them can aspire to anything beyond this mere animal state of thriving in peace: none of them can look forward to any share in the legislation, or civil, or military government of their country. It is from men who either hold, or who are eligible, to public office, that natives take their character; where no such men exist there can be no energy in any other class of the community. The effect of this state of things is observable in all the British provinces, whose inhabitants are certainly the most *abject** race in India. No elevation of character can be expected among men, who, in the military line, cannot attain to any rank above that of Subahdar (captain), where they are as much below an (English) ensign as an ensign is below the Commander-in-Chief; and who in the civil line can hope for nothing beyond some petty judicial or revenue office, in which they may by corrupt means make up for their slender salary. The consequence, therefore, of the

* It is a significant coincidence to find the Report of the Commons' Committee on Indian Cotton Cultivation still using in 1848 this very term "*abject*" as descriptive of the Ryots of the British Provinces, thirty years after Sir T. Munro thus applied it.



It is extremely difficult to imagine that parties who had been in communication with the Government of Bombay should have entered on an attempt of this character, of which even the machinery must have been very costly, and the danger in case of repulse or detection great, if they had not believed, from what they had seen, that, notwithstanding all the professions of the British Government, their object could really be effected by Khuptut.*

These intrigues, carried on by a Native well known at Bombay, Dackjee Dadajee, occurred in 1843. At a later period they were renewed; but, though Col. Outram laid a mass of proof of their existence before the Bombay Government, it refused to take any steps in defence of its own honour.

The truth is, that, under our present system, the decline of a Native State dates from the moment we become closely connected with it, and this decline arises chiefly from the inordinate military establishments directly or indirectly imposed on them. Yet now that in all directions the Native States are more or less embarrassed, the doctrine of their absorption or annexation is boldly and openly preached by servants† of the Indian Government, and has been avowed and acted on by Lord Dalhousie himself. "We are Lords Paramount, and our policy is to acquire as direct a dominion over the 717,000 square miles still possessed by Native Princes, as we already have over the other half of India." This is the new law of our Indian Empire, as laid down by the present Governor-General.

Opposed to it there is, however, a succession of great authorities, all agreed on the impolicy of subverting the Native states on general principles touching our own safety. Let us listen then a little to the wisdom of men who, though dead, yet speak:—

The Duke of Wellington.

"In my opinion, the extension of our territory and influence has been greater than our means. Besides, we have added to the number and description of our enemies, by depriving of employment those who heretofore found it in the service of Tippoo and of the Nizam. Wherever we spread ourselves, particularly if we aggrandize ourselves

* The word Khuptut, as here used by Mr. Chapman, means bribery.

† Particularly by Mr. Campbell, of the Bengal Civil Service, in his recent publications which, valuable for their, perhaps indiscreet, frankness, too frequently indulge in a tone of morality, popular enough in the State of Mississippi, but as yet unsanctioned by public opinion in England.



In like manner, the embarrassments of the principal subsidiary State of Western India—that of the Guicowar of Baroda, or Guzerat—arise from our military exactions. First of all we charge* him for a subsidiary force of about 5000 men; next we compel him to keep up and maintain for our use a contingent of 3000 cavalry; and then we make him pay for 750 Irregular Horse stationed in the British district of Ahmedabad. In addition, the Guicowar is obliged to have an army of 6000 men for his own administration; besides a police corps of 4000. Thus, out of a revenue of £600,000, this Prince has to keep an armed force of 14,000 men; nearly 4000 of whom are for our, and not his, purposes. The consequence of which state of things is, that the principal anxiety of the Guicowar is to get rid of that liability; and believing in the corruptibility of the Bombay government, it is notorious he has spent large sums in bribery at Bombay with that view. Some of the intrigues and corruptions arising out of these compulsory armaments are thus referred to by Mr. Chapman in his recent pamphlet, *Baroda and Bombay, their Political Morality*.

“The Guicowar, a partner in the [banking] House in which Baba Nafra was manager, as well as sovereign of the country, was under certain treaty engagements with the British Government for the maintenance, out of his revenues, of a body of cavalry called ‘the Guzerat Irregular Horse.’ The abolition of this engagement had long been an object with the then reigning prince. * * * Intrigues were, therefore, set on foot at Bombay at considerable cost, with the view to obtaining its abrogation through the corrupt favour of the several members of the Government. Motee Parshotum, whom the Guicowar believed to be secretly in favour with the members of the Government, was one of the principal agents in the business; he was sent to Bombay; Gopallrow Myrall, the virtual minister of the Guicowar, was the soul of it; Baba Nafra was also deeply concerned, and was afterwards interdicted the Residency for his share of it. The sums allotted by the bribers to the different members and officers of Government, but never alleged to have been received by them, were as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| To Sir James Carnac | Rupees 1,000,000 |
| „ Mr. Willoughby | 250,000 |
| „ Mr. Reed | 60,000 |
| „ Shree Crustna | 36,000 |
| „ Dr. Brown and all the minor parties | 110,000 |

1,456,000

A total equivalent to £120,000.

* It is to pay for the subsidiary force, that certain districts in Guzerat, and the



Payment after those purposes have been realized. Here, then, there is ample opportunity for the Indian Government to mitigate the pecuniary pressure of military expenditure on this State. And well does the Rana of Odeypore merit relief at its hands. For, despite the smallness of his resources, he has spent more than a million sterling upon one great work—the magnificent lake of Rajimunder. Whilst in the last twenty years, our whole expenditure over all India, on all our public works, scarcely reaches four millions, out of the gross revenue received during the same period of above 367 millions sterling.

So also in the protected Hill and Sikh States, lying between our territories and Nepal on the north, and between us and the Punjab on the north-west. There, too, it may be desirable to sustain the military spirit of the population. But no such motives are applicable to the Cuttuck Mehals on the south-west; where Rajahs, ruling over a population of about 700,000, maintain armies more than 60,000 strong. Nor in Bundelcund, where, besides the Legion, to which its larger princes are compelled to contribute, there are not less than 30,000 armed men in the service of the Native Princes. Here, also, the policy of our Government ought to aim at reduction of military armaments.

Much, too, might be accomplished even in the subsidiary States. Take, for example, a case in Southern India—that of the Nizam of the Deccan. The territories of this Prince extend over 96,337 square miles, and contain a population of upwards of 10 millions, paying a revenue somewhat under two millions sterling. In the first place, he is compelled to contribute to the British army a subsidiary force of 10,628 men; and, for its payment, the Northern Circars, Guntoor, and the ceded Mysore districts, (which fell by treaty to him on the destruction of Tippoo), are in possession of the Indian Government. In return for this contribution, we undertook to protect the Deccan against external enemies. But the only enemies dangerous to the Deccan, after Tippoo's death, were the Peishwa and his Mahrattas. That Prince was deposed more than 30 years ago, his country annexed to British India, and his Mahrattas are now our subjects. Nevertheless, though there are now no external enemies (ourselves excepted) to protect the Nizam

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lost his power and prestige in his own country had he yielded to those terms.

In some parts of India there are, no doubt, special reasons for encouraging the military spirit of Native States, as in Rajpootana; whence good faith and a little generosity on our part could always, in times of danger, draw powerful military assistance. It, remarked the late Colonel Tod, the very highest authority in every thing that respects the Rajpoot States: "If the spirit of the treaties be upheld, it is no exaggeration to say that, within a few years of prosperity, we could oppose to any enemy upon this one only vulnerable frontier at least 50,000 Rajpoots, headed by their respective princes, who would die in our defence. This is asserted from a thorough knowledge of their character and history. The Rajpoots want no change; they only desire the recognition and inviolability of their independence; but we must bear in mind that mere parchment obligations are good for little in the hour of danger. It is for others to decide whether they will sap the foundation of rule by a passive indifference to the feelings of race; or whether, by acts of kindness, generosity, and politic forbearance, they will ensure the exertion of all their moral and physical energies in one common cause with us." But even in Rajpootana the Indian Government have opportunities quite consistent with all due encouragement to Rajpoot military spirit, to lessen the burthen of military expenditure in these little States. At the head of the Rajpoot Confederacy is the Rana of Mewar or Odeypore, who still possesses "nearly the same extent of territory which his ancestors held when the Conqueror of Ghuzni first crossed the blue waters of the Indus to invade India."* He rules over a million of hardy and attached subjects, and pays, out of a revenue of only £140,000 a-year, a tribute of £20,000 to the Indian Government. His regular army consists of 1200 horse and 4200 foot. But, in addition, the Indian Government compels him to contribute a large sum annually for the maintenance of the Malwa Bheel Corps, which, though only raised for the pacification of some rude tracts in Joudpore, is still kept up long after those districts have been pacified. First, then, the Indian Government takes a tribute of £20,000 a-year from the Rana; next, it is entitled to use all his forces in case of war; and lastly, it imposes a heavy military contribution on him for purposes of its own, insisting on the



In India all other wars than our own, this additional army of 435,229 men can only be of use so far as it promotes the good civil government of the Native States which maintain it; that is in its police capacity. As an element of warfare it is dangerous and mischievous. It would, therefore, be a wise and prudent policy in the British Government to assist the Native States in reducing this enormous force which eats up so great a part of their revenues. And this may be done in a variety of ways. First, by setting the Native Rulers the good example of peace. Next, by giving our own subjects the benefits of tranquillity in large reductions of our own military establishments. Thirdly, by relieving Native Allies from engagements to maintain for our use, when we require them, military forces. And fourthly, by allowing Native Princes to have the advantage in their domestic government of their own contingents. The two first modes involve general considerations, not necessary to pursue here; powerfully as such inducements to reduce their armies would by their influence react on Native States. The other two, however, are special, and need explanations.

In some cases, as we have already stated, Native States are required by the Indian Government to maintain large separate military forces that, in the event of war, these forces may be available to the Indian Government against what that Government deems to be their common enemy, but rather, to speak more correctly, in defence of its general supremacy. Now this obligation might be advantageously revised, insisting, of course, on a reduction of Native armies to the extent of its relaxation. Some years ago the Indian Government, in one instance, did indeed make an offer of this sort; but it was coupled with a demand for a pecuniary contribution that rendered it illusory. It was in the case of one of the Bundelcund Chiefs, the Rajah of Dutteah, who, in a well administered little territory of 850 square miles, having a population of 120,000, and a revenue of £100,000 a-year, maintains an army 6000 strong. In 1840, the Indian Government proposed to release him from the engagement under which he is bound to have that force at its disposal; but as it required, in exchange for the release, a considerable annual tribute, and wished to introduce a local force of its own into his territories, the Rajah would not pay the price or run the risk. So Dutteah still continues burthened with 6000 soldiers. To attempt reductions in this way is, of course, really to obstruct and hinder any



Thus, it appears that the Native States of India, possessing only 53 millions of people, and a revenue not exceeding 10 millions sterling, maintain military establishments of their own, 435,229 strong, against the British Government's army of 289,529 men, provided for out of a net revenue of 21 millions, paid by a population of 100 millions. Of the cost of the Native Armies we know nothing. But, the burthen of so vast a force as 435,229 men, falling, as it does, on comparatively so small a population, and on States comparatively so poor, must, it is obvious, be very oppressive in its financial effects. Its direct pecuniary weight is, however, probably its least evil. For here are nearly half a million of the picked men of this population withdrawn from those industrial and intelligent pursuits which develop the resources, create the capital, and promote the improvement of a people and a country. Here is an enormous amount of taxation needful to maintain such a force, expended by these States in a manner relatively unproductive. And here are war establishments maintained in States not permitted to make war—positively prohibited from using the armies they keep up, except in their own territories, and against their own people.

No doubt, part of this great military force of the Native States is in reality Police; and the cost of that portion, whatever it may be, represents the expenses of civil administration, of the maintenance of order and tranquillity, of the enforcement of law, and the collection of revenue, rather than the burthen of military establishments unnecessarily maintained. But, a very large part cannot be so classified; and in respect of it, the population of Native Principalities would, it is obvious, be greatly benefited by a considerable reduction of their armies. The army of the Indian Government, in number 289,529, costs about twelve millions sterling. But its cost affords no means of estimating the expense of the 435,229 men to the Native Princes. Their pecuniary burthen is, of course, very much less than that of the British army. But then it falls on a population and a revenue not much more than one half that which bears the greater cost. So that, in all probability, the military expenditure of Native States is quite as oppressive, *per capite*, as the military expenditure of the Indian Government.

Now, as we are masters of India in consequence of, and maintain our supremacy over it by, our own army of 289,526 men costing twelve



little or no cotton. Over five of them, the British Government has the right, in case of misrule, of assuming the management of their internal affairs—viz. Cochin, Mysore,* Berar, Oude, and Travancore. But Cutch, Guzerat, Gwalior, the Deccan, and Indore, are not subject to any such control. And it is only when their internal disasters are likely or certain to produce internal consequences hazardous to the general tranquillity, that any right to restore order (not to subvert the State) can accrue to the paramount power. The protected States—the smaller and less advanced, but still more ancient subdivisions of India—are in numbers nearly 400. Generally, their chiefs are absolutely independent in matters of ordinary internal arrangement; but in some few there is a concurrent, in one or two an appellate, British jurisdiction.

These States, subsidiary and protected, (including Nepal, Dhol-pore and Tipperah) occupy, we have said, 717,000 square miles of territory, and their population exceeds fifty-three millions. They yield a revenue of upwards of ten millions sterling a year; they (or rather such of them as are liable) pay subsidies or tribute to the British Government of one million sterling, about a tithe of their gross taxation; and—besides contingents commanded by British officers and available to the British Government of 32,000 men, for which some of them pay—their aggregate military resources comprise 12,952 artillery, 68,303 cavalry, and 317,653 infantry;—in all 398,918 men, exclusive of their contingents; a force more than 100,000 stronger in numbers than the army of the British Government in India. The military armaments of all India consist, there-

fore, as follows :

1. Army of the British Government (Royal, European, and Native) maintained at the cost of its 100 millions of subjects 289,529
2. Native contingents commanded by British officers and available by the British Government 32,311
3. Native contingents, not so commanded, but so available 4,000
4. Armies of Native princes, many of which are at the service, when required, of the British Government, paid for by fifty-three millions of people 398,918

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* Owing to the alleged incompetency of the Rajah, this right is at present



Native Governments pay the price of this protection, in some instances—as in Guzerat, Gwalior, the Deccan, Indore, and Oude—by cessions of territories; in others—as in Mysore, Travancore, Cochin, and Cutch—by annual subsidy. Under the protective system, the obligations of protection on the part of the superior and of allegiance on the part of the inferior, are uniform in all the treaties; in some cases, however, the dependent state is subject to the payment of tribute, whilst in others it is exempt from any such charge. Both systems, have three points in common:—1. The relinquishment by Native States of the right of self-defence; 2. of maintaining diplomatic relations; 3. The arbitrement of all disputes amongst each other by the paramount power. Usually under the protective system, the British government has no right of interference in the internal administration of Native States; but this restriction is only contained in one-half the states affected by subsidiary treaties. Under neither, are the Native Governments debarred from maintaining, for internal purposes, a separate military force. On the contrary, in some instances they are required to keep up a large army of their own, that we may use it when we deem it necessary.

The Subsidiary States represent, more or less, the larger historical divisions still left on the map of India, they are:—

| SUBSIDIARY STATES OF INDIA. | POPULATION. | REVENUE. | TRIBUTE. |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| | | £ | £ |
| Cochin . . . | 280,000 | 48,000 | 24,000 |
| Cutch* . . . | | | 20,000 |
| Guzerat . . . | 320,000 | 660,000 | |
| Gwalior . . . | 3,228,512 | 322,000 | 180,000 |
| Deccan† . . . | 10,666,080 | 1,500,000 | 350,000 |
| Indore . . . | 815,000 | 220,000 | |
| Mysore . . . | 3,000,000 | 690,000 | 240,000 |
| Berar . . . | 4,600,000 | 490,000 | 80,000 |
| Oude . . . | 2,900,000 | 1,400,000 | |
| Travancore . . . | 1,000,000 | 410,000 | 80,000 |

All are large, populous, fertile, and civilised states: all occupy important positions in India; two of them, the Deccan and Berar, being the great cotton field of India—whence, however, we get

* The Court of Directors appear not to have any particulars of the population or revenues of Cutch; at least none are given in their *Statistical Papers*.

† In using the term Deccan, the dominions still left the Nizam are referred to. And the same limitation is applicable to the other subsidiary States. The old



CSL

THE NATIVE STATES OF INDIA.

"I would sacrifice Gwalior, or any frontier of India, ten times over, in order to preserve our character for scrupulous good faith."—*The Duke of Wellington*, in 1802.

"Where there is a total failure of Heirs, it is probably more consistent with right, that the people should elect a sovereign, than that the principality should lapse to the Paramount State; that State, in fact, having no rights in such a case, but what it assumes by virtue of its power."—*Lord Metcalfe*, in 1837.

"I cannot for a moment admit the doctrine, that, because the view of policy upon which we have formed engagements with Native Princes may have been, by circumstances, materially altered, we are not to act scrupulously up to the terms and spirit of those engagements."—*The Earl of Auckland*, in 1838.

"I cannot conceive it possible for any one to dispute the policy of taking advantage of any just opportunity for consolidating the territories that already belong to us, by taking possession of States which may lapse in the midst of them; for thus getting rid of these petty intervening principalities which may be made a means of annoyance, but which can never, I venture to think, be a source of strength for adding to the resources of the public treasury, and for extending the uniform application of our system of government to those whose best interests, we sincerely believe, will be promoted thereby."—*The Marquis of Dalhousie*, in 1848.

INCLUDING in the term British India, all the territories over which the British Government exercises direct authority, legal control, military protection, or political influence, the country so designated may be roughly estimated to contain an area of 1,300,000 square miles, and to be inhabited by 150 millions of people. Of that great area, however, not one half is immediately subject to the administration of the East India Company. For the Native Princes of India still rule, with more or less power, over possessions occupying 717,000* of these 1,300,000 square miles. But this moiety of the surface contains only one-third of the entire population, or some 53 millions of inhabitants. These native Principalities sometimes consist of great blocks of country, situate in the most fertile and desirable portions of India, as the Deccan, Mysore and Berar in the South—Oude and Nepaul towards the North-West and North—Guzerat in the West; where Governments of considerable pretensions and strength still survive. Or of confederacies or congeries of smaller States lying

* These, and the figures which follow, are taken from the *Statistical Papers relating to India*, recently "printed for the Court of Directors of the East India Company," and since ordered for its use by the House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Bright.



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Campbell's Modern India.

India, by John Dickinson, Jun.

THE historian Mill is rebuked by his commentator for having said that India is beneficial to England only if it "affords a surplus revenue which can be sent to England. If the revenue of India is not equal to the expense of governing India, then is India a burthen and a drain upon England." Who, says Dr. Wilson,* will venture to "maintain a proposition so contrary to the fact? Regarding our connexion with India, even only in the paltry consideration of how much money we have made by it, the assertion that we have profited solely by its surplus revenue; that is, that in five years out of six we have realized no profit at all, is palpably false. In every year of our intercourse with India, even in those in which the public revenue has fallen far short of the expenditure, there has been a large accession to English capital, brought home from India. What are the profits of Indian trade? What is the maintenance of 30,000 Englishmen, military included? What is the amount of money annually remitted to England for the support of relations, the education of the children, the pensions of officers, and finally, what can we call the fortunes accumulated by individuals in trade, or in the service of the Company, which they survive to spend in England, or bequeath to their descendants? What is all this but additional capital remitted from India to England; additional, largely additional, means of recompensing British Industry. It is idle, then, to talk of a surplus revenue being the sole source of the benefits derivable from India. On the contrary, it is, and it ought to be, the least even of our pecuniary advantages, for its transfer to England is an abstraction of Indian capital, for which no equivalent is given; it is an exhausting drain upon the resources of the country, the issue of which is replaced by no reflux; it is an extraction of the life blood from the veins of

* Mills' History of India, by J. Wilson, vol. vi. p. 671.



national industry, which no subsequent introduction of nourishment is furnished to restore."

All this is unquestionably true, and in this very truth lies our danger. India may be indirectly pouring treasures into the lap of England, may be enriching individuals, whilst its finances are in a state of exhaustion. The "fortunes accumulated by individuals" if thrown again into the public treasury, in the shape of loans bearing interest, may arrest the progress of decay for a time, but it is obvious, that the application of such a remedy, if long continued, must, in the end, make the disease mortal.

Is the revenue of India then equal at this moment, to the expense of governing India? Has it ever been equal to that charge?

These are questions of vital importance, not only to India, but to England; for the interests of the two countries are now so closely linked, that the credit of the one cannot be affected—as Sir R. Peel informed us in 1842,* when proposing the Income Tax—without a serious reaction upon the other. To the solution of these questions we shall therefore apply ourselves, taking for our guides the official documents which have from time to time been laid before Parliament.

The most sanguine expectations of the great financial results which were to follow, from territorial acquisitions in India, appear to have been entertained from the very commencement of our rule. Clive, when he had come to the determination of demanding a grant of the Dewanee of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, from the King of Delhi, instructed his agent in England to invest all the money that could be raised, in India stock, upon the strength of the high dividends which were to accrue to the East India Company, from these possessions. He described Bengal as a country of "inexhaustible riches." "The East India Company," he said,† "shall be the richest Company in the world; they have now a territory which will give them an income of more than two millions sterling;—their civil and military expenditure shall never exceed £700,000 in time of peace, or £1,000,000 in time of war." Nor in saying this did Clive speak unadvisedly.

* "Depend upon it, if the credit of India should become disordered, if some great exertion should become necessary, then the credit of England must be brought forward to its support, and the collateral and indirect effect of disorders in Indian finances would be felt extensively in this country."—Sir Robert Peel's Speech on the Budget, 1842.

† Malcolm's Life of Clive, Vol. II. p.



He found himself in a country possessing a soil of unexampled fertility, in the highest state of cultivation, teeming with an industrious population, a section of which then possessed unrivalled manufacturing skill, with a busy traffic carried upon a magnificent river, and with the public Treasury full to overflowing. Moreover, he knew that during the whole period of the Moghul Government, Bengal had contributed a clear million sterling per annum to the imperial treasury.

But Clive had soon proof of a melancholy fact, which vitiated his financial calculations, and has vitiated all similar calculations, viz. that in India our charges grew faster than our receipts. In four years from the date of his promise—that Bengal would yield a surplus income of a million sterling—the Government there reported an empty treasury, and their total inability to meet the demands against it. They spoke, at the same time, in pathetic terms, of “the incontestable evidence they had furnished to their honourable masters of the exaggerated light in which their newly acquired advantages had been placed.” At the end of another four years, viz. in 1773, the Company was obliged to apply to Parliament for a loan of £1,400,000; and in the year 1780, the Government of Warren Hastings complained that the revenue of India was utterly inadequate to meet the expenditure, and that no resource remained but to borrow to the utmost extent of their credit.

From 1765 to 1784, we had several exhausting wars, but no extension of consequence to our territory. In 1790, we had war with Tippoo, which ended in the cession to us of half of his territory, and in a pecuniary inlet of upwards of three millions sterling. In 1792-3, there was a surplus of revenue over expenditure in India of upwards of a million sterling; and in that year we find the Minister for India* basing a magnificent financial scheme upon the assumption that this surplus was to be permanent; £500,000 a year was to be appropriated towards the liquidation of the Indian debt; an equal sum was to be paid into the British Exchequer; and the remainder to be divided amongst the proprietors of India Stock. But at the very moment that the Minister was thus dealing with a local surplus, the Directors were, with his consent, raising a loan of two millions under the name of additional capital, in order to keep their treasury afloat at home. In

* Speech of Mr. Dundas on Indian budget, 25th February, 1793.



the three following years—although they were years of peace—the surplus gradually declined; and in the fourth year, viz. in 1797-8, it was converted into a deficit. In that, and in the following year, the Indian Government was obliged to raise more than three millions* by way of loan, and when Lord Wellesley entered into the war with Tippoo in 1799, he with difficulty obtained money to carry on the public service at 10 and 12 per cent interest. Nothing daunted by the conversion of an imaginary surplus into a heavy deficit, or by the annihilation of his financial fabric, the Minister renewed his predictions of a triumphant result.

"It is satisfactory to reflect," he said, "that in India, the only inconvenience produced by the war has been upon the treasuries to a certain degree; but this effect it may be presumed will not be permanent. New sources of wealth have been opened, from which there is every reason to hope a full compensation will eventually be derived for the pecuniary sacrifices that have been made."†

The result of the war of 1799 was to give us possession of another large slice of Tippoo's territory. In 1800 we acquired territory from the Nizam valued at £600,000 a year, in commutation of a subsidy of £400,000. In 1801 we took from the Nabob of Oude territory estimated to yield £1,300,000, in lieu of a subsidy of £760,000. In 1802 we took all the territory of the Nabob of Arcot, all the territory of the Rajah of Tanjore, the petty principalities of Furruckabad and Tanjore, and in the same year the Peishwah ceded to us a territory in Guzerat of the annual value of upwards of £200,000.

These great territorial acquisitions produced their usual result, viz. a conviction that henceforth we were to revel in riches, and in reviewing the state of the finances in 1803 we find the Indian Minister again employed in the pleasing task of apportioning an imaginary surplus of a million and a half sterling.‡ This bright prospect, indeed, he said, would depend "altogether on peace." Nevertheless, "I venture to express it as my firm conviction that with our prospects in respect of revenue the Indian surplus would more than cover the extraordinaries of a war expenditure. I see no reason why any

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| * Increase of debt—1798 . . . | £1,557,174 |
| 1799 . . . | 1,962,881 |

£3,520,055

† Mr. Dundas's speech on the Indian Budget, 12th March, 1799.

‡ Lord Castlereagh's speech on Indian Budget, 14th March, 1803.



nearly three hundred persons, was discovered in the populous city of Bombay. It had prevailed for a quarter of a century, netting a clear gain, as shewn by well kept books, of from fifty to eighty thousand pounds a-year, or above a million in all, in the course of the establishment of the confederation. Ship burning was a branch of business with them, and at Bombay and Calcutta together above three hundred vessels mostly of the largest size, worth close on nine millions sterling, had been destroyed by the incendiary since 1781. Within the last twelvemonth it has come to light that regular armies of depredators, recognized by native chiefs who share their spoils, exist in some of our oldest North West Provinces, who disperse themselves every autumn over the country in brigades and detachments, carrying their ravages into the hearts of our best-ordered cities, and returning in April with their plunder, to be divided over the country; these crimes having escaped detection from the sympathy of the Natives being with the criminals rather than with the Law, or from their natural timidity deterring them from making disclosures.

In governing India, England makes herself responsible for the welfare of an empire which contains a hundred and fifty millions of people, yields a gross revenue of about thirty millions sterling a year, maintains an army of nearly four hundred thousand men, of whom forty thousand are Europeans, at a charge of upwards of twelve millions a year, and affords appointments as covenanted servants or commissioned officers to ten thousand English gentlemen, who receive incomes from the age of eighteen to the end of their days, averaging in one case a thousand, and in the other four hundred pounds a year. The army of Bengal alone, comprising 23,247 Europeans, 138,255 native soldiers, with 3,405 British officers, or 164,908 in all, costs a third more than that of France, though less than half as numerous. France contains thirty millions of people, the Bengal presidency close on fifty. The sea-borne commerce of India is worth above thirty millions sterling. She draws seven and a half millions of imports from, and sends nearly a similar amount of exports to, England. Eight thousand square-rigged vessels reach and quit her three principal shipping ports annually, bringing or bearing with them above a million of tons of merchandize, and receiving above two millions sterling annually of freight; with



nearly 100,000 country craft of a burthen of about a million and a half tons.

NATURAL PRODUCTS AND MANUFACTURES.

This mighty country yields, or may be made to yield, every variety of produce made use of in manufactures. It rests on the East and West, on vast regions of volcanoes; on the North it is walled in by ridges of rock salt. Its soil abounds in Soda, and supplies Nitre for the world. The alum stones of Cutch, in the Punjab, are inexhaustible. Even minerals of the most trifling apparent value yield sums that are enormous; the Wells of Rangoon produce 90,000 tons of mineral oil annually, which at a shilling a hundred weight, realises £90,000: a single mountain in Bengal sends forth £80,000 worth of Mica every season, and the Chinese purchase £10,000 worth every year of the cut Agates and Jaspers of the Rajpepla Hills, though the produce is now reduced to a fraction of what it was wont to be; so plentiful are the stones deemed precious in England, that the finest heliotropes unworked, are sold in the Bombay Bazaar for twenty shillings a hundred weight.

The Koh-i-noor, now allowed to be a fragment of a diamond still more magnificent and its sister in splendour, and almost its rival in size—the Darya-i-noor, each reckoned worth a king's ransom,—are the produce of its mines, which so far as we know may still contain gems as magnificent as any they have rendered up. Iron and coal, the more homely, but to man the much more valuable products of the earth, are abundant: the latter seems restricted to a limited locality, the former is universal. The vegetable and animal are still more magnificent than the mineral products of India. The Palm in all its glorious forms; the Teak, the Tamarind, the Banian, and a thousand other trees, fringe its sea-board; the Acassia covers the most rainless of its plains, and the magnificent Deodar, prince of pines, with a girth of from fifteen to twenty feet, and an altitude of two hundred, clothes, with its kindred, its mountain lands, from a height of six to twelve thousand feet. Its Indigo or Sapanwood, and our other dye-stuffs, supply the markets of the world. Not less famous are its gums and gum resins and its other drugs, than are its dyes; and most wonderful of all, from the white poppy alone a milky juice is drawn by manual labour, drop by drop, which yields

between the two branches, whether commerce had derived aid from the territorial revenue, or whether the revenue had been assisted by the profits of trade. By the Act of 1813, they were required to keep separate accounts of the two concerns, so that from that year a new financial era commenced.

With the exception of a few months war with the Rajah of Travancore, and a demonstration against Ameer Khan, India had enjoyed profound peace from 1806 to 1813. We have seen the Directors complaining that the charges in India greatly exceeded the Revenue in the third year of peace. Most rigorous efforts were made in subsequent years to keep down the expenditure; the interest of the debt was reduced from eight to six per cent; there was, nevertheless, an annual deficiency in the last five years of peace, which amounted on the average to £134,662.*

Lord Hastings assumed charge of the Government of India, in October, 1813, and thus describes the state in which he found the finances:—

“The treasuries of the three Presidencies were in so impoverished a condition, that the insufficiency of funds in them to meet any unusual charges excited considerable uneasiness. At that period the low credit of the bonds which had at different times been issued as the securities for monies borrowed, made eventual recourse to a loan seriously discouraging in contemplation. As twelve per cent discount on the above securities was the regularly computable rate in the market—when no immediate exigency pressed upon us, the grievous terms to which we must have subscribed for a new supply of that nature in an hour of alarm, could not be disguised by any foresight.”†

A local surplus of revenue over the charges—he says—had been obtained, by a false economy, and it had no permanence. In order to find the necessary means for carrying on the war with Nepal, in which he was almost immediately engaged, he put his hands into the pockets of our ally and friend the Nabob of Oude, and drew from thence two millions and a half sterling.

Large acquisitions of territory were the results of this war, and of the war in which we were subsequently engaged with the Mahrattas. And Lord Hastings, after summing up all the events of his trium-

* Report of Select Committee, August 1832, p. 42.

† Lord Hastings' summary of his administration, appendix to Report of Select Committee, August 1832.



phant government, thus expresses himself on the financial prospect in India :

"After revolving every circumstance with the coolest caution, I cannot find any reason why subsequently to the year 1823, an annual surplus of not less than four millions should not be confidently reckoned upon. This ought naturally to increase, for the causes which will augment the receipt, have nothing in their tendency to require further charges."

The "causes," however, which were to blight this fair prospect were then "looming in the distance," and in less than two years, instead of a surplus of four millions, we were involved in the most pinching financial difficulties, the consequence of the first Burmese war, difficulties which obliged us again to have recourse to our native allies. Amongst the first who felt our friendly embrace, was the unfortunate King of Oude, from whose coffers we extracted another million and a half, upon loan at five per cent, the interest in his own country being twelve—abusing him at the same time for his mismanagement, whilst depriving him of the only means by which he could have reformed it. Scindiah, the Raja of Nagpore, the Raja of Putteala, and even our prisoner, the ex-Peishwah Bajee Rao, contributing to our necessities, and from these friends in need we drew a supply of about £800,000.* The Burmese war ended in 1826, with the cession to us of Tannaserim and Arracan, and an increase to the public debt to the amount of thirteen millions, and in 1832, the six intervening years having been years of peace, the affairs of India again came under the consideration of Parliament.

We have seen a succession of Indian ministers expressing from year to year, during almost a whole period of the Company's Charter from 1793 to 1813, their confidence that the Indian Revenue would be found equal to all emergencies; that although in time of war, the English Exchequer might be obliged to forego its claim to participate in the Indian surplus; yet that the ways and means would be equal to the demands of a war expenditure, that some progress might even be made in reducing the debt, and we have seen that period wind up with an increase of debt to the extent of twenty millions!

These results had taught ministers prudence, and there was ab-

* When Runjeet Sing heard of the demand on the Raja of Putteala for money on loan, he laughed, and asked "If this was the gratuitous protection that he and other Sikh chieftains had obtained at the hands of the British Government."



solite silence in Parliament upon the subject of Indian finance. During the whole time of the next Charter, viz., from 1813 to 1833, in that interim great acquisitions of territory had been made, and it wound up with a further increase to the public debt of upwards of 17 millions.

With the Act of 1833, another financial era commenced. India which, during the preceding twenty years, had been largely helped from the Company's commercial treasury, was thrown entirely upon its own resources, with an additional demand upon them of upwards of £600,000 for dividends to proprietors of India Stock; and strange to say, it was under these discouraging circumstances that the Indian Minister ventured to revive the note of financial triumph:

"With respect to the competency of India to answer all the just demands upon its Exchequer, no reasonable doubt can exist (said Mr. Grant.) A steady, progressive revenue, a territory almost unlimited in extent, a rich soil, and an industrious people, 'are sufficient pledges that our treasury in the East will, under wise management, be more than adequate to meet the current expenditure.' Our political position in that quarter has been improved, and our Empire been consolidated during the continuance of the present Charter; it is, I think, no extravagant conjecture that the financial condition of our Indian dominions will gradually advance." *

In the twenty years that have elapsed since this opinion was given we have had another vast augmentation of territory, with its usual accompaniment, an enormous increase of debt. Nothing daunted, however, by these results, we find the Indian Minister, in the face of an hourly increasing debt, and of an actual deficit of nearly a million sterling, only in the last session of Parliament, whilst admitting that the average annual excess of charge over revenue within the last twenty years had been upwards of a million, and that the debt had increased twenty-two millions within the same period, actually congratulating himself and the House upon the financial prospects of India. "True it is," he said, "that we have had some enormously expensive wars; but then see, on the other hand, how expansive the revenues have been." "There cannot be a doubt," said Mr. Herries, "that India will be able to fulfil any expectations that may be formed of her. We are now at peace, and may well expect that the future resources of India will have an opportunity of developing themselves undisturbed by the miseries of war." At the moment

* Mr. Grant to Court of Directors.



sentence was falling from the lips of the Right Honourable
23. treman, we opened our batteries against Rangoon, and thus began
the first act of a second Burmese war. We shall probably finish it
with the usual results, viz., the annexation of territory that will not
pay, an increase of some millions to our debt, and by sowing the
seeds of another war.

It has been shrewdly observed that "our Indian prosperity is al-
ways in the future tense. We are to be reimbursed and enriched
some day or other by the territorial acquisitions made in time of war,
and in the mean time we are increasing our debt at the rate of two
millions a-year."

The public debt of India, bearing interest, as it stood before we
commenced our career of conquest and annexation, was—

In 1792.....£7,129,934

After commencing that career, it stood as follows :

In 181426,970,786

In 182939,377,880

In 185050,847,564

To which last mentioned sum must be added five millions supplied
from the commercial treasury of the Company, in aid of the India
finances during the currency of the Charter, which ended in 1834.

The average annual deficiency in the last five years of the
Charter—*years of peace*—which terminated in 1814,

was.....£134,662

In the next five years, principally war, which ended in

1818-19736,853

In the five years of peace, which ended in 1823-427,531

In the five years ending in 1828-29—three of war2,878,031

In the ten years ending 1849-501,474,195

Our questions seem to be answered by these figures—they prove
that the Revenue of India, in our hands, has never been equal to the
expense of its government. They prove, moreover, that the whole
financial history of India has been a history of delusions ; arising out
of a notion that territory would be as profitable to us foreigners as it
undoubtedly was to its native owners. Under this impression we
have gone on step by step—not only aggrandizing ourselves by con-
from enemies, but by exactions from friends, until we have



made ourselves masters, not only of all India, but of much beyond India; and we are now in a fair way of carrying our dominions to the frontier of China.

Every step was to be the last, and every war was wound up with confident predictions of peace, and financial prosperity, and we are at this moment in the "future tense." The estimated deficiency for the past year, 1851-2, was 78,84,678 rupees—upwards of ₹780,000—in the second year of peace; and we are now again in the midst of a war expenditure, the full result of which will only be known some years hence.

It is only justice to the Court of Directors to say, that up to a very late period they had not lent themselves to the delusion that the Revenue of India was equal to the charge of its government; for while Mr. Grant, at the expiration of the last Charter, was expressing himself with confidence as to the competency of the Indian revenue, to answer all demands that might be made upon it; the Directors were preparing prospective estimates, by which they calculated that if the benefit, which the finances of India had derived from the commercial treasury of the Company was to be continued, there would still be an annual deficiency of £453,823, and if deprived of that aid, of ₹813,209. Strange to say, in correcting this estimate, the same minister admitted that there would be either a deficiency of ₹123,253, or of ₹560,924,* and we have seen that the actual deficiency has considerably exceeded that amount.

That wars have been the main cause of our financial disappointments there can be no doubt; nevertheless, our predecessors, the Moghul Emperors, had many more wars than we have had, and were yet in financial prosperity. The century from the accession of Aebur in 1566 to the deposal of Shah Jehan, 1668, was a period of almost uninterrupted wars. The military establishments of the Moghuls were larger than ours; their expenditure was enormous, but all was "managed with so much economy, that after defraying the expenses of his great expedition to Candahar, his wars in Balk, and other heavy charges, and maintaining a regular army of 200,000 men, Shah Jehan left a treasure, which some reckon at near six, and some at twenty-four millions in com, besides his vast accumulations in

* Report of Financial Committee, August, 1832.



wrought gold and silver, and in jewels.”* Our dominion has lasted for nearly a century; we are already in debt fifty millions; our debt is hourly increasing, and we have no “accumulations” of coin or jewels. It is not, therefore, merely wars, but the expensive European element which we employ in wars, and which pervades the whole of our administration, that eats up our finances. The 40,000 European soldiers, whom we employ, cost more than the 200,000 native horse employed by our predecessors.

The pay and allowance of the European officers of a Sepoy regiment, are double the amount of the pay of the men. We start with a demand upon the Treasury of about three millions, for charges defrayed on account of the Indian territory at home, charges arising entirely from that element. We have nearly a thousand Europeans employed in the civil administration, besides Supreme Courts—Ecclesiastical establishments—an Indian navy—territory out of India—Aden, Penang, Burmah—charges involving many millions, now falling upon the revenue of India, from which our predecessors were altogether free. It is no longer matter of surprise then, that they should have been able to pay their way, and to save, notwithstanding their prodigal expenditure, and that we should find the same amount of revenue altogether insufficient to meet our demands upon it.

It is not matter of surprise that we foreigners should be able to manage the mighty concerns of our Indian empire with less economy, than those who have made India their own country. The irrepressible tendency of charge to outgrow revenue in India, has been felt and lamented from our earliest acquisition of dominion. Clive ascribed the disappointment of his hopes of a large surplus of revenue from Bengal to this cause:—“Every man,” he said, “that is permitted to make a bill, makes a fortune,” and we find the Court of Directors upon more than one occasion animadverting upon it:—

“We have contemplated with much solicitude,” they said, (more than twenty years ago)† “the very unsatisfactory present state of your finances, and we have carefully and minutely examined the causes which have led to it. We observe that it has been brought

* Elphinstone's India, vol. 2, p. 435.

† Letters to Bengal, 10th May, 1830. Lords' Paper, 151, of 1830.



"Many of the best families in the province, who were rich and well to do when we came into Guzerat, in 1807, have now scarcely clothes to their backs Our demands in money on the Talookdars are more than three times what they originally paid, without one single advantage gained on their parts. Parties from whom they have been compelled to borrow at ruinous rates of interest enforce their demands by attachment of their lands and villages; thus they sink deeper and deeper in debt, without the chance of extricating themselves. What then must become of their rising families?"

In the North-West, however, things are not so bad. But why? Because, there alone the revenue administration has to some extent followed native footsteps, recognized native rights, and is carried on through the ancient native village system, swept away in Bengal and Madras. But even there, where the assessment does leave to all a profit, so defectively has it been carried out, that some have a very small, if others have a larger one. And already the revenue even there is declining. "If," wrote the Court of Directors, on the 3rd of June, 1852, "the amount received from the new territory be deducted from the last two years, there will appear a deterioration in the land revenue from the old territory of the North-Western Provinces, as compared with the first average, of £80,000, and in 1849-50, there was no improvement as compared with that average." All, therefore, is not so bright as it seems even in the North-West; superior as it is to the rest of India.

But it is on India as a whole that attention must be fixed; and how sad the condition of the cultivator is in Bengal, with a population of 40 millions, how far worse it is in Madras with its 22 millions, and how bad it is in Bombay with its 10 millions, the evidence thus briefly produced (to be followed hereafter by detailed examination) will give some general idea of. It is not merely cultivation that is depressed; it is society itself that is being gradually destroyed. The race of native gentry has already almost every where disappeared; and a new danger has arisen—that in another generation or two, the cultivators* will not be worth having as subjects.

* It will seem from the following extract of a reply made by Governor Higginson, who knows India well, to an address from the inhabitants of Faleq in the Mauritius, that in his opinion, the condition of the natives of India will be "immeasurably" improved by their settling in that island, and their working as negroes in sugar plantations.

"It is very gratifying to me to learn that the measures which have been adopted to secure a more adequate supply of labour here, met with your approval. In



For, moral debasement is the inevitable consequence of physical depression. This prospect may be deemed "satisfactory" by the persons responsible for it. But to India it is ruin and destruction; to England it is danger and disgrace.

V. LAW AND JUSTICE.

The state of the LAW, the forms of legal procedure, and the ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE—these form another test by which to try the legislation of 1833. And these, in the case of that Act, are a special and peculiar test. For Law Reform was not only declared to be one of its most prominent objects; but it contained large and costly provisions to advance that priceless object. "I believe," said Mr. Macaulay, the ministerial orator in passing the Act of 1833 through the House of Commons; "I believe that no country ever stood so much in need of a Code of Laws as India; and I believe that there never was a country in which the want might be so readily supplied." And what Mr. Macaulay so strongly believed to be so needful, and so confidently held to be so easy of execution, he afterwards tried to furnish. For, as member of the Law Commission established under the Act of 1833, he prepared a Code of Criminal Law. That Commission was appointed in 1835, the year after the passing of the Charter Act. The statute is now on the point of expiration. Twenty years have nearly elapsed. But India still awaits the fruits of its labours. The Code prepared by the Commission was first submitted to the Supreme Government in May 1837; it was sent back for revision; it was returned in the October following. It was then sent home to the Court of Directors and the Board of Control; it was next returned to India with Home observations and criticism. Calcutta considered it once more, and sent it back to London; and finally, after eleven years' deliberation, it reached India in 1848. And it has been lying snug and dusty on the shelves of the Council ever since. The Act

the absence of a native population to cultivate our soil, our attention should be directed not only to obtaining a sufficiency of labour for our more immediate wants; but also to the more valuable and permanent benefits to be gained by inducing the natives of India who now come here and carry their earnings back after a few years to settle in the Colony; and from my own experience of both Countries I can affirm that by adopting this as their future home, they will by their own industry, improve their social and physical condition immeasurably beyond what they can ever hope to attain in their own country."

GL
TO WAS
0.310

* Revenue, exclusive of opium :

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| † There was a surplus in 1820-21 of | £136,898 |
| in 1821-22 of | £412,876 |
| in 1830-31 of | £110,199 |

‡ Total revenue from customs and salt :

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| \$ Total collection from salt and customs from 1841-42 to 1844-45 | £16,175,599 |
| " " from 1846-47 to 1850-51 | 16,572,288 |
| Decrease | <u>403,311</u> |

* Appendix to Commons' Report, 1852, pp. 276, 450, 451.



from opium for similar periods, taking the three years from 1835-6 to 1838-9, instead of the three years of the Chinese war, when the opium revenue was unnaturally depressed, gives an average increase in the last six years of very nearly a million sterling.

It is indeed a melancholy fact, revealed to us by these papers, and of which the Indian authorities appear to be quite aware, that the opium revenue* is the great regulator of the Indian exchequer. Whether there be a surplus, or a deficit, depends entirely upon the demand for this drug in China; so that, if anything were to occur to deprive us of the millions which it now yields, we should be utterly unable to pay our way, even in time of peace.

"The fluctuations," say the authorities, "in the increase from opium for the last ten years, shew to what extraordinary vicissitudes this source of revenue is subject, and how incumbent it is to regulate the charges of Government without depending too much upon the opium receipts. In the four years from 1838-9 to 1841-2, owing to the state of our relations with China, the income from opium scarcely averaged 80 lacs per annum. * * * * In the succeeding six years, from 1842-43 to 1847-48, the income will have averaged nearly 230 lacs per annum. * * * * Had the net receipts from opium continued at their average rate during the fifteen years prior to 1842-43, instead of being augmented to the extent already stated, your Government must have borrowed seven crores more than it has done to supply the annual deficiency." Again, four years later, in June 1852, they observe: "In 1849-50, the net revenue from opium greatly exceeded that of any former period, it having amounted to $3\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees (£3,309,637), and thus a surplus in the finances of India was realized sooner than could have been expected."

We have seen that the surplus which existed in the three years preceding the Afghan war, was produced mainly by a large and rapid increase in the receipts from opium. The revenue from that source, indeed, in three years, exceeded the amount of the surplus by nearly a million sterling; and in the three years ending in 1850-51, it exceeded the opium revenue in the three years of the surplus by upwards of four millions. No stronger proof can be afforded that the

* Total revenue from opium:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|
| From 1835-6 to 1837-8, and from | |
| 1842-3 to 1844-5 | £9,746,610 |
| Average | 1,624,436 |
| Iditto, from 1845-6 to 1850-1 | 15,571,577 |
| Average | 2,695,262 |



House amount to from a hundred to a hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year,—their dinner bills for the past eighteen years being set down in the accounts as an extra item of £53,000!

The Indian part of the administration is conducted by a Governor-General and Council, with Governors and Councils at Madras and Bombay; a Governor without a Council for Bengal, and another for the North West Provinces. The Punjaub is managed by a Board of Administration; Scinde, and British Burmah, by individual Commissioners. The Governors, supreme and subordinate, are appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Control or Ministers of the day, though the nomination *pretends* to emanate from the Court of Directors. The Governor-General has generally secured some distinction before his appointment, but this by no means invariably happens, and the most commonplace and mediocre men are occasionally deemed perfectly qualified for the most important and lucrative appointment under the Crown. For the Governors of the minor Presidencies, and for all the Commanders-in-Chief, no qualification whatever is deemed requisite—interest suffices for all, and industry and exertion on the spot are occasionally regarded by the nominees just as superfluous as previous qualification. The Governors without councils, and the Commissioners, are appointed by the Governments of India from distinguished members of the public service, and the country under them has been found well managed in proportion as they have been left unrestricted. The Councils—consisting in one case of five, and in the two others of three, members, of whom in all cases the Commander-in-Chief is one—are nominated by the Court of Directors, and being for the most part selected from the Secretariat, always filled with the *élite* of the service, are generally men of ability,—with the exception of the Commander-in-Chief, who may be so or not just as it happens. He is generally worn out with age, and almost always devoid of experience: fortunately he for the most part spends the bulk of his time at a distance from the Presidency—rarely entering the council-room.

The emoluments of these functionaries are as follows:—Governor-General £24,000 and five Councillors £9,600 each, (20) Secretaries, amongst them £73,068; Governor-General's office and establishment £15,231; expense of visiting the Upper Provinces £53,252;—making the general charge of the Supreme Govern-



ment £206,771. This takes no account of the Commander-in-Chief, except in his civil capacity of councillor. The Government of Bengal costs £432,970; and £103,715 is set down for public offices at the Presidency. Bombay charges, to which those of Madras closely correspond, consist of salaries to the Governor £12,000 and three Councillors £6,000 each; Governor's office establishment £9,977; Governor's tour in the Deccan £2,399. Public offices at the Presidency and in Scinde £70,124; Miscellaneous charges £15,265; so that the total charges of the Bombay Government and Secretariate establishment alone, exceed a hundred and thirty thousand pounds a year. The Governor of Bombay's pleasure tours to the Hill station of Mahabuleshwur, and his country residence at Dapoorie, courteously termed his visit to the Deccan, costs it would appear close on £2,400 a year; and the charges under this head during the present administration exceed £12,000—or about the sum assigned annually for the whole educational purposes of the Presidency.

Some idea of the cost of Governments without councils may be formed from that of the North West Provinces, set down at something under £10,000 a year. The Board of Administration for the Punjab, including all expenses, costs under £54,000 a year; and the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner of Scinde, including establishments and contingencies, manage that province for about £10,000 a year.

It was admitted by the majority of witnesses examined before the Parliamentary Committee last Session, that councils at the minor Presidencies were wholly superfluous, and that competent Governors, without Councils, would manage infinitely better than with them: and it was openly or tacitly allowed on nearly all hands, that they were maintained mainly to enable the Ministry of the day to confer from time to time a gift of £60,000, (the emoluments of a five years' administration) taken from the treasury of India, with a further sacrifice for councillorships—maintained to permit of the appointment of incompetent Governors of £36,000 a year,—on any of their personal or political friends.

But monstrous as is this piece of extravagance, it is exceeded by the lavishness by which Commanders-in-Chief are requited. These officers invariably belong to the Queen's service, and are in the



majority of cases *effete septuagenarians*, to whom no one would commit the drill of a militia corps. Sir Richard Armstrong, Commander-in-Chief at Madras, requires to be carried about in an easy chair. The faculties of Sir John Grey, late Commander-in-Chief of Bombay, were so far gone that he forgot the names of his own aides-de-camp, and never could be made to comprehend when he should write his name at length,—when only put his initials, to a document. The rule as to antiquity, is not however absolute: and the seniority system is made occasionally to bend in favour of a “pet officer.” Sir William Gomm was at the bottom of the list of Lieutenants General when the baton of authority was conferred on him,—much junior to the Commanders-in-Chief of Bombay and Madras, the former of whom, Sir Willoughby Cotton, resigned his command in consequence. Sir Hugh Gough had not been two months Lieutenant-General at all when he was appointed to the Madras command in June 1841; and when he had held this two years and two months, he was in August 1843 raised to supreme authority, though junior to Sir Thomas MacMahon, the Bombay Commander-in-Chief, to make room for the Marquis of Tweeddale, on whom it had been determined to confer the office both of Governor and Commander-in-Chief. Not one of the present Commanders-in-Chief, of whom the youngest, however, is allowed to be a man of ability, when appointed to commands in India, had ever been in the country, or could know anything of its geography, its climate, its people, its languages, its religions, or its government; or had ever seen a native soldier when placed over sepoy armies numbering close on three hundred thousand men, with seven thousand English officers; many of the officers men of great experience and the highest talent, few of them beyond the prime of life, and possessed of all the qualifications for those highest commands they are prevented by the injustice of their country from filling, of which those placed over them are for the most part conspicuously devoid.

The Commander-in-Chief in India receives £8,000 a year as his military salary, and £10,000 as member of council: the Commanders-in-Chief at the minor Presidencies receive half these sums, in each of these capacities, besides having all their travelling, personal, and other charges defrayed by the state,—these amongst them amounting to about half their salaries; the three very old gentlemen costing



the country altogether somewhere about fifty thousand a year. The Commander-in-Chief of India, rarely crosses the threshold of the council room, unless when sworn in, and pockets in the course of his five years' administration £50,000 for his services as councillor, it not being *possible* for him, residing as he does a thousand miles from the council room, to perform one atom of councillor's service: and the Commanders-in-Chief at the minor presidencies are very nearly in the same position. If they do sometimes enter the Council Chamber when the agreeable nature of the weather induces them to remain at the seat of government, the value of their services is on these occasions quite on a par with those of the Commander-in-Chief of India.

Lord Keane proceeded for Affghanistan in November, 1838, and returned to the presidency in February 1840: during these sixteen months he received £8000 as member of council Bombay,—above £5000 as Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, and £600 for house rent; besides his field allowances, prize money, and other contingencies, as Commander of the Armies of Affghanistan, and the reward afterwards of a Peerage and a Pension of £2000 a year for himself and his descendants for two generations. Sir Hugh Gough was about this time still more fortunate. He had just been relieved from the command of the forces at Madras, by the arrival of Sir Samuel Whittington in January 1841, when he was placed in charge of the expedition to China in the following March. By the demise of the officer just named he was appointed Commander-in-Chief and Member of Council for Madras in June, and from this time until September 1842 he received £8000 as Member of Council; having never during all this time been within two thousand miles of the Council Chamber. He drew besides £5000 as Commander-in-Chief, £600 as house rent, and the field and other allowances, the prize money, etcetera, as Commander of the Chinese expedition. He was subsequently rewarded by a baronetcy. In July 1843 the Marquis of Tweeddale was appointed Governor of Madras; and as his interest at the Horse Guards was unbounded, it was determined that he should have the appointment of Commander-in-Chief as well as that of Governor, an arrangement permitted by the retirement of Sir Jasper Nichols from sheer old age, from supreme command, to which Sir Hugh Gough was promoted. In the course of the present Charter



Act, close on half a million will have been expended,—£10,000 annually for twenty years, on the Commander-in-Chief of India, and half that sum for each of the other Commanders-in-Chief—or £400,000 in all, on civil services by Commanders-in-Chief which it was utterly impossible for them ever to have rendered.

Now the people of England have a perfect right to dispose of their own money as they think fit, and if they choose to bestow on any piece of antique military mediocrity with friends at Court, a yearly stipend double of the whole official allowances of the late Duke of Wellington, no one has any right to complain; but it is not very worthy conduct on the part of a great nation to waste in a pitiable fashion like this, taxes raised from the earnings of fifty millions of poor native wretches living in huts not fit for an English pigsty, and whose average income falls short of three pence a day.

With administrations costing such an enormous amount of money with which, even as matters now stand, men of experience and ability are in the majority of cases entrusted, and for which the first administrative talent in the country can always be secured, it might be supposed that the less interference there was allowed from home the better, and that the Governments of India might, like those of Her Majesty's Colonies, be left to do their own work in their own way. Nothing in the world can be more remote from fact, and a Governor-General who in salary, travelling charges, and office allowances, costs the country £70,000 a year, is treated exactly as if he were the head clerk over the old factory at Fort William, in charge of prints and piece goods, and not at all above cribbing a piece of calico from his employers should it fall in his way! Every step he takes must be explained to the people at home; a copy of every letter he writes or receives, or minute he makes, must be sent to London. A detailed narrative of everything that is said, written, or done, by the Supreme or Subordinate Governments, must be forwarded home to be commented on or criticised by "the clever Clerks" of Cannon Row or Leadenhall Street, who hold the nominal rulers of India in the most absolute subjection to their pens. So frightful is the minuteness insisted on that it becomes physically impossible for these gentlemen to peruse the documents on which they are supposed to decide. The papers sent by the Cape occupy close on 200 folio volumes annually of from 500 to 1000 pages: and a single revenue



despatch is quoted by a late President of the Board of Control as having 45,000 pages of accompaniments! The from-ship-to-ship despatches of the Bombay Government will annually print out to 60 volumes of 1,500 pages folio—or as much as would make 240 vols. 8vo. of ordinary sized print!

CHANGES IN THE STATE OF INDIA SINCE 1833.

A general view has been given at the outset of the countries and interests for which Parliament is about to legislate, by once more re-enacting the Bill of '33, which, in all its essential particulars was a repetition of that of 1784. Why, in the course of the last eighteen years the changes that have occurred in the East are so stupendous as of themselves to demand a total alteration of the law. Since 1834, we have added the Punjaub, Scinde, Sattara, and Pegu, to our dominions, and the addition of the rest of Burmah, if not of the whole Peninsula, is inevitable. We have ravaged Afghanistan, disarmed Gwalior, and made young Holkar half a British Prince; and seem likely to annex Oude, the Nizam's and the Guicowar's dominions, almost immediately.* The reigning sovereign of Travancore—a high caste and orthodox Hindoo—has the Bible read in all the schools in his dominions,—the liberality and enlightenment of his administration in this and other matters putting that of the British Government to shame. Steam communication has come into existence, and diminished the distance betwixt India and England to one-third of what it was in 1834, measuring the interval by time. Communications formerly conveyed, irregularly and uncertainly, on an average of about a hundred days, now pass with perfect punctuality once a fortnight in an average of twenty-eight days, which before five years are out will be reduced to twenty; and long before 1874 arrives we shall have the Electric Telegraph conveying intelligence instantly to all parts of India. Since 1834 the press has been liberated, and newspapers, till then in a state of most slavish degradation, now enjoy more freedom in India than in England: are conducted with as much pro-

* "I cannot conceive it possible for any one to dispute the policy of taking advantage of any just opportunity for consolidating the territories that already belong to us, by taking possession of States which may lapse in the midst of them."—*The Marguts of Dalhousie in 1848.*



heir. Unlike Scindiah, Holkar did so, and on his death, in 1844, the adoption was confirmed by the Paramount Power. Here also the young Rajah lived only a few months; and, in 1845, Lord Hardinge, then new to Indian rule, wished to make the choice of a successor "bear the appearance of a free act of grace on the part of the British Government." But he never talked of absorbing the State of Indore, because the Rajah had died leaving no "heirs natural." The Resident, however,—by what was afterwards censured as his "precipitation," but what was really his strong sense of the obligation of this right of adoption,—defeated Lord Hardinge's design, and the accession of the reigning Holkar "assumed," to use his Lordship's language, "more the form of a succession by legitimate right."

Nor are Gwalior and Indore the only recent cases. In Bhopaul in 1820, the succession, on a vacancy without heirs, was at once filled up by the Local Representative, the late Sir John Malcolm, without even any reference to the Supreme Government—to the intense delight of the Puthans, who, to show their gratitude, offered him their swords and their lives. So also in Duttah in 1840, in Oorcha in 1842, in Kotah in 1828, in Banswarra in 1842, in Odeypore* in the same year, in Doongerpore in 1846, and later still in Kerowlee. In all these States, under Lord Dalhousie's law, the Chiefs having died "without heirs natural," "the territories should have been made to lapse." But in all the opposite course was pursued. The right of adoption was recognized and the States were preserved.

If, then, this new theory, of what may be termed painless extinction, is hereafter to be acted on by the British Government, a fundamental change in the constitution of Indian policy will be commenced, and India is a country in which experiments on society are very dangerous.

But even if our Supremacy would justify, either in law or morals, this theory and practice of subversion, look at the enormity of the operation, divide and detail it as the Indian Government may. The greater part of India is still in the possession of Native Princes; they yet retain 700,000 square miles of territory; they yet

* Judging from a reply made by Sir C. Wood recently to Mr. Otway, Lord Dalhousie's rule has not to prevail in Rajpootana, because there the Native Dynasties are so ancient. The more correct reason would probably have been



possess a population of 53 millions of subjects, a revenue of 10 millions sterling; armies 400,000 strong. All will not yield without a struggle. We may be able to annex the Nizam's dominions—absorb Oude—to subvert the Guicowar, without much bloodshed or great difficulty. But not the Rajpoot Princes, not the Bundelcund Rajahs, not the Protected Sikh and the Hill States. There, we shall have to encounter brave soldiers, attached subjects, and a love of independence, preserved, in a remarkable manner, for centuries. This policy is, therefore, essentially a warlike policy,—it has bloodshed, and devastation, and conquest in prospect; it is an expensive policy,—warfare is ever costly and burthensome; it is also an ambitious policy, an aggressive policy, an intolerant policy, unworthy of the English crown and people, and contrary to the statutable enactments of Parliament itself.

But, suppose it at last carried out; suppose the British Government masters of all India, administering, or trying to administer, the affairs of 1,300,000 square miles of varied and diversified territory—ruling, or endeavouring to rule, 150 millions of people, still more varied and diversified, directly and immediately. How frightful the responsibility—how enormous the risk. At best we could only hope for safety; success would require centuries to realize. But should the attempt fail—should we, in grasping at too much, lose all. Where then would be our Oriental “Mission,” for which policy excuses, and philanthropy reconciles itself to, these acts of injustice?

To those who, like Mr. Campbell and Mr. Thoby Prinsep,* allege that our Indian difficulties arise from our not being complete masters of the whole area of India, and who, like Lord Dalhousie, argue in favour of losing no opportunity of subverting Native States, and annexing their territories to our dominions, may then be replied:—

1. Considerations for our own safety, arising, in the judgment of the eminent authorities already quoted, from the maintenance of the authority of our Native Allies.
2. The limited and restricted character of our Supremacy, and the tendency which an avowal of our intention to disregard those limitations and restrictions has to degenerate our Government to one of mere unlicensed and uncontrolled power and force.



are financially the worse for these acquisitions, to the extent of at least half a million a year, for it is a great mistake to suppose, that the current charges for troops cover our military expenditure. Every increase of territory involves an immense outlay, for buildings, stores, pensions, retiring allowances, and casualties: particularly casualties amongst European troops, as every English soldier is supposed to cost £100, from the time of his enlistment, until he commences active service in India. The increase of payments in England, on account of territory, from £1,974,665, the sum at which it stood in 1837-8, before we entered upon our last period of war, to £2,352,800, the amount expended in 1850-51, is proof of this fact.

If peace therefore had continued, we should have entered upon our new financial career, with an additional demand upon our resources—additional as compared with the demand of 1837-8—of £841,352 increase of interest upon debt—of £500,000 excess of charge in our newly acquired territory—and of £4,458,885 excess of general charges.* Of the total increase of charge in 1850-51, viz. £5,800,237, £3,265,921 arose in the military, and £2,534,316, in the non-military departments—no expectation is held out of any reduction in the charges; and from the fact that the fixed military charges had actually increased rather than diminished in the second year of peace,† there would appear to have been no prospect of a reduction in general charge even had peace been procured, and experience has taught us, that the charges of India have invariably increased faster than the receipts.

What then are our ways and means to meet these extraordinary demands? It is acknowledged that what we may call our permanent sources of revenue, land, salt, and customs are either on the decline, or stagnant, and that where there is a languid increase in those

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| * Increase of charge in 1850-51 over 1837-8 | £5,800,237 |
| Deduct increase of interest £841,352, and for territory 500,000 remainder | 4,458,885 |

† Military charges :—

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| 1847-48 | £9,107,067 |
| 1848-49 | 9,025,060 |
| 1849-50 | 9,400,417 |
| 1850-51 | 9,933,545 |



branches, as in Madras and Bombay, the charges grow faster than the revenue. It is in the opium revenue only that there is vitality, and when we find that there have been fluctuations in the receipts from that source, within the last few years of nearly two millions sterling,* when we recollect that a deadly blow might be struck at this source of supply, by renewed hostilities with China, or by internal regulations in that empire, we shall see the full danger of our present financial position, our solvency depending as it does even in time of peace, exclusively upon the produce of the opium revenue. It was by an increase in that produce of no less than £641,731 in the year 1849-50, that a momentary equilibrium was established in the finances, an equilibrium that was disturbed in the following year by a corresponding fall in the receipts, and which we should not have been able to re-establish had peace continued, even if we could have secured as large an average receipt from that source for the next seven years, as it yielded in the preceding seven. But we have again a war expenditure to provide for, and when we recollect, that the first war in Burmah, which lasted only two years, cost India 15 millions, we cannot expect to come out of the present one without a serious addition to our present burdens. We are now masters not only of all Hindostan but of much territory out of Hindostan—we have seen, that *whilst we have not trebled our revenues, we have increased our debt more than six fold, and we are at this moment adding to that debt in order to make good deficiencies of income.*†

We seem, therefore, to have been imitating the example of the man "greedy of acres" in this country, who borrows money at five per cent in order to purchase an estate which will barely yield him three. We have been urged on in this "earth hunger," first,

* Opium revenue :—

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1847-48 . . . | £1,559,423 |
| 1848-49 . . . | 2,667,002 |
| 1849-50 . . . | 3,309,637 |
| 1850-51 . . . | 2,700,662 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| † Total revenue from opium for 1844-45 to 1850-51 . . . | £17,616,536 |
| Average | 2,516,876 |
| Revenue of 1850-51 | 2,700,662 |
| Deficit of 1850-51 | 678,709 |
| Do. of 1851-2, Rs. 78,84,078 | 710,000 |



by a notion that extension of territory is the necessary consequence of a successful war; secondly, that territory must needs be as profitable in our hands as in the hands of its native owners. Clive was of a different opinion; he thought that Oude would be more profitable to us financially and politically in the hands of its own sovereigns than if placed under our direct rule; he therefore reinstated the Nabob Sujah ud Dowlah in his dominions after the victory of Culpac in 1765, although the attack made upon us by the Nabob had been unprovoked, we having undertaken to protect his territory from all enemies, the Nabob paying the expense; and it was the opinion both of Clive and Hastings — certainly very competent judges—that the extension of our territory beyond the Bengal provinces would be a burden instead of a benefit. Looking at the question merely with reference to finance, the soundness of their opinion cannot be questioned. The more territory the more debt, and why? because we foreigners cannot make territory as profitable as its native owners. Our management is wasteful, and we are enormously cheated. Cheating the revenue is a vice common in all countries, and especially so in a government so emphatically foreign as our Government in India. A striking proof of this is afforded in the present financial state of the Punjab. The Punjab, after supporting an army of 100,000 men, and a splendid court, gave Runjeet Sing a large surplus revenue. We hardly realize enough from it to pay a couple of regiments, in addition to its civil charges. The same story may be told of Scinde, of Sattara, and it is doubtful whether any territorial acquisition that we have made since we first obtained possession of Bengal has yielded as much under our rule as it paid to us in tribute. Our Eastern settlements, Singapore, Penang, and Malacca, *exclusive of the pay of the troops*, cost India upon the average more than £100,000 a year. The territory we took from the Burmese in 1826, including the military charges, costs as much more. Aden is a drain upon us to the extent of £11,154.† The charge of these outlying settlements is thrown upon India. We cannot relieve the people of India from any of their burdens, because money is required for the maintenance of possessions which India has no more to do with than it has with Java or Japan. We have just

* Appendix, p. 463.

† Appendix, p. 293.

† Revenue.



taken the territory of Pegu—a preliminary only to the absorption of the whole of Burmah, nay, to a much wider stride, for we are informed by an influential paper,* and which echoes English opinion in India, that “every one out of England is now ready to acknowledge that the whole of Asia, from the Indus to the sea of Ochotzk, is destined to become the patrimony of that race which the Normans thought six centuries ago they had finally crushed, but which now stands at the head of European civilization. We are placed, it is said, by the mysterious but unmistakeable designs of Providence in command of Asia, and the people of England must not lay the flattering unction to their souls that they can escape from the responsibility of this lofty and important position by simply denouncing the means by which England has attained it.”

The people of England will do well then to be on the alert, and ascertain before they assent to this “lofty and imposing position,” who is to pay for the enterprise? If forgetful of every obligation, they were to endeavour to saddle India with war charges, it would be to no purpose, for India is already sinking under her own burdens. The most sanguine view that could be taken of Indian finances before we came into collision with the Burmese war, was that “if we managed well and kept out of wars, we were in no immediate danger of bankruptcy.”† That this danger is much aggravated by the war‡ in which we are now engaged, is proved by the fact—that the first Burmese war, although it lasted little more than two years, added thirteen millions to the Indian debt. It is not, therefore, a little surprising to find it treated by the Indian authorities as an expedition that might for a time arrest a reduction in charges; but which would not entail any additional expenditure.§ This sanguine view, has however since been corrected, and it has been asserted with some triumph,|| that the war expenditure will not

* Friend of India, January 6, 1853.

† Campbell's Modern India, p. 418.

‡ The great Duke's opinion, which has been adduced in favour of this war, depended of course, upon the case that was put before him. If he had been reminded that the first Burmese war cost fifteen millions—that thirty millions have been spent in subsequent wars—that the revenues of India were inadequate to meet the demands of a peace establishment; we cannot doubt that his language would have been “then suit your resentment to your convenience, make reprisals on the Burmese, but don't plunge into a war, which may bring you to the verge of bankruptcy.”

§ Appendix to Report of Commons, p. 480.

|| Debate in the House of Commons on the Burmese war.



exceed £30,000 a month. This would be serious enough, if it was to last only for a few months of war; but experience has taught us, that a war expenditure does not cease with the establishment of peace. Every acquisition of territory involves the necessity of a permanent increase to the army particularly in that inordinately expensive branch of it, the European, and the remoter the acquisition from the metropolis—the greater the increase. Since 1837, the last year of peace, we have added 16,000 men to our European force, at a cost of more than £500,000 a year.*

We have said enough to shew that the financial history of India, has been a history of delusions from our first acquisition of empire in the East, and that the revenues of India have never been sufficient *unaided* to meet the demands of a peace establishment.†

We have shewn that the more territory we get the heavier are our embarrassments. In the year 1792, the year in which we first began to extend our dominion, we had a surplus revenue of nearly a million; the debt in that year was not equal to the annual revenue,‡ nor the interest to one-sixteenth of the revenue. After having enormously increased our territory, we have an annual deficit of upwards of a million sterling, and it would now take the revenue of more than two years and a half to cover the debt, and the interest of the debt is now equal to one ninth part of the revenue, notwithstanding a reduction of more than one half in the rate of interest at which we raised our loans.§

* European troops of all arms,

1837 — 27,814

1850 — 43,579

† "Between the years 1814 and 1834, the finances of India had assistance from the commercial profits of the Company, to the extent of five millions, and from 1834 to 1850-1, to the extent of twelve millions.

| | REVENUE. | DEBT. | INTEREST. |
|---------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1792-93 | 8,276,770 | 7,992,548 | 526,205. |
| 1850-51 | 18,629,338 | 59,847,564 | 2,346,075. |

§ The rates of interest have been gradually reduced from twelve to ten, to eight, to six, to five, and notice is now given that they will in future be four per cent. It is a significant fact, that this reduction in the rates of interest upon our loans has been made whilst the general rates of interest in India remain unchanged. Twelve per cent, and even much higher rates, still obtain



Every year we are obliged to borrow in order to find the means of paying the interest of our debt, and in comparing our present revenue with the revenue as it stood before we began our career of conquest, we are to remember that that branch of it which though subject to great vicissitudes, is upon the whole the most flourishing, viz., the opium, would have been just as large as it is now, if we had never added an acre to our territory; for it is mainly the produce of our ancient possessions. It may be, at no distant period, the unpleasant duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to renew those applications for loans in aid of the finances of India, which, as we have seen, were not unfrequently made in the early part of the century;—such a prospect, however disagreeable, is before us. We can scarcely suppose that the people of England will look with satisfaction upon any increase of their burthens to make up for the embarrassments of Indian finance, but to this they must soon come, unless greater responsibility be laid upon the Indian Government, and greater wisdom mark the administration of our Indian empire.

the general transactions of the country. Our Indian Government borrows at lower rates, because its creditors in the main are Europeans, who, seeking for secure remittances to the mother country, have the choice between the Government funds in India, and the Government funds in England, and therefore freely lend their money to the Indian Government, provided they can realize one or two per cent more for it than they could get from the Government of England. It is clear that, if the credit of the Government in India was national, they could only borrow at the national rates of interest, and to these rates they would be driven should their demand for money ever exceed the savings or the profits of the European community.



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INDIA REFORM SOCIETY. — On Saturday, the 12th of March, a MEETING of the Friends of India was held in Charles Street, St. James's Square, with a view of bringing public opinion to bear on the Imperial Parliament in the case of India, so as to obtain due attention to the complaints and claims of the inhabitants of that vast empire. H. D. SEYMOUR, Esq., M.P., having been called to the chair, the following Resolutions were agreed to by the Meeting:—

1. That the character of the alterations to be effected in the constitution of our Indian Government at the termination of the East India Company's Charter Act, on the 30th of April, 1854, is a question which demands the most ample and serious consideration.

2. That although Committees of both Houses of Parliament have been appointed, in conformity with the practice on each preceding renewal of the Charter Act, for the purpose of investigating the nature and the results of our Indian Administration, those Committees have been appointed on the present occasion at a period so much later than usual, that the interval of time remaining before the expiration of the existing powers of the East India Company is too short to permit the possibility of collecting such evidence as would show what alterations are required in our Indian Government.

3. That the inquiry now being prosecuted by Committees of the Legislature will be altogether unsatisfactory if it be confined to the evidence of officials and of servants of the East India Company, and conducted and terminated without reference to the petitions and wishes of the more intelligent of the natives of India.

4. That it is the duty of the friends of India to insist upon a temporary Act to continue the present Government of India for a period not exceeding three years, so that time may be given for such full inquiry and deliberation as will enable Parliament within that period to legislate permanently for the future administration of our Indian Empire.

5. That in order to obtain such a measure, this Meeting constitutes itself an "India Reform Society," and names the undermentioned gentlemen as a Committee.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| T. Barnes, Esq. M.P. | C. Hindley, Esq., M.P. |
| W. Beaumont, Esq., M.P. | T. Hunt, Esq. |
| J. Bell, Esq., M.P. | E. J. Hutchins, Esq., M.P. |
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| Lieut.-Gen. Sir J. P. Fitzgerald, R.G.B., M.P. | T. Plinn, Esq., M.P. |
| W. R. S. Fitzgerald, Esq., M.P. | H. Reeve, Esq. |
| M. Forster, Esq., M.P. | W. Scholefield, Esq., M.P. |
| R. Gardner, Esq., M.P. | H. D. Seymour, Esq., M.P. |
| Right Hon. T. M. Gibson, M.P. | W. D. Seymour, Esq., M.P. |
| Viscount Godolphin | J. B. Smith, Esq., M.P. |
| G. Hadfield, Esq., M.P. | J. Sullivan, Esq. |
| W. Harcourt, Esq. | G. Thompson, Esq., M.P. |
| L. Heywerth, Esq., M.P. | F. Warren, Esq. |
| | J. A. Wise, Esq., M.P. |

Correspondence on all matters connected with the Society to be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, by whom subscriptions will be received in aid of its object.

JOHN DICKINSON, Jun., Hon. Sec.

Committee Rooms, Clarence Chambers, 12, Haymarket,
April 12th, 1853.



Part - V 32

INDIA REFORM. CSL

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No. III.

NOTES ON INDIA,

BY DR. BUIST

OF BOMBAY.

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NOTES ON INDIA.

BY DR. BUIST OF BOMBAY.

FROM the reports of the Committees of April last it would appear that the Act of 1784 encumbered with the various deteriorations it has suffered by each successive enactment is about to be extended, with little alteration, to 1874.

For the next twenty years the natives of Hindostan are as heretofore to be in a great measure excluded from public employment in their own country, although pronounced by Act of Parliament equally eligible for this as Europeans, and proved by the testimony of the Duke of Wellington, Lord William Bentinck, the Earl of Ellenborough, Sir George Clarke, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Holt Mackenzie, and all the ablest statesmen of the age, eminently qualified for office. We are to have, till the close of the present century, a constitution continued to us which was framed near the end of the last; we are to have three separate sets of government for India, the principal function of each of which seems to be, to thwart and retard the operations of the others; the Leadenhall Street division costing £130,000 a-year, being merely the minister of patronage, and place of record, without one atom of power beyond this, save that of suggesting, criticising, and obstructing; the Board of Control costing £25,000 a-year, managed by a chairman, appointed without any necessary qualification to the office, whose average tenure of service has, since 1820, fallen short of two years, void of all responsibility, endowed with absolute power, governing in secret, and presenting to Parliament, when asked for information, collections of papers so disgracefully vitiated and garbled as to mislead, in place of enlightening, and whose main contributions to the policy of India during the past twenty years have been wars, which have cost thirty millions sterling. With three governments in India, costing half a million sterling annually amongst them, so completely under



a parcel of clever clerks at home,* as to be compelled to send home particulars of every thing they say or do, to be commented on, checked, or controlled, by parties incapable, from position, of forming a correct opinion on what they decide ; and finally, in India, we are to have Indian education neglected, improvement thrown aside, irrigation and the means of communication overlooked, though to neglect such as these we have, since the last Charter Act, been indebted for famines which have swept nearly two millions of human beings away, and caused a loss to the revenue of above eight millions sterling, a sum, if properly expended, sufficient to have averted for ever the calamities by which, in a few years, its loss has been occasioned. Against things so monstrous as these, in reference to which Parliament seems deaf or unheeding, it has been resolved to appeal through the Press to the people of England, in the firm belief that were they aware of the tremendous responsibilities they were incurring by the mismanagement, of which they are the authors, they would afford India such redress as she is entitled to seek from their hands, the refusal of which may yet be productive of such fearful consequences.

History contains no record of anything so strange, or so reprehensible, as the neglect with which Englishmen treat the interests of the British Empire in the East. The disfranchisement of Gattton or old Sarum occupied ten times the attention, and was listened to with a hundred times the anxiety, that is bestowed upon an empire which contains an area equal to half that of Europe.

WHAT IS INDIA?

India occupies from the 7th to the 32nd parallel, from the 67th to the 90th meridian. Its boundary line is 11,260 miles in length, or half the circumference of the globe. It comprises an area of 1,309,200 square miles, ten times that of France, of which 800,758 belong to England, 508,442 to native subsidiaries or allies. It extends from the sea level to an altitude of 27,000 feet, and its climate varies from that of the torrid zone to that of the arctic regions—where the huge Himalayas rise far within the line of perpetual snow. On its western marches along the Indus from the sea

* Lord Ellenborough's evidence.



to the borders of the Punjaub are regions where rain hardly ever falls, where the houses are built of unburnt bricks, and a shower once in five years is a rarity. On its eastern frontier, under the same parallel, in the Kassia Hills, and at a similar distance from the sea, the average fall is from 3 to 400 inches during the three summer months: as much is often measured in forty-eight hours as suffices England for a year. It has rivers, double the size of the Danube or the Rhine, shrunk up at one season of the year, so as to be almost unnavigable, swelled out at another season so as to become vast inland seas, the one shore hardly visible from the other, carrying as much solid matter annually to the ocean as would build up an English county from beneath low to above high water mark.

POPULATION.

The races by which these vast regions are occupied, are as strange and diversified in character as are the features of the country and the climate; they are of every form, hue, and faith, from the huge Patan or Beloochi, to the short but active Goorka, and diminutive man of Malabar; from the Todawars, who dwell on trees, and feed on reptiles and vermin,—the Khoonds, slaughtering their hecatombs of children,—the Arab, dark as the Ethiopian, and the Ethiopians themselves in abundance; the Parsee and the Mogul, scarcely distinguishable from the Englishman in point of hue—to the learned Brahmin, studying the stars, calculating eclipses, and constructing astronomical instruments, compared to which those of modern times are but toys in point of size. The distinguished astronomer Jayasinha, Rajah of Ambhere, nearly two centuries ago had observatories constructed at Delhi, Benares, Muttra, and Onjein, each possessed of equatorials of such size as to allow above three inches and a half to the degree, each degree being divided into minutes: the gnomons of the sun dials were from a hundred to a hundred and twenty feet in length. The bodily and the moral maladies which afflict a community of such mass and diversity of material, are almost equally frightful in point of character and magnitude. Famines occurring almost decennially, some of which within our time, have swept their millions away. In 1833, fifty thousand persons perished in the month of September in Lucknow; at Khanpoor twelve hundred died of want; and half a million sterling was subscribed by the

bountiful to relieve the destitute. In Guntoor two hundred and fifty thousand human beings, seventy-four thousand bullocks, a hundred and fifty-nine thousand milch cattle, and three hundred thousand sheep and goats, died of starvation. Fifty thousand people perished in Marwar; and in the North West Provinces, half a million of human lives are supposed to have been lost. The living preyed upon the dead; mothers devoured their children; and the human imagination could scarcely picture the scenes of horror that pervaded the land. In twenty months' time a million and a half of people must have died of hunger or of its immediate consequences. The direct pecuniary loss occasioned to government by this single visitation exceeded five millions sterling,—a sum which would have gone far to avert the calamity from which it arose, had it been expended in constructing thoroughfares to connect the interior with the sea coast or districts where scarcity prevailed, with those where human food was to be had in abundance; or on canals to bear forth to the soil, thirsty and barren for want of moisture, the unbounded supplies our rivers carry to the ocean. India has indeed been the birthplace or the cradle of the most frightful maladies that have ever visited the earth: a hundred and fifty thousand persons perished of cholera betwixt its appearance on the Ganges in 1816, and the time it reached Western India the year after. In 1820 it swept away one-fourth of the whole population of the Mauritius; before 1831, fifty millions of human beings are supposed to have been destroyed by it in various parts of the world. The plague of Marwar in 1837 carried off ten thousand, one-fourth of the population in a few months; and in 1849 the Mahamurree swept away one-fourth of the inhabitants where it prevailed, in Gurhwal 88 per cent died of those attacked.

The crimes of India are nearly as frightful as its maladies. The existence of Thuggee, the practice of which is represented in the frescoes of Ajunta as having prevailed above two thousand years ago, has become known to us within the present century, and is scarcely yet extinguished. Infanticide, by which tens and hundreds of thousands of female children must have perished since it first became known to us sixty years ago, has been extinguished barely two years since. The extinction of widow-burning, is of somewhat older date within our territories, but the practice still prevails upon our borders. Ten years ago the existence of a fraternity of plunderers, consisting of



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fresh loan should be contracted abroad, but, on the contrary, I conceive a sinking fund to the extent of one million may be annually applied to the discharge of the Indian debt—not that the debt, he said, was a real incumbrance—there were advantages, in many points of view in having a permanent debt in India in some degree proportionate to its present extent.” This was said in March; in June intelligence was received of the breaking out of the Mahratta war. The confidence of the Minister, however, in his estimates remained unabated. “I trust I shall satisfactorily prove,” he said, “that no very material disappointment is to be feared in the year to which these estimates apply, and that as to future years the stability of the power and the resources of the British empire in the East is now such that unless events should occur against which no human foresight can provide, the only serious inconvenience to be apprehended is the procrastination of the liquidation of the Indian debt.”

It was shrewdly remarked during the debate, that “all that related to the past, in the Minister’s speech—all that was certain—was dark and gloomy; all that concerned the future—all that was uncertain—was fair and brilliant.” At the very moment that the Minister for India was propounding a plan for the liquidation of debt out of an imaginary surplus, and assuring the House of Commons that we should get through the war without incurring fresh debt, the Governor-General, Lord Wellesley, was borrowing all the money that he could get at eight per cent interest, to make up a heavy deficit and to provide for the war. But even these favourable terms failed to fill the treasury; this very loan was at a heavy discount, the establishments in arrears, and the credit of the Government so low, that unless the chief mercantile houses at Bombay, at the instance of the late Sir Charles Forbes, had come forward to prop it, the operations of the great Duke—then General Wellesley—would have been paralyzed. He tells us, indeed, that he was on one occasion compelled to levy a contribution on one of the enemy’s towns in order to find means for paying his troops.*

When Lord Wellesley entered upon his administration in 1798, the charges in India exceeded the revenue by the sum of £118,746; when he quitted it in 1805, there was a surplus charge of £2,268,608; and whilst the revenues, from large territorial acquisitions, had increased from upwards of eight, to upwards of fifteen millions, per annum, the debt had increased from seventeen to thirty-

* Letter to Major Malcolm, 13th March, 1804.



one millions and a half. He resigned his trust, however, with confident predictions of enduring peace, and of financial prosperity, and strange to say, we find his cautious brother, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, lending himself to the delusion, that augmented territory would inevitably bring with it augmented wealth; after an elaborate examination of Indian finance in 1806, we find him expressing his conviction that "the revenues of that great empire would be found to afford ample means of restoring the finances, and that there would be in that year, the first of peace, a surplus, after providing for every demand, of upwards of £700,000."* The minister chimed in with this sanguine note; there was already a surplus, he said, of £800,000, and by necessary attention to the expenditure, he had no doubt it would produce such a surplus as would be sufficient for a speedy liquidation of their debts; and this was said in support of a Bill, then before the House, to authorize the Company to borrow two millions in England upon bond; and with a letter from the Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis, before him, in which he stated that "an inquiry into the state of the finances of India afforded the most discouraging prospect, that unless some speedy measures were taken to reduce the expenditure, to meet with effect the contingency of war, the consequences would be serious; that the regular troops were little short of five months, and many other departments still more in arrear."

In the next year (1808) we have the same minister moving for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the causes of the "*considerable deficit* in the territorial revenues of India, and to investigate the nature and extent of that deficit."† In 1811 the Company again came to the Parliament for the loan of a million and a half, and when they applied for assistance to a like amount, for the third time, in 1812, they expressed their grievous disappointment, that there should have been an excess of charge over revenue in India, even in the third year of peace, of upwards of a million sterling. This first chapter in the financial history of India ends with the year 1813, when the affairs of that empire again came under the consideration of Parliament. From 1765 to 1814, the East India Company had a common treasury for territory and commerce, so that it was impossible to ascertain exactly how the accounts stood

* Speech on India Budget, July 8, 1806. Do. of Mr. R. Dundas, July 30, 1807.

† Speech of Mr. R. Dundas on India Budget, March 11, 1808.



and a half millions pound weight of opium, and produces a revenue to Government of upwards of three millions sterling a year. The animal creation presents representatives of every living thing moving on the earth or in the waters, from the huge leviathan found in multitudes in its seas, the elephant, the lion, the tiger, and the monkey, to the beetle and the ant levelling forests through which the strongest and most ferocious have failed to make their way. Whales abound on its shores, drawing after them fleets of American whalers, and the fins of the sharks which pursue and destroy them, exported for the use of the gourmands of China, realize in their raw state from £30,000 to £40,000 a year.

Its indigenous manufactures, now fast hastening to decay, were once on a scale of magnificence worthy of its raw produce. The correct forms of ships—only elaborated within the past ten years by the science of Europe—have been familiar to India for ten centuries; and the vessels which carried peacocks to Ophir for king Solomon, were probably the same as the fishing craft of the present day, which furnish the models the American and English clipper and yacht builders are aspiring after. The carving of its woodwork, the patterns, colours, and texture of its carpets, shawls and scarfs, admired for centuries, have, since the Great Fair of the world been set forth as patterns for the most skilled artificers of Europe to imitate. From the looms of Dacca went forth those wonderful tissues that adorned the noblest beauties of the Court of Augustus Cæsar, bearing in the eternal city the same designation sixteen centuries ago as that, by which cotton is still known in India; and the abundance of Roman coins and relics up to our time occasionally exhumed, yet preserve traces of the early commercial connection between the two most wonderful nations in the world—those of the Cæsars and the Moguls. The rarest gifts Bengal could offer its native princes or its foreign conquerors, were the muslins known as “the running water,” or “the nightly dew,”—being when wet scarcely distinguishable from either; and since the advent of the English, a single piece, twenty yards in length, and one and a quarter in breadth, weighing no more than fourteen ounces, has been sold for twenty-five pounds,—a sum equal to the requital of three Dacca spinners and weavers for a twelvemonth.



The elaborate stone carving of Central India, Rajpootana and Goozerat; the embossed and enriched silver work of Cutch and Agra; the microscopic paintings of Delhi and Lahore; the carvings in sandal wood, and the filligree of Trichinopoly; the inlaid work of Mooltan and Bombay are up to this hour the marvels of the world.

The most singular monuments of Indian art can only be seen in the country; and amongst a people at once eminently devotional and martial, temples, tombs, fortresses, palaces, and weapons of war, supply subjects of special wonder. The Hills of Western India, over the space of five thousand square miles, are penetrated by hundreds of caves, approaching in size, in richness and beauty of architectural decoration, the finest cathedrals in Europe. These have been hewn out in absence of the aid of gunpowder, and fashioned without natural adjunct or addition of masonry, into their present form, covered with rich and elaborate sculptures by the hand of man. The caves are grouped together so as to furnish places of worship, halls of instruction, and domiciles for the professors and their pupils, exactly on the plan of the universities which came into existence in Europe two thousand years after those of India were forgotten; indicating an amount of civilization and demand for knowledge in the East twenty-four centuries ago, such as scarcely exists in these regions in modern times. Or passing down to a later age, there is the huge mountain of Aboo, 5000 feet high, covered and surmounted by one vast mass of temples, constructed from the seventh century of our era down to the present date. The hills of Paulitana, are literally crusted over with temples of the finest arabesque, cut in the hardest stone. The ruined city of Beejapoor contained sixteen hundred mosques. The dome of the Mausoleum of Ibrahim Adil Shah, is a third larger than that of St. Paul's: the mosque to which it belongs is 450 feet in length and 150 in breadth: while the Taj-Mahal of Agra, the monument erected by the Emperor Jehangeer over his wife, the "light of the harem," built of the purest white marble, and inlaid with the richest mosaic, stands unrivalled amongst the Mausoleums of the world.

As for weapons of war, the cannon of India could have taken in and discharged the largest sixty-eight pounders of modern warfare,



were the trunions knocked off. The gun at Moorshedabad is seventeen feet long, with a bore of eighteen inches; that of Dacca twenty-two feet long, with a bore of fifteen inches,—it weighed twenty-one tons, and threw shot of four hundred weight. The great gun at Agra is a brass fifteen-hundred-pounder, twenty-three inches bore—it weighs eleven tons, and is worth five thousand pounds as old metal: while two out of half a dozen of large guns at Beejapoor threw shot of half a ton and a *ton and a quarter* respectively. The damask rifles and damask sword blades of Goozerat beat anything Europe can boast of; and the wootz steel, from which these are manufactured, is deemed so excellent in England as to be used mainly for surgical instruments. The ruins of desolate cities point to the greatness of the Empire before Europeans sought its shores as traders, and seized its soil as conquerors. Gour, the former capital of Bengal, covers an area of seventeen square miles, and once boasted of a population of above a million of inhabitants. Beejapoor while flourishing contained nearly a million of inhabited houses, occupied by more than three millions of people. Rajmahal, the city of a hundred Kings, is now a miserable village inhabited by a few paper-makers. Mandoo, the capital of the Patan sovereigns of Malwa, surrounded by a wall twenty-eight miles in circuit, occupies an area of twelve thousand English acres: the Jumamah Musjid, built of white marble, is the finest specimen of Affghan architecture in existence: it now supplies the lair of the wolf and the tiger: Bhali-bibura, in Kattiwar, Behut in the Northern Doab, Lamkassa at the base of the Himalayas, Palibothra near Patna on the Ganges, and Cannouj in the province of Agra, have scarce left sufficient traces behind them to mark their boundaries.

PUBLIC WORKS.

The irrigation of the country, so long neglected by the British Government, and from which such magnificent results have within the last twenty years been derived, was an object of anxiety to the rulers of India five centuries ago. The Emperor Feroze constructed about the year 1350 a magnificent canal, for the purposes of irrigation, from the base of the mountains to the neighbourhood of Delhi, two hundred miles in length, by means of which a vast tract of country was made fertile as a garden, and above a million of people provided



with bread. Two centuries after this, the illustrious Akbar devoted himself to the construction of new canals for the purpose of irrigation, and the clearing out of those formed by his predecessors, and which had fallen into decay. He made the subject a regular part of the system of government, and left a canal act behind him, which has come down to our times, providing for a complete series of arrangements and a large array of officers for their extension and management. The Shah Jehan, seventy years later, took up with enthusiasm the plans of his predecessor, and was nobly seconded in his efforts by Ali Murdan Khan, celebrated over the East for his skill and taste in architecture. The success of their labours was magnificent; tradition still enlarges on the vastness of the returns derived from the canals brought into existence by them, which were such as from a single canal to pay for the maintenance of twelve thousand horsemen. The permanent establishment maintained for police purposes, consisted of five hundred horsemen, and a thousand footmen, armed. It is mentioned by Ferishta that during the earlier of these excavations, vast collections of giants' bones were discovered, and in our time the extension of the canal system in the same quarter has disclosed in these, the skeletons of numberless extinct animals; the Mammoth and Mastodon, the Bramatherium, and Sevatherium, and the other kindred contributions, which Colvin, Darand, Cautley, and Falconer, have made to our Indian paleontology. Our first canal operations commenced little more than thirty years ago, and in 1821, the waters which had five centuries before been made to visit the city of Delhi, were after fifty years suspension re-introduced through their former channels.

From the Jumna canal, now in use, Government derives a revenue of £25,000 a year from a total investment of £90,000; from the Western Jumna canal an investment of £140,000, a direct revenue of £44,000 a year arises. Lands previously comparatively barren are maintained in a state of constant productiveness for a water rent of a shilling an acre. The population maintained in the irrigated districts is very nearly double, mile for mile, of that of those not irrigated. A careful computation made by authority shows, that in the famine year of 1837, the gross value of the saving effected by the eastern Jumna Canal, was half a million sterling; one tenth of this being revenue, or fifty thousand pounds, direct gain to the public treasury.



The united Jumna Canals saved at the same period, above two millions sterling to the Common-wealth. On the Canals in the North West Provinces, completed between 1821 and 1848, Government expended £557,000, and drew in direct Canal revenue £546,000. By this an area of nearly 1,300,000 acres of ground previously sterile, have been made to yield produce worth two and a half millions annually, and to support upwards of six hundred thousand human beings. The Sutledge Canal now in progress is expected to water 624,000 acres, and to yield government a revenue of £55,447, on an expenditure of a quarter of a million, or nearly twenty per cent. It has been estimated by the Bengal Engineers, that water and land available for the purpose of irrigation in these neighbourhoods would, on an expenditure of two millions, afford a permanent return of £578,150 annually, or close on thirty per cent., and that a surface of nearly nine millions of acres, or above ten thousand square miles, might thereby be brought into cultivation. The present Governor-General most strongly recommended the Court of Directors to borrow for such improvements as these, so long as money could be had at five per cent, and made to realise from fifteen to forty. *In place of acting on counsel so judicious, the Court have directed the most stringent retrenchments to be made; any surplus that may accrue to be applied to the liquidation of their debts—they have not even left the returns on existing canals to be expended on others; and the intervention of private enterprise is out of the question where nothing can be done without the sanction of government, and government takes five years to answer a letter.* The most magnificent of all the works of this sort is the Grand Ganges Canal, navigable for nearly 900 miles, and on which a million and a quarter is proposed to be sunk. It is expected to yield a return of £400,000 a year, of which £180,000 will be direct revenue: it will fertilise no less than five millions and a half of acres of land now in a state of comparative sterility—increase the gross produce by upwards of seven millions sterling annually in value, and relieve a population, of above six millions, of all fear of those frightful famines by which the country was wont to be decimated;—yet millions on millions might be expended on irrigation in India with assurances of profit equal to what they afford.



The principal canal for watering the Baree Doab will leave the Ravee some miles from Shalhpore, following the line of the highest level, right through the centre of the Doab, and will rejoin the river about sixty miles above Mooltan, a little above its junction with the Chenaub. Two branches will flow off from the main trunk to the south, both limited by the Sutlej, one watering the country in the direction of the Sobraon, the other in that of Kussoor; one branch to the north irrigates the land around Lahore, and so along to the southward of the Ravee between the river and the main canal. The length of the trunk and its branches is no less than 450 miles, and it will serve the purposes both of navigation and irrigation. The work will cost, it is believed, half a million sterling: it will irrigate about 545,000 acres at present in a state of complete sterility. It will cost for its maintenance about £20,000 a year, and yield a free return of £120,000, or twenty-four per cent on outlay after meeting all charges,—thus repaying the cost within five years, and leaving us a clear increase of £120,000 on our revenue from this single department.

The Madras Government has within these six years spent thirteen lakhs of rupees (£130,000) on works of irrigation on the Godavery, and have already received twenty lakhs (£200,000) in direct return in the shape of increase of land revenue. Of course at the outset, while the works were in progress, the receipts were inconsiderable. The average revenue for a period of six years before the work began was nineteen lakhs—it is now thirty lakhs of rupees (£300,000): so that a third more than the entire original outlay having been already refunded to the treasury, Government will hereafter draw from the improved districts ten lakhs a year, or two-thirds of the whole sum originally expended, of net increase of revenue. The increase of the land tax is a small fraction of the actual gain: the native goods exported by sea from the irrigated districts sprung up at once from seven (£70,000) their previous average, to thirteen (£130,000) lakhs; and though the tremendous floods of 1849 reduced them, they now promise to maintain themselves at above fourteen lakhs (£140,000). Before this much could be contributed to the public purse, at least five times as much must have been taken out of the soil by the cultivators,—expended probably on their own sustenance



partly devoted to the purchase of such luxuries as they could not previously afford, and in part it is to be hoped set aside as accumulated capital, but all constituting the solid and substantial wealth of the State. We probably do not overrate the fruits of the expenditure of thirteen lakhs (£130,000) at a half million sterling annually in all—representing, at five per cent, a permanent capital of ten millions added to the value of our empire; or a return of four hundred per cent, annually on the adventure. Talk of improving a country by railways requiring a guarantee for their construction of five per cent, the longest of which will scarcely penetrate so far into the interior as the length of some of our arid river deltas!—where the productive lands, or lands capable of being rendered such, abut on the sea shore, or are penetrated by navigable streams, and which in either case provide water-carriage, so that the produce may be transported from the fields where it grows to a place of shipment. Talk of California—with its countless robberies and murders, its weekly conflagrations, its universal rapine and brutality—yielding wealth such as the diggings of a single delta supply, with twenty deltas on our hands yet unexplored.

This is no case of conquest or of rapine—of dominions ravished, through violence and deluges of blood, from the hands of their original possessors. No question of right can ever be raised—no claim of compensation or groan of grievance emitted. No people have been coerced or enslaved—no native nobility reduced or expatriated: our grounds of congratulation are genuine as they are unalloyed, the only thing we have to blush for is, that we should so long have neglected these, and still neglect seizing other, sources of wealth so enormous—of good so unalloyed.

Our wants at the outset are most moderate—all we desire is investigation: we have a noble corps of engineers to rely upon—we have scores and scores of other officers capable of acting as surveyors almost as efficiently as engineers, and hundreds on hundreds of European soldiers willing and able to share in the more laborious and less intellectual parts of the toil. All we want to begin with is a survey of, and report on, every river delta in India: for Madras this has been accomplished; in Bombay it yet requires to be begun. With estimates of the outlay and return once before us, Government



has only to select the improvement to be begun with,--or if too timid to attempt to improve the revenues of the country, to place their improvement within the reach of those willing to undertake it. Even in the midst of universal distrust, roguery, and mismanagement, it would not be a very difficult matter to induce capitalists at home to embark in enterprises assuring them of a twenty per cent return, and leaving about as much more to be acquired by the rulers of the land, who would in this case have so kindly and cordially at least consented to allow their dominions to be improved but that the interminable delays of correspondence intervene.

COST OF THE CHIEF GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONARIES OF INDIA.

The Government of India consists of two divisions, the Court of Directors and the Board of Control in England, and the Supreme and Local Governments, the India House and Board of Control in India: the principal part of it is at home, and this again is divided in two. In the hands of the Board of Control rests absolutely and entirely the administration of Indian affairs, it consists of a President and Secretaries, two members of the Administration,--the first receiving £3,500 a year, the others £1,500 each--all selected without the slightest consideration of their knowledge of the affairs of India; their average tenure of office for the last thirty years having been about twenty-seven months at a time, and some score of permanent irresponsible clerks, on whom they must be absolutely dependent for information and counsel. The cost of the establishment amounts to about £25,000 a year.

The Court of Directors, in whose name the country is governed, consists of twenty-four gentlemen--six of whom go out of office annually, to return to it next year. They exercise the entire initial patronage in sending out young men to India; in seniority services, mediocrity or dulness rising as rapidly as merit, or more so if they be helped by interest which the others are without. The patronage the Directors exercise in India is limited and, like that which they influence, which is extensive, is generally mis-used. The Court of Directors have not one particle of power in the administration of affairs conducted in their name, when they differ from the Board of Control, though the charges of the India



of 1833 has not therefore produced that Code of Laws, "the want of which might be so readily supplied;" instead, it has imposed on India an enormous cost under this head, hitherto without result.

Mr. J. B. Norton of the Madras Bar, in his recently published Pamphlet, *The Administration of Justice in Southern India*, states the Salary alone of the Law Commissioners to have already reached the enormous total of £170,000; but without any advantage whatever to the Natives of India.

"Possibly a considerable amount of useful information has been collected; and certainly sundry very heavy blue books have been brought forth—a proposed Criminal Code proved an abortion, and was strangled at its birth. What few Acts have been produced, are drafted in the loosest and most unlawyerlike fashion, so that almost upon every occasion when they have become the subject of discussion in the Supreme Court, a "coach and horses" have been easily driven through any given section: but, up to the present time no Code, worthy of the name, has been prepared for all India; although it might have been imagined, that to any man wishing to illustrate his name, and hand it down immortal to Posterity, such an object would have been sufficient incentive to his ambition, even if he were not lured by the additional bait of £10,000 per annum, paid monthly, and with the strictest regard to punctuality. But the truth is, the office, from which so much has been expected, has been a mere job. From Mr. Macaulay down to Mr. Bethune, we have never had a lawyer of any practice appointed. Theoretical men, having influence with the Ministry of the day, have been from time to time nominated. They have come out here at a comparatively advanced age, with the world before them where to choose, totally ignorant of the character and habits of the Natives, of their existing Laws and innumerable customs, and consequently unable to form any correct estimate of the wants and exigencies of the country.

"During the few months which Mr. Jackson, the Advocate General of Calcutta, filled the office, he succeeded in pushing through a small but important body of Laws; and we have now unquestionably a ripe and able lawyer of large practice at the helm—but although there can be little doubt that Mr. Peacock's drafts will be workman-like, it remains to be seen whether he will not be overwhelmed with the enormous amount of knowledge which he must necessarily acquire, before he can safely proceed to legislate for a country to which he is a stranger; and whether the habits of the Special Pleader will yield to the more enlarged requirements of the Legislator; but the appointment of a practical lawyer is an instalment of what is due to us; we must take the good the Gods provide us, and be thankful for it.

"But it is not after all, the state of the substantive Law, defective as that is, which is the main subject of just complaint; it is the miserable system under which it is at present administered; and the



and more frightful prospect which awaits this unhappy country, if the British Legislature will still turn a deaf ear to our necessities. It is to the awful results of this feeble and insufficient system of judicial administration, the utter inability of the Judges to control the proceedings before them; the unnecessary swelling of the records, the prolongation of trials, and the increased repetition of litigation, which arise from the want of power in the Bench, and are permitted to reign unchecked, that we have all along pointed; for which we emphatically demand a speedy and effectual remedy; certain that if it be not extended to us *now*, we may look in vain for it for the next five and twenty years, unless indeed in the mean time, the evil should have become so intolerable, as to rouse even the unenergetic listless Hindoo to such an extent, as to endanger the continuance of our rule in India."—pp. 127-8-9.

Then, as to the actual state and administration of civil law. In the Regulation Provinces there is nothing worthy of the name of law; but, to a system unworthy that sacred name, are appended cumbersome legal forms and a legal tax. To enter into the courts of what is called justice, it is not only necessary that you should have a plaintiff, but money to pay (not lawyers but) the government. So that to all the Company's subjects who cannot commence the search of justice by paying a tax to the government, the doors of the courts are closed; for them there is neither law nor justice. And having money, what, when admitted, do they find? Judges, as Mr. Campbell confesses, a scandal to the British name.

"When a Collector is old enough, he is made a Judge. It seems to be considered that if, at this time of life a man is fit for anything, he is fit for a Judge; and if he is fit for nothing, better make him a Judge and get rid of him. The judicial department being in a less satisfactory state than any other, is less sought after, and, the ill effects of mismanagement being less immediately startling, the principle that, in a choice of evils, any man will do for a Judge seems to have become established. Some who mismanage their districts are said to be promoted to be Judges against their will."

Judicial proceedings are rendered intricate by the multiplication of technical forms, by the rigid exaction of nice, obscure, puzzling, pedantic, and expensive rites and ceremonies; in short, intricacy and obscurity are intentionally created. The courts indeed profess to give every man the law of his own religion or country, or where the litigants are of different tribes, according to the custom of the country or the law of the defendant. But on this variegated basis a large and complicated legal system of constructions, undigested and unarranged, has been reared, and it is left to the administration of men not



Agency of India depends entirely upon a source of supply, which may be cut from under us by renewed altercations with China, or by a change in the policy of that empire. A revival of hostilities with China would bring the revenue at once down from three millions, its present amount, to three hundred thousand pounds, its amount when our war with China was at its height.*

Are we then warranted in thinking favourably of the financial condition of a country, which is dependent upon a precarious source of income for means to pay its way in time of peace? and which, while constantly liable to war, has no resource, when war occurs, but to add to its debt by loans raised at high interest?

We are keen enough in detecting flaws in the financial state of our neighbours, and from constantly recurring deficits and increase of debt, we augur unfavourably of the financial condition of Austria and France. *Deficits have been the rule, equilibrium in the finances of India the rare exception, for a century*; and yet we argue from the exception against the rule, and venture to say, "that the resources of India, under ordinary circumstances, are not only ample to cover all necessary expenditure, but sufficient to yield a considerable surplus towards the liquidation of debt." We say this, and confess, in the same breath, that the main stays of our exchequer—the land revenue and the salt revenue—are either in a languid or a stagnant state; and that one-sixth of our revenue rests upon the most precarious foundation. We act, moreover, as if our resources were inexhaustible, and our credit unbounded; but the very fact that the salt revenue—which, as it hits every one, and the poorer classes harder than the rich, and is therefore a gauge of the capability of India to bear more taxation—is

| SURPLUS. | | REVENUE FROM OPIMUM. | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| *1835-6 . . . | £1,441,512 | . . . | £1,309,009 |
| 1836-7 . . . | 1,248,224 | . . . | 1,439,031 |
| 1837-8 . . . | 780,318 | . . . | 1,487,291 |
| Total . . . | £3,470,054 | | £4,325,331 |
| 1848-49 . . . | | | 2,667,902 |
| 1849-50 . . . | | | 3,309,637 |
| 1850-51 . . . | | | 2,700,662 |
| | | | £8,678,201 |
| Increase . . . | | | 4,352,870 |



rather on the decline than otherwise, is proof that no other tax would be productive: and another fact, viz. that the principal creditors of India are not the people of India, seeking a safe investment for their surplus capital in Government securities, but the servants of the Government, or the European community in India,* is proof that our credit is extremely limited. The public servants in India pour their savings yearly into the public Treasury, under a conviction that if the finances of India should be embarrassed, the national exchequer will come forward to their aid; but the public of India appear, from the comparatively small amount of stock which they hold, to feel no such confidence.

It is indeed a significant fact, that in times of emergency we can raise no money for the public service of India at a lower rate than 5 per cent. Proposals have frequently been made to transfer a portion of the Indian debt to England, by borrowing in the home market upon better terms, but those always have been put aside, and it has been found impossible to raise even so small a sum as a million and a half for railroads, without a guarantee of from 5 to 4½ per cent. Would there be this shyness in investing money in Indian securities, if our financial system was as sound, and our credit as good as it is often asserted to be?

It is obvious that our finances can never be in a safe state, or our credit stable, so long as we are dependent upon a precarious source of revenue, for the means of meeting a peace expenditure, and upon loans, when we engage in war.

It has always been matter of regret to the most far-seeing of our Indian statesmen, that no financial provision should have been made in times of peace for the eventualities of war. "I have again and again," said Sir Thomas Munro,† "urged the expediency of lowering our land revenue, and of establishing a fixed and moderate assessment, because I am satisfied that this measure alone would be more effectual than all other measures combined, in promoting the improvement both of the country and the people. India should, like England, be relieved from a part of her burdens, whenever the state of affairs may permit such a change. The remission granted in time of peace, might be again imposed in war, and even something additional. Every state should have the means of raising extraordi-

* See Appendix to Commons' Report, p. 406.

† Life, vol. iii. p. 389; vol. ii. p. 255.

ary taxes in time of war. If it has not, it can only meet its expenses by reductions in times of peace, a resource which must soon fail, as it cannot, without danger, be carried beyond a certain limit.*

Having always lived beyond our income, we have never been able to relieve India of any of her burdens. Nay, we have rather increased than diminished them; if we have abolished some vexatious taxes which were laid on by our predecessors, and done away with a system of transit duties of our own devising, we have, on the other hand, imposed a salt tax, which obliges the people to pay four, five, and in some cases ten times as much for a necessary of life as they did under their native rulers, a tax from which none can escape, but which is felt most by the very poorest classes. We have, moreover, invented a stamp tax, a source of revenue unknown to native governments, which is, in fact, a tax upon justice, as it is from stamps used in legal proceedings that this source of revenue is mainly fed.

All attempts to extend the range of our taxation, or to innovate in taxation, have signally failed. It is well known that the natives of India,—the most patient on the face of the earth under burdens to which they are accustomed, revolt at once when attempts are made to impose new taxes upon them. Numerous instances of this occurred under the Native Governments, and our efforts to impose a tax upon houses at Benares, and a police tax at Bareilly, were met by a stubborn resistance, which ended in the defeat of the Government, after a good deal of blood had been spilt. A similar resistance was experienced upon our attempt a few years ago to double the price of salt in the Bombay territory, as a substitute for the tax upon trades and professions which we had abolished.

"The natives of India," said the great statesman† to whose authority we have so often referred, "are too intelligent and acute

* A striking proof of the danger of a reckless reduction of establishments in time of peace was afforded when Lord Hastings took charge of the government of India, in 1813. He found the army so reduced in numbers, as to be incapable of discharging their ordinary duties. Many Sepoys had demanded their discharge, in consequence of the heavy duties imposed upon them. Deep discontent prevailed in the native army, and a tone was assumed by native powers in their intercourse with the British Government, which was quite unprecedented. See Lord Hastings' summary of his Administration. Appendix to Report of Committee of House of Commons, August, 1832.

† Sir Thomas Munro.



to overlook any sources from whence the public revenue could with propriety be increased, and whenever they appear to have neglected the establishment of a productive tax, it will probably be found upon examination to have proceeded from attention to the prejudices of caste and religion."

If the Native Governments, therefore, were contented with a tax upon salt, not equal to a fourth of our impost, it was because they found that taxation could not be carried beyond a certain limit, and that a high tax upon land and a high tax upon salt were incompatible; that the one must be paid at the expense of the other. We cannot increase the price of salt; we cannot count confidently upon the maintenance of the opium revenue at its present standard. We cannot impose fresh taxes; we cannot with safety, even in time of profound peace, reduce our military establishments below a certain level. What, then, under these circumstances, are our financial prospects? "Very gloomy," say the Indian authorities,* "if we look only at the years of deficit; but if we look at the years of peace and of surplus, they are not discouraging. It is obvious, indeed," they say, "that the ordinary revenue of India is more than sufficient to meet ordinary demands upon it." But what would be the condition of an individual who in framing an estimate of his income and expenditure, should leave no margin for contingencies? Nations which are taxable, and whose credit is extensive, need not, in times of peace, make provision for such contingencies; but India, as we have seen, does not come within either of these categories; its income is fixed,—to a certain extent, precarious,—and its credit limited; and what must be the result if we continue to build expectations upon years of peace and of surplus, when excess of charge has been the rule, excess of revenue the rare exception, for the greatest part of a century?

"The restoration and re-establishment of peace upon a basis which we trust will prove lasting, will immediately bring the total expenditure within the revenue, and lead to a surplus in the next year."† This was the official language immediately after the first Sikh war; but the expectation was no sooner formed than crushed,‡ by a diminution in the receipts of 60 lacs, and an increase in the charges of 18 lacs, making a difference, the wrong way, of £700,000.

The strong hope expressed that all financial difficulties had "at

* Appendix, p. 480.

† Appendix, p. 436.

‡ Appendix, p. 443.



length been overcome by the establishment of peace throughout India," at the end of the first Sikh war, was disappointed by the breaking out of the second; but the same sanguine expectations were revived of enduring peace and financial prosperity the moment that contest was over. "This result will prevent the recurrence of such expensive and devastating wars as have lately prevailed."* The ink was hardly dry upon this sentence when the second Burmese war broke out, and with the news came "Estimates of the Revenues and Charges of India for the year 1851-2," from which it appears that the deficiency in that year amounted to 78,84,678 rupees, or upwards of £780,000.†

This was the deficit at the end of the second year of peace, and with this deficit we entered into another war. We have seen that a surplus revenue which had arisen in 1793-4 was converted into a deficit in three years, though these three were years of peace. We have seen that it was not until after twenty dreary years of deficits that a momentary surplus again appeared; that after ten years of uninterrupted peace,—principally by adventitious aids, and by precarious receipts—a surplus again was produced, that this surplus was gradually diminishing before it was extinguished by the breaking out of the Afghan war. From the year 1834-5 to the year 1850-51, the finances of India were assisted by adventitious receipts to the extent of upwards of twelve millions sterling.‡ These extra sources of supply are now completely exhausted, and India is thrown, for the first time, entirely upon its fixed revenues for means to meet its expenditure. We start then with an acknowledged deficit of upwards of £700,000, with a war, which cannot fail to add largely to that deficit, and with an increase of permanent charge of upwards of three millions. If we compare the financial state of India in the year 1850-51 with its state in 1837-8, the last year of the surplus, we have the following results:

| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Increase of revenue | £4,341,210 |
| „ of charge | 5,800,237 |
| „ of debt | 17,452,028 |
| „ interest upon ditto | 841,352 |

* Appendix, p. 486.

† Appendix, p. 486.

‡ From commercial assets

£11,252,897

Sundry receipts

1,566,888

12,819,780



If this increase of revenue had arisen from sources which are under our control, or if there was any reasonable prospect of our being able to reduce the charges even to a level with the receipts, our financial position would still be worse now than it was in 1837-8, when we had less revenue and lower charges. But the increase arises principally from opium,* a source of revenue which may be snatched from us at any time, and from the acquisition of territory which does not pay its expenses.

Within the last twelve years we have enlarged our territory by 167,013 square miles, which carries a population of 8,572,630 souls. Our principal acquisitions have been Scinde, the Punjab, and Sattara, the civil charges† of which go far to absorb the revenues, and which, including military charges, entail a heavy burden upon our finances. Scinde, when under its native princes, paid us a tribute of three lacs of rupees a-year, and Lahore a tribute of twenty lacs; if we add these to the total excess of charge over revenue, we shall find that

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| * OPIUM RECEIPTS . 1837-8 . . . | £1,487,291 |
| 1850-51 . . . | 2,700,662 |

1,213,361

† Comparative statements of revenues and charges for the years

| | 1837-8. | 1850-1. | INCREASE. |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Revenue | £14,288,128 | £18,629,328 | £4,341,210 |
| Charges | 13,507,237 | 19,308,047 | 5,800,810 |
| Debt | 33,355,536 | 50,807,564 | 17,452,028 |
| Interest on debt | 1,504,723 | 2,346,075 | |
| Surplus | 780,318 | Deficit 678,709 | Deficit 841,352 |

| REVENUE. | | CIVIL CHARGES. | MILITARY CHARGES. |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Punjab | R.1,30,05000 | 96,22000 | 40,00000* |
| Scinde | 27,00000 | 20,00000 | 20,00000 |
| Sattara | 20,00000 | 27,00000 | |
| Total | 1,77,00000 | 1,43,22000 | 60,00000 |
| | | | 1,43,22000 |
| | | Total Charges | 2,03,22000 |
| | | Excess of charge | 26,22000 |
| | | Add Tribute | 23,00000 |
| | | Net loss | 49,22000 |

* The military charges of the Punjab are not stated in the accounts, although there are three times as many men located there as in Scinde. We have set down the Military expenses at twice the amount of those of Scinde.



3. The moral advantages of a strict adherence to good faith, of a generous interpretation of treaties, and of a liberal course of policy towards our inferiors.
4. The risk, as experience warns us, that we run of only increasing our financial difficulties by extensions of our territories.
5. The magnitude of the task of adding to our dominions a greater area than that we already rule.
6. The evil effects which the immense extension of patronage at home, consequent on the further employment of European agency in our new acquisitions, may produce by increasing the power of home authorities.
7. The danger to England as well as to India which a successful resistance in any one case may originate and produce.
8. The injustice, the slaughter, and the cost of pursuing such a policy.
9. The hopelessness of promoting the improvement and happiness either of our old or our new territories by such means.

It is idle to urge that the countries and subjects of native princes would be benefited by the change. Such an argument, used as a rule of policy, would justify almost any aggression, and might, with equal validity, be applied to the destruction, as to the extension of our Indian Empire. There are, no doubt, Native States in India where few evidences can be seen of intelligence, spirit, or improvement in their governments. But the unhappiness and misery of their people is too large an inference to deduce from a state of apathy and indifference on the part of these Courts; caused chiefly, it may be, by our interference with the proper sphere of their duties. For even in ill ruled Native States the princes are under the controul, to a large extent, of native public opinion, of native public spirit, and, when necessary, of native public resistance; wherein lie their subjects' security. Nor is it to be forgotten, as evidence of the actual condition of the people of such States, that they are not *adscripti glebae*—they are not slaves. No extradition law follows them into our provinces; they may emigrate from oppression; they may fly from misrule; they may find, if they can, happiness and prosperity in the adjoining British territories. But, even from those principalities most seriously charged by us with bad government, the Ryots do *not* fly. On the contrary, there is a steady flow of emigration from British provinces,



into both the Nizam's and the King of Oude's territories. Yet people do not, either in India or in Ireland, by preference shun comfort and well doing, or shuffle on in misery and hardship.

But—finally—it is not ill ruled Native States that we have commenced to subvert. The Sattara State was prosperous and well-doing; its princes were prudent and economical; they spent their revenues beneficently on roads, bridges, and other public works; nor did they over spend themselves, for they had always large cash balances both in their public and private treasuries. Their administration drew down the applause of Residents, of the Bombay Government, of the Supreme Government, of the Court of Directors, of the Board of Controul; it produced them laudatory and flattering epistles, and procured for them complimentary presents of jewelled swords and model field-pieces. Better still, their rule was blessed with the contentment and the prosperity of their subjects; and “unquestionably,” said Sir George Clerk, in 1848, “a Native Government conducted as that of Sattara has been a source of strength to the British Government.” Neither the happy and prosperous condition of the country and people, nor the just and praiseworthy government of its princes, could, however, save Sattara. “I take this fitting opportunity,” said Lord Dalhousie, in pronouncing his unworthy sentence against it, “of recording my strong and deliberate opinion, that in the exercise of a wise and sound policy, the British Government is bound not to put aside or to neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves;”—and Sattara “fell, unwept, without a crime.” But though territory was acquired, revenue—fitting punishment for the greedy—has been lost. And, by the latest accounts, the new British functionaries there—disappointed of profit—are racking the Sattara ryots, are compelling the Sattara gentry to exhibit the titles of their estates, and are resuming lands in the proprietary archives of which they can discover, or imagine themselves to discover, any legal defects or insufficiencies.

It is not, therefore, to improve the condition of their people that Native States are to be overthrown. It is (in serious truth) to gratify a vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself; and may, if not *now* restrained by Parliamentary interference, endanger everything in India.



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CSL

121-57
LETTER

ON THE

SACRIFICE OF THE IMMENSE RESOURCES

OF

INDIA

UNDER THE

PRESENT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT,

AND THE NECESSITY OF

IMMEDIATE REFORM,

ADDRESSED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE

LIVERPOOL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

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1853.



Part - VII

CSL

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

OF LIVERPOOL.

GENTLEMEN,

It can hardly be necessary to offer an apology for calling your attention at the present moment to the affairs of India, because you are all aware that an opportunity which may not recur again for many years now presents itself, of urging upon Government the adoption of measures calculated to extend the trade between India and Great Britain. I cannot, however, help expressing my regret that an abler and more influential advocate has not undertaken this very important duty. If I should succeed in leading you to devote a portion of that energy and of those talents which have been so ably and so successfully directed to other subjects, I shall be satisfied to leave this question in your hands, with the conviction that what you undertake you will carry through with judgment and persevering resolution.



Although many of you are much better informed as to the actual position of Indian commerce than I am, it may probably be useful that I should, shortly state some facts showing the vast unexplored treasures we possess in the East, and which may at the same time remind us all of the awful responsibility which rests not only with the Government of Great Britain, but with every individual Englishman, for having tacitly sanctioned the anomalous system of government under which India is now ruled. And it becomes us seriously to consider, not only as merchants, but as members of this great empire, if we have done or are doing our duty towards the inhabitants of that great country.

In the following observations, however, I shall confine myself as much as possible to matters relating to the agriculture and commerce of India—and a few preliminary observations respecting the extent, soil, climate, and population may be neither misplaced nor uninteresting.

The soil and climate are of great variety: but in all parts of that vast continent there is abundance of rich virgin soil, capable when irrigated of producing two or more crops every year, and there are very few districts where ample supplies of water might not be procured at all seasons by means of canals, tanks, or wells. Indeed, few countries are so highly favoured by nature and so little by art.—Periodical monsoons supply at regular and known periods sufficient stores of water to render the labour of the husbandman easy and his success almost certain. Moderate and never-varying breezes at the



same time render the navigation of the seas secure, cheap, and expeditious. Months of dry weather, which succeed these fertilizing rains, not only ripen the crops, but enable the bullocks, with bales of merchandize and the bullock carts with small loads, to travel over unmade tracks, and pass dry-shod across the beds of rivers. For many hundreds of miles large navigable rivers are placed by the hand of nature at the disposal of man for enriching the soil and for enabling him to carry its fruits to distant lands.

The chief productions are cotton, wheat, Indian corn, rice, and other grain of great variety. Indigo, sugar, silk, opium, wool, coffee, spices, vegetables, and fruits of many kinds. Coal, ironstone, copper ore, and other minerals are also known to exist in abundance.

In a country where no agricultural statistics are kept it is impossible to ascertain the value or extent of its productions, but we may venture to form an estimate of some of them. It is, indeed, evident to all, that in order to support a population of 150,000,000 of inhabitants, their value must be very great; and it is no less clear that a little extra production in such a country may form the basis of a very extensive trade with foreign nations. If we take as an example the article of cotton, and if we allow only 5 lbs. of cotton wool as the annual consumption of each individual, and that in a country where no other kind of clothing is consumed is a low estimate, we shall find the consumption mount up to no less than 750,000,000 lbs., or, at 3 cwt.



per bale, to above 2,000,000 of bales. To this large quantity we must add the average of the exports, which may be taken at 400,000 bales, from which about 200,000 bales should be deducted as an equivalent for the quantity of cotton goods and yarn imported from Great Britain, leaving still about 2,200,000 bales as the average annual growth of cotton in India. It is more difficult to find data for estimating the quantities of grain, sugar, opium, &c., produced, but that they are very large cannot admit of a doubt.

In estimating the value of a country, the climate, soil, and extent are but the raw material; that which alone renders them productive and the country valuable is the number and character of its inhabitants. In casting a hasty glance at our Indian possessions, we are at once struck with the fact that they are inhabited, not like Australia, Africa, and many other parts of the globe, by a few scattered savage tribes, but by a numerous race of people, who had attained a high degree of civilization before Europe had emerged from barbarism. Remains of that civilization are yet to be seen in their physical appearance, in their manners, their intelligence, their literature, and in their architectural remains. It is true they do not now possess, as a nation, the energy, the sterling moral qualities, the physical strength, or the mechanical skill which we are blessed with; but if European nations be excepted, we shall find that they stand as high in the scale of civilization as any race of men in any part of the world.



The population and extent of this great country are thus given in a late publication :—

| | Area in Square Miles. | Population. | Revenue from Land. | Pop. per Square Mile. |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Under British rule.. | 676,177 | 101,862,916 | £15,204,055 | 150 |
| „ Native rule.. | 690,261 | 52,941,263 | 12,959,000 | 77 |
| Total. . . . | 1,366,438 | 154,804,179 | £28,163,055 | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Population per square mile in the North-western Provinces | 322 |
| „ „ Belgium | 328 |
| „ „ Great Britain..... | 221 |
| „ „ France | 169 |

What happy consequences must have been anticipated from such a country and such a people being placed under the guidance of the Anglo-Saxon race ; from the junction of an agricultural territory of such boundless resources to a commercial and manufacturing nation, of unexampled enterprise ! “The value of the annual exports of Great Britain,” says the English merchant to himself, “are equal to nearly £3 for each inhabitant. In the same proportion, the value of the productions exported from India ought to amount to £450,000,000 every year. We can consume hundreds of tons of her sugar, indigo, rice, silk, and saltpetre, and we can take her cotton to any extent, returning it to her again in the shape of cloth, giving bread to our people and clothes to our Indian brethren, and employment to our ships and seamen. We have machinery and steam power for weaving, India has the cultivators and land for growing cotton, without limits. Why should our looms ever stand idle, or the Indian expose his bare



back to the sun?" Alas! how cruelly have these hopes been blasted!

For many long years the East India Company not only assumed the despotic government of the people, and the proprietary right to the land, but monopolised the whole foreign trade of India. By great exertions, in which several of your illustrious fellow-citizens took an active part, the trade was thrown open, but the offspring of monopoly, it was stunted and unhealthy. In the year 1821, the first year of which I have any record, the total exports of cotton goods to India did not exceed £500,000. In 1852, they amounted to £5,000,000.

This prodigious increase is laid hold of by the rulers of India as an argument to prove the benefits conferred *by them* upon that country. But the people of India do not thank *them* for the blessings conferred upon them by this great increase of trade with England, for they know that their thanks are due not to the Indian governors, *but to the manufacturers of Manchester, and to the merchants and ship-owners of Liverpool.* Let us, however, hold the balance, and weigh, with impartial hand, the claims of both parties. First, then, we call upon "you men of the city of Manchester. What have you done to increase the trade with India?" "We," say they, "have improved our machinery and our steam engines—and, we can now sell a piece of white cotton cloth for 10s., which, thirty years ago, cost 25s., and a pound of cotton yarn for less than half what it then cost; we have, also, joined others in making railways and canals, by which our goods are conveyed from



our looms to the shipping ports in one-tenth of the time and at one-tenth of the expense incurred thirty years ago."

"Men of Liverpool, what have you done to swell this important trade?" We have greatly improved the models and economical management of our ships; and, instead of charging £20 a ton for carrying cotton goods to India as the East India Company did, we carry them for 20s. a ton in three-fourths of the time. Moreover, we despatch more ships to India in a week than the East India Company did in a year. We also bring the produce of India to Great Britain, a distance of 15,000 miles, at less cost than it can be brought 200 miles over the best roads of Hindostan."

"Honourable East India Company, what have you done to cause this great trade to prosper?" "Have you encouraged the agriculturist, by maintaining in repair the magnificent tanks and canals for irrigation left by your predecessors?" "No!" "Have you made railways, roads, bridges, quays, &c. for facilitating the operations of the merchants?" "No," "but we are encouraging others to make railways, and hope to see one hundred and thirty miles open, in different parts of India, in a few years." "Do you think that is doing much for a country half as large as Europe?" "No." "Have you improved the administration of justice, and established an efficient police for the protection of life and property?" "No." "Do you monopolise the salt trade?" "Yes." "Do you monopolise the opium trade?" "Yes." "Have you increased the import duties on British produc-



tions?" "Yes!" "Then, upon your own evidence are you condemned, not only of having done nothing to increase commerce, but of having done much to check its growth. To the British merchants and manufacturers is due all the praise for the rapid extension of this mutually beneficial traffic."

But there is a limit beyond which the skill and enterprise of the British merchant cannot go. He can deliver his merchandize on the shores of India at prices which, in the days of monopoly, would have appeared fabulous, and he can afford to give high prices for the productions of India delivered to him on board his ship. But he has no power by which he can expedite and cheapen the conveyance of his merchandize from his ship's side to the door of the native consumer in the interior; or of the productions of India from the fields where they grew to his ship. He cannot relieve the disheartened cultivator from the vexatious and excessive rack-rent levied by the officers of Government, or by the no less severe task-masters, the Zemeendars: he cannot repair and extend tanks, canals, and wells for irrigating and enriching the soil. In short, he can do nothing to invigorate the internal commerce and agriculture of our Indian possessions, which lie crippled and contracted under the iron claws of monopoly and despotism. For, extraordinary and incredible as it may appear, there exists in the capital of free and enlightened Britain a power more despotic in its character, more illiberal in its internal, more unscrupulous in its foreign policy, and depending more upon bayonets and cannon balls for



power is claimed by the Directors of the East India Company, but is, perhaps, more frequently wielded by the Board of Control; they levy from their subjects nearly £28,000,000 of taxes, keep on foot an army of upwards of 300,000 men, depose and imprison powerful sovereigns, almost without a remark from any member of the Imperial Parliament, and, apparently, without creating any interest in the minds of those who would sacrifice English blood and English treasure to release from prison the Madiai or even less conscientious individuals!

In one important point, the rulers of India differ from all other European despots, that not only do they exercise uncontrolled sway over the lives and properties of their subjects, but they have constituted themselves the *sole proprietors of the soil*. They claim the whole of India as their inheritance! and, as proprietors, they levy whatever amount of rent from the land they see fit, without check or hindrance of any kind whatsoever, except the ability of the cultivator to pay—a limit long ago reached. But with the rights, they are bound to assume the duties of landed proprietors; and in this country we are accustomed to consider that responsibility a heavy one, guided and controlled as the proprietor is by the competition and example of neighbours, by the impartial administration of just laws, and by a powerful public opinion. But the responsibility which attaches itself to that body of the state which has assumed not only the sole proprietary rights over a territory half as large as Europe, and with them the duties of a proprietor, but which possesses, moreover, the sole power of framing and administering laws for



so large a portion of the globe, is so prodigious, so overwhelming, that we can with difficulty conceive it.

India is essentially an agricultural country, and the prosperity of the commerce of India depends upon the capital, skill and enterprise of the agriculturist, quite as much as upon the degree of perfection to which the means of conveying agricultural produce and other merchandize from one part of the country to the other may have arrived, and the absence of all fiscal and other hindrances to her intercourse with foreign countries. But what is the position of the Indian agriculturist or ryot?

It is admitted by those best informed on the subject, that the cultivators of the soil are in a very impoverished and helpless state in all parts of India; that they have neither capital, intelligence, nor enterprise, that they are oppressed and despised by all, and are reduced to a state of hopeless pauperism. When such is the case in this country, we blame the proprietor of the soil; our laws, and still more, our public opinion, hold him responsible for the welfare of his dependents. With how much greater force will these just and humane maxims apply to those who are at one and the same time both proprietors and governors, legislative and administrative—"to whom much is given, from them shall much be required." The Government of India must therefore be held especially responsible for the welfare of the agricultural classes. I do not wish you to rest your opinion upon my assertion: but that you may satisfy yourselves that the cultivators of the soil are in a very miserable condition, I refer you to the evidence given before the Committee of the House of Commons.

them by the Tehsildars of six different talooks, because it included lands that had been relinquished, and others which were not liable to assessment; and because the lands bearing assessment were then re-measured with new ropes, shorter by one cubit than the legal measure; some of them were compelled, *by imprisonment and corporal punishment of various kinds*, to put their names to the dittums; and when others ran away from their talooks to avoid the like treatment, the curnums of the villages forged the names of those who had absconded to the dittums that were assigned to them; they who remained complained to the collector, who said the dittums should not be altered, and refused redress; and when the jumma-bundy came round, on their refusal to pay the excess of the assessment, the houses of the Ryots were stripped of their roofs; their ploughs, ploughing cattle, grain seed, and forage for their grazing cattle, were seized by attachment and sold by auction; some Ryots were arrested as security for the balance still unpaid from the proceeds of the auction; the houses of others were broken into and plundered by the peons, who were paid batta from the proceeds of the sales; their herd cattle were not permitted to graze; and their families prohibited taking water from the tanks and wells for domestic purposes."

Nor is even this all: "The abuses of the whole system," (again we quote from Mr. Campbell,) "and especially that of remissions, is something frightful; the opportunities of extortion, speculation, chicanery, and intrigue of all kinds are unbounded; while the reliance of the Madras collector on informers by no means mends the matter." So bad indeed is the system, he adds, that "if the collector were one of the Prophets, and remained in the same district to the age of Methuselah, he would not be fit for the duty." This is the state of things actually affecting—this the system under which now exist seventeen out of the twenty-two millions of people in the Madras Presidency; contributing nearly four millions sterling to the Government, which thus treats it and them.

In Bombay, where a sort of composite system prevails, things are not much better. "The receipts* have fallen off, and the country generally speaking is not prosperous." The cost of collection is enormous; not less than 55 per cent.; the surveys are partial and incorrect; settlement there is little or none; while whole classes are exempted, others are squeezed and oppressed to make up, if possible, yearly falling off receipts.

Mr. Saville Marriott passed nearly half a century in the Civil Service of Bombay, terminating his career in its highest office, that of



the Council of the Presidency, and, in 1846,* he thus summed up the fruits of his minute observation and wide experience, in almost every province of Western India :

"In elucidation of the position that this country (India) is verging to the lowest ebb of pauperism, I would adduce a fact pregnant with considerations of the most serious importance ; namely, that of late years a large portion of the public revenue has been paid by encroachment upon the capital of the country, small though that capital is in itself. I allude to the property of the peasantry, which consists of personal ornaments of the precious metals, and jewels, convertible, as occasions require, to profitable purposes and accommodation in agricultural pursuits, most frequently in the shape of pawn till the object has been obtained. I feel certain that an examination would establish that a considerable share of this and other property, even to cattle and household utensils, has been for ever alienated from its proprietors to make good the public revenue. In addition to this lamentable evidence of poverty, is another of equal force, to be seen in all parts of the country, in the numerous individuals of the above class of the community wandering about in search of the employment of hirelings, which they are glad to obtain even for the most scanty pittance. In short, almost everything forces to the conviction that we have before us a narrowing progress to utter pauperism."

Where Rent and Taxation are thus destroying Capital—defined by Political Economy to be the fund for the employment of Labour—well indeed might Mr. Marriott add, when examined before a Parliamentary Committee in 1848, that the condition of the cultivators was "very much depressed, greatly depressed, and I believe declining."

The Bombay Government received a revenue of £500,000 a-year from its Collectorate of Guzerat ; and after an absence of fourteen years, Mr. Giberne returned to it, as Judge, in 1840. Everywhere, he told the Commons' Committee on Cotton Cultivation in 1848, he remarked deterioration, and amongst all classes :

"I did not see so many of the more wealthy classes of the natives. The aristocracy, when we first had the country, used to have their gay carts, horses, and attendants, and a great deal of finery about them ; and there seemed to be an absence of all that. * * * * The Ryots all complained that they had had money once, but they had none now."

And in a private letter dated 1849, "written by a gentleman high in the Company's Service," and quoted in a pamphlet† published in 1851, the decay of Guzerat is thus described :

* "India: The Duty and Interest of England to inquire into its State," p. 12.

† "Letters on the Cotton and Roads of Western India," p. 15.



out, less by the pressure of occasional, and extraordinary expenditure, than by *continual progressive augmentations of charge in every department.*"

And again, as late as last year, the Court says :

"In our letter in this department of 19th August, 1846, we shewed that the expense of the civil establishments in Bengal had risen between the years 1830 and 1841, from 64 to 89 lacs of rupees per annum, and in our letter 9th October, 1850, No. 39, we pointed out that between February 1844, and December 1848, the net increase of civil salaries and establishments has exceeded 36 lacs of rupees per annum. Those additional charges necessarily augmented the annual deficit when it occurred."

It is not then merely from a war expenditure, that our finances are embarrassed, but from increased charges in all departments, and particularly in the European element in all departments; an increase which constantly progresses in spite of every effort to arrest it—not merely an increase of current expenditure, but an increase of dead weight upon the Revenue, in the shape of pensions, retiring allowances, &c. In 1839-40, the charge under this head, including off reckonings was £488,701; in 1849-50, it had increased to £614,303.

Two things are however confidently asserted: one, that our revenues have kept pace with our debts. The other, that those revenues have always been ample to satisfy the demands of a peace expenditure. But the official accounts tell us, that in 1792-3, before we commenced our career of territorial aggrandisement, the Revenue of India was £8,276,650, the debt £7,129,934, or less by more than a million sterling than the annual revenue; that after we had to all appearance finished that career, the revenue was £19,576,089, the debt £50,847,564, or equal to more than two and three-quarter years of the revenue."

The opinion that the "Indian revenues under ordinary circumstances are not only ample to cover all necessary expenditure, but sufficient to yield a considerable surplus towards the liquidation of debt contracted in war,"* appears to be founded upon a fact, and upon an assumption—the fact that "in the three years prior to the

* Letter from the Court of Directors, June 1862. Appendix to Commons' Report, p. 484.



expedition to Afghanistan, there was an average surplus of upwards of a million sterling—the assumption, that the opium revenue will continue to be as productive as it has been for the last eight years. If, however, we look narrowly into the sources of this surplus, we shall find them to have been in a great measure casual and precarious.* We had a surplus of nearly a million sterling in the year 1793-4, but this gradually melted away, and was converted into a deficit in 1797-8, although these were years of profound peace. From 1806 to 1814, we had a long interval of peace, but no surplus revenue. From 1818 to 1824, and from 1826 to 1836 we had peace, and although the finances of India had been assisted from the commercial revenues of the Company, to the extent of nearly five millions, yet the revenue was found insufficient to meet the demands of a peace expenditure, and in 1834-5, the deficit amounted to £194,477.

But from 1834 to 1836, “a rapid reduction was effected in the debt of India, by the application of a portion of the Company’s commercial assets to that object,”† and it was in the reduction of a charge for interest upon debt, effected by this adventitious aid, that the foundation of a surplus was laid. The surplus amounted in three years to £3,470,054, which was almost wholly made up by reductions in charge for interest, increase in the revenue from opium—and from the Government bank at Madras.‡

It was not then from any increase in the permanent sources of revenue, but from adventitious aids, and from precarious and casual receipts, that a surplus was created in those three years. There was, indeed, an actual decline in the permanent sources of revenue in the

* Tucker on India Finance.

† Appendix to Commons’ Report, 1852, p. 485.

| | 1834-5. | 1835-6. | 1836-7. | 1837-8. |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Interest upon debt | 1,774,153 | 1,655,287 | 1,345,619 | 1,365,382 |
| Opium revenue | 728,517 | 1,399,009 | 1,439,031 | 1,487,291 |
| Government Bank, Madras | “ | 86,612 | 12,599 | 9,297 |

Total surplus for three years £3,470,054

From reduction of interest upon debt 956,171

From increase of opium revenue 2,139,780

From Madras Bank 108,508

£3,204,459



Financial Letter of 1852, which will be found at page 449 of the Appendix to the Report of the House of Commons' Committee of last year, you will find a statement of the quantity of salt sold in Bengal in each year, downwards, from 1841-42, and it will then appear that the sales in the last year were 62,76,276 maunds, which was more than a sixth above the quantity sold ten years before. Mr. Blackett, who has largely availed himself of this document, stated that the revenue derived from salt had fallen off; but he omitted to mention that this had been occasioned solely by a reduction of the duty. The consumption has increased under the operation of this milder impost. The average of sales during the five years ending 1845-46, was 57,17,945 maunds; the average of the next five, ending 1850-51, was 62,90,355. The East-India Company would thus appear to be placed in rather a difficult position. If they maintain a high rate of duty on salt, they are charged with imposing an insupportable tax on one of the great necessities of life. If they reduce the duty, they are taunted with a loss of revenue, and declared unworthy of holding the Government.

The impost on salt in India, whether duty or excise, though heavy, is perhaps less felt by the great body of the people than any other tax of equivalent value would be. There is also less of the baneful interference of native agency, and consequently less of oppression in the collection of this tax than we could possibly secure in regard to any other tax. Within the present century there was a tax of 600 per cent.



on all salt in England; but other sources of taxation have been found, and the country has been released from this burden. In India the tax may be considered about 200 per cent. upon the prime cost of the article, and there can be no question that as soon as means have been discovered to raise a corresponding sum, with equal ease, and as light a pressure on the people, the Government of India will be but too happy to follow the example which has been set in England. At present, however, I can see no other mode of raising £2,740,000 a year—the product of the tax—which would not be likely to create an insurrection.

Considerable stress has been laid on the insecurity of property in the six or seven districts of Lower Bengal, from the depredations of dacoits; and it is an unquestionable indication of the weakness and inefficiency of the Government. Dacoity is the normal crime of Bengal; it was the great difficulty of the Mahomedan Government of 1753, and it is the difficulty of the British administration in 1853. But you will be delighted to hear that Government has now taken the field in earnest against these depredators, and adopted the same stringent means for extirpating them which have been found so efficacious in regard to the Thugs. You have also quoted an article from the *Friend of India*, relative to the recent case of a zemindar having collected together a body of armed retainers, and fought out his quarrel with his opponent. The circumstance was said to be “trifling,” and you very justly appealed to the House whether “they could



conceive a state of society in a country under the government of England, where a scene of such violence could be considered trifling." This word was intended simply to convey the idea that such conflicts were of such ordinary occurrence that they attracted little attention, and were, therefore, considered matters of little importance. Such a state of things in a country under British rule is greatly to be deprecated. It is very discreditable to our administration that any such power above the laws should be allowed for a moment to exist; that the great landholders should be able to wage war with each other, and with the indigo-planters, and to break the peace of society, with impunity; for in not one instance out of ten is the zemindar himself, who collects this brigade of armed men, and sends them to do battle with an opponent, brought to justice. Such scenes rarely, if ever, occur in the North-west Provinces, and they are now unknown in the Punjab.

This state of things arises from the comparative weakness of the Government, and the blame of that feebleness lies at the door of Parliament, which, in 1833, enacted that the Government of Bengal should, in the absence of the Governor-General, be made over to one of the Members of Council. It is this fatal arrangement, under the operation of which the Governor of Bengal has been changed eleven times in eighteen years, which has weakened the powers of Government in this, the largest and most opulent, the oldest and most important of our possessions. Under such a system of perpetual



mutations, it was impossible for the Government of Bengal to exhibit that sustained and uninterrupted energy which is necessary to cope with such great evils. Give to this much-neglected province, which contains a population of more than thirty millions of inhabitants, and yields a gross revenue of ten millions sterling, the benefit of the same system of government which has proved so beneficial in the Agra Presidency; place it under the charge of an officer of great talent, long experience, and undaunted firmness; entrust him with adequate powers, and guarantee him all necessary support, and the depredations of the dacoits by night, and the civil wars of the zemindars by day, will become mere matter of history in three years. But the new Governor of Bengal will require all the support Government can give him; in his arduous career of reformation, he will encounter the most formidable opposition. Those who thus disturb the peace of society are the Landholders of Bengal, who have sent up a memorial to Parliament, which recommends a transfer of the powers of Government to their hands. Some of those whose names appear to that petition, and possibly, also, of those who have assisted in getting it up, are the men who have been most extensively engaged in these disgraceful scenes. Whenever the arm of Government is vigorously stretched forth to put down this system of outrage, and to constrain the zemindars to reduce their forces to a peace establishment, and an example has been made of the most impudent and violent of them, a great outcry will be raised about the violation of the



liberty of the subject, and the Government will be assailed with a storm of obloquy. It will be necessary, therefore, not only to appoint a separate Governor of Bengal, but to afford him unflinching support in the honest and vigorous discharge of the duties committed to him.

In the remarks which you have made on the deficiency of Roads in India, and more particularly in Bengal, you have only echoed the opinion of every friend of India, both in and out of the service. The importance of constructing roads in every province has not been sufficiently appreciated by the Government of India; and it is to be hoped that the present discussions will give a new impulse to this department of labour. But the deficiency has been in some degree exaggerated. The same may be said with regard to Canals. It is greatly to be regretted that there should have been any hesitation in sanctioning the construction of canals of irrigation at the Madras Presidency, and that the great works which were recommended on the Kistna, were not commenced and completed in time to prevent the great loss of life which was occasioned by famines. But while we are required to reprobate the deficiencies of Government in some provinces, it is only matter of equity to take into consideration what has been effected in other quarters. You have quoted, with manifest approbation, a letter from a gentleman who had been in the Company's service, and who says, "What abominations, villainies, and idiotcies there still are in our system! It is quite clear that no radical improvement can



take place till some influences can be applied to stimulate our rulers to more healthy, wholesome action ; health can never be looked for in a body constituted as the Court of Directors now is ; nothing but torpid disease can be expected as matters now stand." It is not surely in the morbid spirit of this letter-writer, or in reliance on the accuracy of his views, that Parliament will be justified in legislating for India. Though some important interests have been neglected, nothing can be more fallacious than the assertions, or less commendable than the tone of this epistle. It is not all barrenness from Dan to Beersheba. While there are some districts almost without roads, there are others in the south with 700 miles of excellent roads, traversed night and day by carts and carriages ; and even the district of Cawnpore, which has, so unaccountably, been brought forward in condemnation of the Government of India, is intersected by 500 miles of good road, which are always kept in repair. If the object of the opponents of the Company on this occasion had been to strike a fair balance between short-comings on the one hand, and successful exertions on the other, and to place the question in a correct light, some mention, however slight, would have been made of the great trunk-road from Calcutta to Kurnal, which will be completed to Peshawur, on the borders of Affghanistan, in two years more, which extends 1,430 miles in length, and upon which more than a million sterling has been already expended. This road, which may vie with the boasted Roman roads, is smooth as a



bowling-green, bridged throughout, with the exception of the impracticable Soane, and is protected by a special police from one end to the other in such a manner as to render life and property perfectly secure. It is a work of which even the most civilized nation might feel proud. Some brief and passing allusion might, also, have been made, had justice been the object of the correspondent, to the Ganges Canal, the most magnificent work ever undertaken in India—even if it be not the greatest enterprise of its kind in the world. There we have indeed acted on Brindley's assertion, that rivers were made to feed canals. It traverses with its branches more than 800 miles, and will provide the means of irrigation for five millions and a half of acres, and increase the fertility of the land to the extent of a million sterling a year; and, what is of far more importance, prevent the possibility of the recurrence of those famines which have so often desolated the North-west Provinces. This gigantic undertaking, the cost of which is a million and a half sterling, is the work of the last eight years. Is this noble canal,—is the canal of the Punjab, 450 miles in length,—is the great trunk-road, to be considered as exemplifying the statement of the letter-writer, that “nothing but torpid disease can be expected as matters now stand?”

In reference to the administration of justice in India, you have stated that “as far as you were able to understand, there appeared to be throughout the whole of India, on the part of the European population, an absolute terror of coming under the Company's courts.” You quoted the opinion of a



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gentleman who had seen a long period of service in India, that "it was hopeless to expect that Englishmen would ever invest their property in India, under any circumstances which placed their interests at the disposal of those courts;" and you stated that "what you wanted to show was, that the reason why so little was done with India by Englishmen was, that there did not exist in that country the same security for their investments as in almost every other country in the world." That the administration of civil justice in India is lamentably defective, will be readily admitted by every one who is acquainted with the state of the laws and the courts. In the older provinces, the system of legal procedure was borrowed from the English courts at a time when English law was considered the perfection of reason, and the Indian courts unhappily retain too much of the system after public confidence in it has been shaken, if not destroyed, in England. The legal procedure in the older provinces is technical, tedious, and complicated, and affords the largest scope for the exercise of that chicanery in which the natives excel every other people. Every suit is a game, in which success falls to the lot of the most skilful and the most unscrupulous. In addition to the inherent evils of the system, we have that great and insuperable obstacle to the cause of justice to cope with, the total absence of all truth in the community. If the laws in India were brought to perfection; if the code of procedure were rendered as simple and efficient as human ingenuity could devise; if all the judges,



European and native, were perfectly qualified for their duties, still, so long as no confidence whatever could be placed in any oral testimony, and the witnesses were always ready to swear to any falsehood, the administration of justice must continue to be unsatisfactory. The difficulties which have been experienced in all attempts at legal reform in England, may serve to moderate our indignation at the tardiness of legal improvements in India. But all experience disproves the assertion, that "it is hopeless to expect that Englishmen would ever invest their property in India under any circumstances which placed their interests at the disposal of those courts." Undeterred by the villany of the courts, they have already invested property to the extent of more than a million sterling in indigo-factories. Some eight or ten years ago, there appeared to be an opening for the remunerative employment of capital in sugar-works, and steam-engines and sugar-machinery were set up in every direction with the utmost avidity, but with little judgment. More recently, a Bengal Indigo Company was formed in London, and many gentlemen who had passed their lives in India, and were thoroughly acquainted with the character of the courts, lavishly invested their money in it. These speculations failed, not from the nefarious proceedings of the courts, which are said to be so great a terror to Englishmen, but from their own intrinsic unsoundness, and the extraordinary conduct, — I do not say roguery,—of European agents. It is the mistrust of Calcutta morality, not the atrocities of



the tribunals, which forms the great obstacle to the investment of property by Europeans in India.

Another misdemeanor of the present Government of India, and another reason for transferring the administration to the Crown, is, it seems, the very small number of Europeans who have settled in India, and who do not exceed 6,749 at the Presidency which offers the greatest attractions. The smallness of the number is, of course, owing to the misgovernment of the country. But every one who has resided in India must be perfectly aware that it is the state of the thermometer, and not the state of the government, which prevents the settlement of Europeans in that country. The climate is altogether unsuited to European habits and feelings, and it requires no ordinary spring of activity to resist its enervating effects. It is vain to hope that our countrymen will ever be induced to plant the hopes of their families in so uncongenial a soil, where the European constitution both in mind and body so inevitably and rapidly degenerates. It has been asserted that a European family in India would become extinct in the third generation, unless it was reinvigorated by long intervals of residence in England. How far this opinion may be correct, we have no means of ascertaining; but it is indisputable that the children of an English family, with India for its home, would soon lose all that spirit and energy, and also that high tone of morals which distinguishes the European character. All hope of colonization must be dismissed when no parent can reconcile it with his duty to allow his



children to grow up amidst the degrading connections of the East, and when his first object is to remove them to England to be trained up in the healthy associations of his native land. If all the institutions of Government were carried to a degree of even ideal perfection in India, it would afford an Englishman little inducement to settle his family in the East.

The increase of the import and export trade of India, more especially with England, during the period of the present charter, is naturally regarded by those who feel a real interest in the country, as a subject of delight, and it is painful to perceive anything like a disposition to undervalue it, as having grown up under the government of the Court of Directors. You remark that "the exports to India had certainly increased very much, because they started from nothing at all; and before the opening of the trade, the Court of Proprietors, by resolution, declared that it was quite a delusion to suppose it possible to increase the trade with India." That so erroneous an opinion was entertained forty years ago, before the opening of the trade, is matter of historical record; and, if my recollection be not incorrect, no one adopted it with more confidence than George Canning. But it is scarcely more reasonable to adduce this hallucination in disparagement of the astonishing growth of this trade, than it would be to quote against the present establishment of railways throughout the United Kingdom, the opinion so solemnly pronounced by one of the first periodical publications of the day, while they



were yet in embryo, that it was ridiculous to suppose it possible to attain a greater speed than twelve miles an hour. The increase of the trade of India since 1833, exhibits a picture of prosperity, on which the eye of every Englishman, and more particularly of every Lancashireman, may dwell with satisfaction. I possess only an imperfect return of the trade of Bombay, and none of that of Madras; but in the Bengal Presidency, the account stands thus :—

| | 1833-34. | 1851-52. |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| | £. | £. |
| Imports | 2,543,000 | 9,247,000 |
| Exports | 4,288,000 | 11,040,000 |

The entire trade of Calcutta has, therefore, increased in about eighteen years, from a sum a little under *seven* millions to more than *twenty* millions sterling; and yet, one of the members of the India Reform Association assured Parliament, that the East-India Company “had placed obstacles of every description in the way of the progress of British commerce.” The exports from England to Bengal exhibit even a greater increase than that of the trade generally. They started in 1833, not from “nothing at all,” as you have been led to suppose, but from £1,399,000, and in the course of eighteen years have risen to £6,515,000. Surely an augmented consumption of five millions sterling annually of British manufactures by the inhabitants of one Presidency, is something not to be despised, even though it should be only at the rate of 1s. 3d. per head per annum.



As it regards the employment of natives in the service of Government, allusion has been made to the liberal and enlightened enactment in the last Charter, which declared that no native of our Indian empire should, by reason of his colour, his descent, or his religion, be incapable of holding office; and it has been affirmed by Mr. Cameron, as quoted by you, "that during the twenty years which have since elapsed, not one of the natives has been appointed to any office, except such as they were eligible to before the statute;" and also that the Company "had not shown any disposition to make the natives fit, by the highest European education, for admission to their covenanted service." Mr. Cameron is evidently alluding to the non-admission of natives to the covenanted civil service, which he considers a grievance. It is a fact that the Court of Directors have exhibited a strong indisposition to open that service to them. Perhaps they were injudicious in manifesting any disinclination to place the natives upon a footing of perfect equality with what is considered the highest patrician service of the state. They do not, however, stand alone in this feeling either in India or in England, and it is quite possible to consider the natives as not yet prepared for such association, without incurring the charge of illiberality. But, with this exception, the Company have manifested no disposition to confine the natives to offices of inferior importance. During the currency of the present Charter, they have been appointed to the office of deputy magistrates, with powers but little inferior to that of the European



magistrates. Of the three magistrates of Calcutta, one is a native; of the three judges of the Small Cause Court, one is also a native; and it was after the passing of the Act of 1833, that the entire cognizance of all suits, of whatever value, was made over to native judges; and that the value of all the suits in the Principal Sudder Ameen's court, amounted in one year to no less than seven millions sterling. The Government of India has enlarged the powers of the native judges in proportion to the increase of their qualifications, and it is to be hoped that situations of still higher value, and of larger emolument, will be opened to them in the course of time. It would be advantageous to the cause of justice, and also a just recognition of the extraordinary talent for judicial investigations which the natives have exhibited, to place the ablest native officer on the bench of the remodelled Sudder Court, or court of highest jurisdiction in the country. But at the risk of being considered a monster of illiberality, I must confess that I should hesitate, as yet, to introduce them either into the Executive or the Legislative councils. They do not appear to exhibit that grasp of thought, that strength and independence of character, or that soundness of judgment, which is required for governing a great empire. The government of India must be conducted on those elevated principles which have hitherto made but little progress among the natives. They are, moreover, totally devoid of all confidence in each other. However immaculate a native Member of Council might be, it would be exceedingly difficult, perhaps



impossible, to convince his fellow-countrymen that he was impervious to pecuniary considerations. His residence would become the great focus of intrigue, his evening levees would be crowded with sycophants, and his own servants would reap a rich harvest from their real or supposed influence over him. The appointment would tend to impair the character of the Supreme Council in public estimation, and become a source of anxiety and weakness. For the present, therefore, it is the European mind which must regulate the Government of India, at the same time that the natives are employed, to an enlarged degree, in the administration of its institutions. As regards the indisposition which Mr. Cameron attributes to the Company, to make the natives fit, by the highest European education, for admission to their civil service, he is evidently alluding to his plan of the University of Calcutta, which the Court of Directors refused to sanction. It is to be hoped that the establishment of a University at each Presidency will be placed beyond doubt before Parliament has completed its legislation; but a reference to the *curriculum* of studies pursued in the Hindoo College, which was matured under Mr. Cameron's own directions, and embraces the departments of English literature, mental and moral philosophy, history, mathematics, and natural philosophy, political economy, and logic, will show that it includes nearly all the branches of education which are considered a necessary qualification for admission to the civil service. The regulation of the studies of the natives in the Government colleges in India



has been left almost exclusively in the hands of the Committee of Public Instruction; and if the sanction of the Court of Directors had been required to any plan for enlarging the sphere of instruction, there is no reason to believe that it would have been for a moment withheld.

You have further stated that you found that "while Government had overthrown almost entirely the native education that had subsisted throughout the country so universally, that a schoolmaster was as regular a feature in every village as the 'potail,' or head man, it had done next to nothing to supply the deficiency which had been created, or to substitute a better system. Out of a population of 100,000,000 of natives, we instructed but 25,000 children; out of a gross revenue of twenty-nine millions sterling, extracted from that population, we spent but £66,000 on their education."

From the employment of the word "potail," in this reference to indigenous schools, which the Company's Government is said to have subverted, it is probable that you had your eye on Bombay, and, if your information be correct, there must be some statistics relative to vernacular education at that Presidency which I have not seen; but it has never been the policy of the Indian Government to overthrow any educational institutions which were found to be in existence. With regard to the Gangetic provinces, comprising two-thirds of the empire, in point of wealth and population, I will venture to assert, without fear of contradiction, that for one village with a school there were twenty without one, and



That the proportion of the population capable of reading and writing, has not, for the last century, exceeded five or six per cent.; that all the schools have been supported by fees from the scholars, and not from the State; and that Government has in no single instance overthrown one of them. It is just possible that you may have been dwelling on the resolution of Lord William Bentinck eighteen years ago, to curtail the encouragement given by Government to the study of the Hindoo shastrus. In that movement he was cordially seconded by Mr. Macaulay, who described the sacred literature of the Hindoos as teaching "astronomy, which would move laughter in girls at a boarding-school; history, abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns 30,000 years long; and geography made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter." Lord William resolved to transfer the Government patronage from this kind of instruction to English literature and European science, and there are few who will doubt that he exercised a wise discretion, and that what he gave the natives was of more value and utility than that which his plans withheld from them.

Regarding the number under instruction, the statement you have given may be near the truth; but the comparative paucity of scholars is to be attributed in a great measure to the system of instruction adopted by Government. After long and anxious deliberation, it was deemed more advisable to give the highest possible culture to a limited number, than to afford an ordinary and incomplete education to a larger mass. I have



always considered it an error to confine education to the higher orders, and I could wish that it had been more generally diffused among the other classes of society, in which case the number of scholars would have been more than quadrupled. But this is matter of opinion. As to the sum devoted to the object of education, it is so niggardly and contemptible, and so unworthy of a great Government, that I abandon it most cordially to your indignation. It is true that Parliament originally voted only £10,000 for the education of the whole empire, and that the Court of Directors have subsequently enlarged it to £66,000; but if you will move the augmentation of this sum fivefold, I hope your proposal will be carried by acclamation.

The next subject treated of in your speech is, the finances of India, and the whole question may be summed up in one short and gloomy sentence. With the exception of two transient gleams of sunshine, we have had a constant deficit for fifteen years, and an increasing debt. During the present Charter, the debt has increased £15,344,000. Of this sum, the proportion in hand in the various treasuries in India is about Five millions, and the amount actually expended, over and above the revenues drawn from the country, a little more than Ten millions sterling. The sum in hand, which has been so strangely overlooked in these discussions, is ascertained by comparing the cash balances in 1834-35, with those of 1851-52. At that former epoch, when the Charter arrangements began, the amount in the vaults of the various treasuries was £8,384,600;



on the 30th of April, 1852, it was £13,840,000. It was the possession of this large cash balance which encouraged the Court of Directors to attempt to reduce the pressure of the debt by converting the five per cents. into fours—the only kind of conversion which has ever been patronized in Leadenhall-street. Whether they will be able to complete this financial operation, now that the Burmese refuse to make peace, and the Chinese cabinet menaces the opium revenue, is another question. Be that as it may, the amount of borrowed capital actually expended for the purposes of the State, during the period under review, amounts to a little under ten millions sterling; and as the sum paid for the dividends in London since 1834 has been £10,080,000, advantage has been taken of this accidental coincidence of figures to represent the whole of the dividends as having been paid from borrowed funds. In other words, that the debt has been incurred to pay those whom you designate as “the amiable traders and gentlemen whose votes returned to Leadenhall-street those immaculate Directors whom the Government is so desirous of cherishing.” In the warfare now waged against the Court of Directors, perhaps it may be deemed allowable to employ this kind of argument against them, although it cannot be considered strictly legitimate, after Parliament had decreed that the dividends should be paid from the revenues of India, and when one of the charges against the Company is, that it has not only made unnecessary wars, but got into debt to prosecute them.



Supposing, however, that the dividends have been paid out of the loans, to whom is India indebted for this burden but to Parliament? In 1833, the merchants and manufacturers of England came forward and demanded the extinction of the Company's commercial privileges, and the opening of the trade to China. Parliament acceded to the demand, and as an equivalent for the trade which had hitherto supplied the dividends, saddled the revenues of India with the payment of them, for forty years, at the rate of £650,000 a year. Had no such arrangement been made by Parliament twenty years ago, the finances of India would have presented a very different appearance, notwithstanding the extensive wars in which we have been engaged. But it is scarcely just to look at the increase of the debt, which has been incurred in enlarging and consolidating the empire, without also considering the difference of the proportion which it bears, at the end of eighteen years, to the annual income. In 1834, the debt was thirty-eight millions, and the gross revenue eighteen millions and a half. In the past year, the debt had risen to fifty-three millions and a quarter, while the revenue had increased to twenty-nine millions. The debt has therefore increased 40 per cent., while the income has in the same period been augmented to the extent of 55 per cent. A debt which is less than the income of two years, can scarcely be an object of surprise and alarm in a country where the national debt exceeds the annual revenue of fifteen years.



Against this debt, moreover, must be placed the fact that a mighty empire has been added to the national domains, with a population of a hundred millions of subjects, and extending more than two thousand miles from north to south, and over nearly the same expanse from east to west, which affords a market for nine millions sterling of English exports a year, and gives the means of honourable subsistence, and often of independence, to the extent of four millions sterling annually, to five thousand of the sons of the educated classes of our native land, and employs two hundred and fifty thousand tons of British shipping, without having entailed one shilling of expense on the exchequer of England. No one will, of course, venture to affirm that the acquisition of these advantages would justify the conquest of India; but when we sit down to calculate the cost which has been incurred, we must also bring into the account the advantages which have been obtained.

You have further stated that "from one end of India to another, with very trifling exceptions, there was no such thing as a steam-engine; but this poor population, without a steam-engine, without anything like first-rate tools, were called upon to bear the very heaviest taxation under which any people ever suffered, with the same means of paying it." Yet, the steam-engines in Bengal consume 100,000 tons of coal annually, drawn from the mines of Burdwan; but, admitting that the steam-machinery in India will bear no kind of comparison with the colossal establishments at home,



because we can import cheaper than we can manufacture, which is a happy circumstance for England, it is still a consolation to find that the taxation of the country is on the same humble scale. In England, covered as it is with steam-engines, and enveloped in an atmosphere of smoke, the taxes are at the rate of about forty shillings a head per annum. In India, where we have so few steam-engines, and such second-rate tools, it is at the rate—deducting the opium revenue, which is derived from China—of five shillings a head.

In the course of the debate several other members of the India Reform Association delivered their opinions on the delinquencies of the Indian administration; and a brief reference to some of them may be advantageous to the cause of truth. Mr. Phillimore asserted that “there was no loss or hardship to which a respectable native would not submit rather than expose himself to the accidents of a law court, because he regarded his appearance there as a preliminary to his ruin, and as the certain badge of discredit. They,”—that is, Parliament,—“could not retain their power in India much longer with such an administration as that he had described.” This is a most extraordinary assertion to hazard, in regard to a people who are proverbially the most litigious on earth. I speak more particularly in reference to the provinces through which the Ganges flows, though the remark will apply, more or less, to all other parts of the country; and I will venture to affirm that, so far is it from being the case that the native is anxious, above all things, to avoid

the accidents of a lawsuit, that the great difficulty is to keep him out of the courts. There are, of course, exceptions; but, as a general rule, an opulent zemindar considers it as natural that he should go to law as that he should succeed to his patrimony. There are few who have not legal agents established in the courts of the district, with a whole company of witnesses ready to support them by swearing to anything that may be desired. There are not a few among the natives who have been known to measure their dignity by the number of suits in which they had the courage to embark. Every suit is a game, the various turns and phases of which become an object of intense interest to the zemindar and his retainers, and the whole neighbourhood. A great lawsuit between two opulent and unscrupulous men affords something like the same excitement to the community at large, which a tournament formerly did in England. It becomes the theme of discussion in fifty circles. So delightful and animating is the feeling which I have often witnessed among the natives, even at the uncertainties of a lawsuit, that I have sometimes been led to suspect that any reform of the law which should shorten the duration of suits, and render them more simple and summary, would create something similar to a feeling of disappointment. Mr. Phillimore has evidently mistaken the repugnance of a respectable native to appear personally in the courts, for a dread of his being involved in legal proceedings. That repugnance is almost incredibly intense. The native, who may



have a dozen lawsuits on hand, and who rejoices in the influence which his wealth gives him in the courts, considers it the last indignity to be constrained to make his appearance in them, even as a witness, though he were certain of being treated with the consideration due to his rank. It is a morbid feeling, which leads a native to consider that the real dignity of his position in society consists in his not being obliged to appear in any court, like inferior mortals. This is a great obstruction to the cause of justice; and a draft of an Act was promulgated about a twelve-month ago, to constrain the appearance of both plaintiff and defendant, when necessary, in any civil suit; but the members of the British India Association, who have now appealed to Government against the evils of the courts, offered the most strenuous opposition to this measure, as being incompatible with the honour of the upper classes; but it is to be hoped that the Legislative Council will have the courage to insist upon establishing the principle, with whatever restrictions may be necessary to guard respectable natives from injury.

Mr. Phillimore has quoted a passage from Holwell, in which it is stated "that under the native rule property and liberty were safe, robberies unheard of, whether public or private, and travellers were escorted on their journeys from place to place by guards who were responsible for their security." Holwell is about the last authority which any one who valued his own reputation would venture to quote on the character of the Mahomedan rule, of



which he had little personal knowledge besides the horrors of the Black Hole, in which he was immured. He knew nothing about the country or its government. The quotation was altogether irrelevant, and would have excited little attention, if Mr. Phillimore had not proceeded to add, "that once happy country at this moment is one dead level of uniform misery, in which all are involved alike; and in the richest country in the world, from the conduct of the Government the House was asked to support, he defied any one to point out a rich resident proprietor." As to those halcyon days which Mr. Holwell describes, it is a fact, which he did not perhaps know—for it was not published till some years after the date of his book,—that not fifty years before he wrote, the most renowned of the viceroys of Bengal had a pond filled with ordure, through which the most respectable landholders were dragged when they delayed to pay up the instalments of revenue. What security could there have been for life or property, when the fairest provinces of Bengal were for twelve years ravaged by the Marhattas? The tradition of these atrocities is not yet effaced from the memory of the people, after the lapse of more than a century. But this earthly paradise is now "one dead level of uniform misery, and there is not one wealthy proprietor left." It is at least some alleviation of this misery, that the natives of Bengal have not seen the smoke of an enemy's camp for nearly a century. But what is the real state of the case? In this ruined country there are hundreds of proprietors with rent-rolls varying



from £500 to £15,000 a year; and within seventy miles of Calcutta one wealthy proprietor maintains a princely establishment, on a scale of magnificence to which there is nothing comparable among the nobles of England. Scarcely a year passes in which men are not seen to spring up and take a high position in society, who began life with sixpence a day, and are found to have accumulated by industry and perseverance a hundred thousand pounds sterling. In that ruined country, the natives have invested more than sixteen millions sterling of their property in Government securities. But "the working of the administration," we are told, "may be judged by the single fact, that from 1834 to 1850 £60,000,000 of arrears of rent were remitted to the inhabitants, and in Bengal one-tenth of the land was set up to sale to pay off those arrears." This single fact is a most extraordinary error. When Mr. Phillimore is better acquainted with the accounts, he will find that of 345 millions sterling, the amount of the demand of land revenue since 1833-34, the remissions have not amounted to even three millions and a half, or one per cent.; and these remissions have been made, not because the assessment was exorbitant, but to relieve the injury occasioned by drought or inundation. When Mr. Anstey, a year or two ago, stated in the House that nine-tenths of the agricultural population were annually sold up, I examined the revenue returns, and found that out of an annual rent of £7,756,800, at both divisions of the Presidency, the quantity of land sold in the year for arrears was of the annual

rent of £40,800—that is, a little more than *one-half* per cent. Mr. Blackett, another member of the India Reform Association, asked if the House could believe that the cost of collecting the revenue of £19,576,089, amounted to the enormous sum of £5,810,644. It would certainly require no ordinary amount of credulity to believe anything so preposterous; and it is difficult to discover where the honourable member can have obtained his figures. He has evidently confounded the prime cost of the two articles of salt and opium, with the expense of collecting Indian revenue; but, after deducting the sum of £1,746,800, expended in the manufacture of salt and the cultivation of opium, he is still more than two millions ahead of the truth. The papers published by Parliament in May last demonstrate that the actual cost of collecting the revenue of £20,367,000, derived from land, customs, stamps, and excise, was £2,059,000,—not twenty-five per cent., but a trifle over ten per cent. Mr. Danby Seymour, after informing the House that “he might go on for ever quoting in reference to the failings of the East-India Company, for every part of their administration was equally bad,” brought forward the fact communicated to him by a friend, that money in the limits of the Supreme Court was to be had at five or six per cent.; but that out of those limits, and the moment the Company’s jurisdiction began, the interest was twelve or fourteen per cent. Mr. Seymour’s friend has fallen into this amusing error by confounding the amount beyond which the Courts cannot decree interest, with the



interest at which money can be obtained, which depends on the value of the security, and not on the locality of the transaction. The Company's Courts are forbidden to allow more than twelve per cent. The Supreme Court adheres to the English scale of interest, but, I believe, in the case of Europeans only; for an instance occurred, not many years ago, of a demand of more than seventy per cent. per annum in Calcutta itself by a great millionaire from some victim whom he had got within his gripe, and the Supreme Court allowed it.

The observations which I have thus ventured to offer on the statements made during the debate, may serve not only to shake your confidence in the information you have received, but also to show that the attacks now made on the Government of India, however patriotic and benevolent, are based upon a one-sided and biassed view of the subject. Some of the assertions which have been advanced in order to inflame the public mind against Leadenhall-street are palpably incorrect. Other charges of delinquency will be abundantly mitigated when they are examined in a calm and considerate temper of mind, and in connection with the difficulties by which all Governments are, more or less, embarrassed by the passive resistance of circumstances and the active resistance of prejudices. When it is considered that the government of a hundred millions of people has been thrown upon a handful of foreigners; that the people themselves are, generally, in a state of extreme degradation; that there is little moral courage among the lower classes, and little moral



virtue in the higher orders; and that the duties of Government are as arduous—to use a Chinese aphorism—as an attempt to carve on rotten wood, which baffles the skill of the ablest artificer, the marvel is, not that so little has been done, but that so much has been effected. But the principle of the British Government in India has been that of progression. The great men to whom England has delegated the administration of her Eastern dependencies, have fallen into many errors of judgment, and have often done mischief where they were congratulating themselves on having conferred unmingled benefits; but throughout the whole of our Indian career there has been an honest anxiety to correct the errors and supply the deficiencies of the past. The British Government in India has endeavoured to keep pace, at however long an interval, with the progress of improvement in England. As our domestic institutions here have been ameliorated, step by step, during the last sixty or seventy years, and more enlightened principles have gradually been introduced into the government, so have the rough institutions established in India been elaborated and improved, at successive periods, and more correct and elevated principles have obtained the ascendancy in its councils. It is much to be doubted whether the England of 1853 presents a greater and more gratifying contrast to the England of 1783, than India at the present time does to the India of the days of Hastings. The opportunity has now come round for giving another impulse of improvement to our institutions in India, but there appears



to be some danger lest, in the eagerness which is manifested to introduce reform, we should be led to exaggerate former defects, and act unjustly towards our countrymen who have administered the affairs of India. These men, trained up in all the dignified associations of their native land, have been most assiduous in endeavouring to maintain its reputation, as well as the honour of the religion they profess, by making the British Government in the East a blessing to the people to whom it affords protection. To assume, as some of the members of the British India Association appear to do, that the power committed to the Government of India has been so wantonly exercised as to be beyond all endurance, is to inflict the deepest stigma on the character of those who have been employed in the responsible duties of the administration abroad. I am not the advocate of the Court of Directors, or of the Board of Control. I am independent of both ; as a public writer I have for eighteen years faithfully pointed out the defects of the Indian Government, and urged improvement with unabated importunity ; and as a proof of this assertion I appeal to the fact, that some of the sharpest weapons employed by the members of the British India Association have been drawn from the armoury of the *Friend of India*. The sums expended in education have unquestionably been inadequate ; sufficient attention has not been bestowed on the construction of roads. The police in Bengal is exceedingly defective, and the administration of justice in the older provinces needs great simplification and reform ; and the Court of Direc-



ters have not sufficiently relaxed the traditional maxims of secrecy which have so long retained a habitation in Leadenhall-street, for which they are now paying a severe penalty in the attacks which are made on them; for, if they had been sufficiently attentive to the duty of enlightening public opinion, and had more freely thrown open the records of the Government in India, they would have occupied a different position in public estimation. I have had opportunities, enjoyed by few men not connected with the administration, of watching the movements of the public functionaries in India, and observing the solemn sense of responsibility under which they considered themselves to be acting, and their earnest solicitude to improve the institutions of the country. I have marked their disappointment when their labours have been defeated by the adversity of circumstances, and the exultation of their feelings when they have been crowned with success. I shall be excused, therefore, for the anxiety I feel to vindicate their characters, at a time when their fellow-countrymen here are required to believe that the British administration in India has reflected nothing but disgrace on England in the eyes of the civilized world, even though this vindication should carry with it some commendation of the Indian authorities at home who have directed and encouraged their exertions. I feel confident that nothing is necessary to counteract the imputations of delinquency which are so freely cast on them and on their masters, but a simple statement of the progress of improvement in



India during the current Charter since the year 1834.

Within the last eighteen years, the British Government in India has abolished the Town and Transit duties, which were almost as great an obstruction to the development of the resources of the country as the Protection duties of England. It has conquered and regenerated the Punjab. In the North-west Provinces, it has established a revenue settlement, which is the object of universal admiration, and organized a system of administration, in which even the researches of the British India Association have scarcely been able to detect a flaw. It has turned the province of Arracan, which, when first occupied by us, was a pestilential swamp; into the granary of the Bay, and a port formerly visited only by a few boats, is now crowded during the year by more than a hundred vessels of all sizes and all flags, exporting its superabundant produce. It has converted Moulmein, which, on our taking possession of it, consisted only of half a dozen fishermen's huts, into a flourishing town, with one street of shops four miles in length, and more than two hundred and fifty cabs; and more than fifty square-rigged vessels have been constructed in its dockyards. It has reformed the police of Calcutta, and brought it into some degree of approximation to that of London. It has established a Small Cause Court, corresponding with the County Courts in England,—but not one half so expensive to suitors,—which has given universal satisfaction to the community, and is about to serve as a model for similar courts throughout the



country. It has established by law a plan for the organization of municipal institutions in the country, and thus introduced the principle of self-government into the community. It has elevated the native character by entrusting the original cognizance of all suits, even of the highest amount, to native judges. It has established a system of examination for the junior civilians, in regard to criminal and fiscal law, and the languages of the people, which will impart the highest efficiency to the civil service. Above all, it has restored to the natives the inestimable blessing of the use of their own vernacular tongue in the courts to which they resort for the protection of their rights and the redress of wrongs, after they had been deprived of it for six centuries. It has established the liberty of the press. It has recognised the glorious principle of religious liberty, by abrogating the Hindoo law, which reduced a man to beggary for following the dictates of his own conscience and forsaking the national idolatry. It has extinguished the profession of Thuggee, and turned the families of the Thugs, who were hereditary assassins, into an industrious community. It has suppressed infanticide to the full extent of its power. It has eradicated, as far as possible, the practice of human sacrifices among the Khoonds. It has civilized the lawless and predatory Bheels, and the wild inhabitants of Mairwarra. It has relinquished all state lotteries, and forbidden them throughout the country. It has abolished slavery among a hundred millions of people. It has nearly completed a magnificent



canal eight hundred miles in length, which will diffuse fertility over six millions and a half of acres, and prevent the recurrence of desolating famines. It has commenced railroads at the three Presidencies, and, if unchecked in its career, will extend them rapidly throughout the country. It has made arrangements for the establishment of three thousand miles of electric telegraph, and the operations will begin with the commencement of the cold season: and the next mail is expected to bring the Act establishing a cheap and uniform postage, which has been sanctioned by the Home Authorities, and which, even without the convenience of the rail, will convey a letter from Peshawur to Cape Comorin, a distance of two thousand three hundred miles, for three farthings!

These are some of the improvements which have been effected by the British Government in India during the last eighteen years; and they are, I think, sufficient to convince every reasonable mind that it is not that monster of abomination which it has been represented, and that, amidst all its deficiencies, it is entitled to some small portion of national applause. Important, however, as the moral and political achievements of our countrymen in India have been, the field of improvement which still lies before them is one of no common magnitude, and it now devolves on Parliament to introduce such modifications into the government at home and abroad as shall enable them to cultivate it with increasing vigour and success. That the machinery



of the Court of Directors is defective, no one will attempt to question: it was originally constructed for the management of a great commercial enterprise, and it has been applied to the government of a mighty empire. Considerable changes are rendered necessary by the progress of circumstances and of opinion,—not because the management of affairs in India has been ruinous and disgraceful, but because it is susceptible of further improvement. These changes, however, must be cautious and temperate,—dictated by a cool and sober judgment, and not by a spirit of reckless innovation. It would be most hazardous to attempt any violent alteration in the vast and elaborate machinery by which the government of a hundred millions of people is now conducted, in a country on the opposite side of the globe, and as large as Europe; and the sudden extinction of the agency of the East-India Company, and the immediate transfer of its duties to the Ministry, is therefore a measure which cannot be contemplated without dismay. Even the most virulent opponents of the Company among the journalists of India, have always deprecated so sweeping a measure, of which it was difficult to calculate the result. It is in the full conviction that it would create inconceivable embarrassment, and impede the progress of improvement, that I venture to offer my humble suffrage in favour of Sir Charles Wood's milder and more moderate measure, which, while it introduces great and beneficial changes, has also the merit of



paving the way for the eventual consummation of the plan you propose, though, in the present circumstances of the case, that plan cannot but be considered premature and unadvisable.

Yours very faithfully,

JOHN C. MARSHMAN.

BRIGHTON,

June 20th, 1853.



Part - III
LETTER

CSL

TO

Dr MacLagan

JOHN BRIGHT, Esq., M.P.

RELATIVE TO THE

AS003455

RECENT DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT

ON

THE INDIA QUESTION.

BY

JOHN CLARK MARSHMAN.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

WM. H. ALLEN & CO.,

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AND

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Part VIII

CSL

LETTER,

&c.

TO JOHN BRIGHT, Esq., M.P.

MY DEAR SIR,—The period has now arrived for a parliamentary revision of the arrangements which were made for the government of India twenty years ago, and the introduction of those improvements which the experience of the past may suggest; and it is a matter of congratulation that the question has engaged the attention of public men in a degree corresponding with the magnitude and importance of the interests at stake. On such an occasion, it may be considered the duty of every one acquainted with the circumstances of India, to contribute his quota of information; but I should scarcely have ventured to come forward if my name had not been mentioned by you and others during the late debate, in so prominent a manner as to remove all appearance of officious intrusion from this public communication.

Whatever difference may exist in our opinion of the character and the results of the British administration in India, I beg to assure you of the high



respect I feel for the purity of your motives; I am confident that your most vehement denunciations of the delinquency of the Government arise from an honest conviction that the East-India Company have not done their duty by India, and that the extinction of their agency is necessary to its welfare. At the same time, it must be evident to all those who are familiar with the administration of India, with trifling exceptions, that the prejudices which now prevail against the Indian Government are mainly to be attributed to misinformation; and as the value of every innovation must depend on the accuracy of the data on which it is based, I am sure I need not apologize for endeavouring to point out to the ablest of the opponents of the present system, some of those errors by which his judgment has so evidently been warped.

The first question which presents itself in the course of your speech is that of passing a new India Bill in the present session, or postponing legislation to some future period. I cannot but think that you have failed to treat Lord Dalhousie's opinion with that consideration which is due to his extraordinary ability, his long experience in the government of India, and the pre-eminent advantages he enjoys for ascertaining the bearings of this question on the welfare of that country. On such a subject his opinion is entitled to the highest respect, and may be followed with implicit confidence. If anything was necessary to add weight to it, it might be found in the concurrent, though independent, testimony of so many other witnesses. It would be



difficult to over-estimate the mischief of keeping open the question of the future government of India for two or three years, and thus unsettling the minds of the natives in India, and encouraging that feeling of excitement which cannot fail to weaken and embarrass the Government. The Bill now introduced into Parliament is necessarily limited to the form and constitution of the Indian Government at home and abroad, and upon this, the most difficult and important branch of the question, the opinion of the natives at the three Presidencies, whatever may be its value, has already been transmitted to England, and no additional light can be expected from them, however long we may wait for it. The Calcutta petition, for example, advises Parliament so to construct the future Government of India as to transfer all substantive power to the natives of the country, and to smother, if not extinguish, the element of European influence. What more can the Baboos of Calcutta ask if two additional years are given them to mature their wishes? Parliament is, therefore, sufficiently in possession of the views of the native community, as well as of the opinion of Europeans acquainted with Indian subjects, regarding the construction of the future Government, to be justified in proceeding at once to legislation; and no time can be more suitable than the present, when there happens to be no question of domestic or foreign policy to interfere with the interest which the Indian question excites. It is possible that additional information might be obtained regarding the working of our institutions in India, and the



reforms of which they are susceptible; but this would be for the consideration of the Government which might be formed, and could have no influence on the decision of the question which relates to the construction of that Government.

You stated it as "your solemn belief, that if the decision on the question were delayed for two years, so as to enable Parliament to make due inquiries as to the means of establishing a better form of government in India, it would create in the minds of all the intelligent natives of India, a feeling of confidence and hope, and that whatever might be done by them in the way of agitation would be rather for the purpose of offering information in the most friendly spirit than of creating opposition to any Government legislation in the final result." From my own knowledge of the native character, I feel confident that these expectations will not be realized. At whatever risk of obloquy, I will venture to assert, after witnessing the mode in which the Indian campaign has opened in Parliament, that nothing could be more disastrous for India than to prolong this "agitation" for two years, during which the "intelligent natives" would be led, however erroneously, to imagine that their representations would be welcome to their friends in England, in exact proportion to their virulence and unscrupulousness. Two years of such unhealthy agitation, by raising hopes which must be disappointed, and fostering a spirit of disaffection to the British Government, might even tend to shake the principle of loyal obedience in the native community.



Moreover, any opposition which may have been manifested in India to immediate legislation, has been founded on the idea that Parliament intended in the present, as on former occasions, to make a complete and final arrangement for twenty years, and then dismiss all further concern for India till the year 1873. But that feeling of repugnance to legislating during the present year, will be in a great measure, if not altogether, removed by the announcement made by Sir Charles Wood, that it was not proposed "to tie up the hands of Parliament so as to prevent its making any change that might appear desirable in this form of government—which was to last until Parliament should otherwise provide." There is every reason to believe that when this resolution is known in India, it will give equal satisfaction to the native and the European, and that such an arrangement will be infinitely preferred to any temporary and spasmodic movement, to be followed by nineteen years of stagnation and neglect. It will inspire genuine "confidence and hope" in the natives of India to find that, in future, Parliament will always be open to their reasonable representations, and that it will not be necessary to wait for a remote and favourable opportunity of presenting them. Those representations, likewise, are more likely to be temperate and useful, if presented, as the emergency may arise, after calm deliberation, than if it was deemed necessary to make the most of a brief period, when the minds of the community had been brought into a state of unwholesome excitement, and they were expected to



make out a strong case against their rulers. The present is, therefore, the fittest time for legislation, and it would be better to put up, even with an inferior measure, which shall be open to revision, than, in the forlorn hope of obtaining a perfect scheme, to keep up a feeling of disquietude equally detrimental to the Government and the people of India.

In reference to the extreme destitution of the peasantry of Bengal, you have quoted a statement which I made in India a twelvemonth ago, and to which I still adhere; but before it is used as an argument against the present system of government, and as a reason for transferring the entire administration of India to the Crown, it would be but equitable to examine the cause of this wretchedness, and to see how far it is likely to be cured by this mutation of power. It is to be traced, not to the oppressive demands of the Government, but to the rapacity of the landlords and their servants. It is one of the results of the permanent settlement, which required the zemindar to pay his revenue with punctuality, on pain of forfeiting his estate; and, to enable him to do so, armed him with the power of distraint; and this power has been used without mercy. Under this settlement, the tenant has nothing whatever to do with Government; his connection is solely with his landlord, upon whose conduct depends his misery or his comfort; and it would be just as equitable to charge whatever destitution might exist among the agricultural population of England, upon the Executive Government of the day, as to lay the blame of that



wretchedness to which the peasantry in Bengal is reduced, at the door of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control. The tenant always endeavours to pay as little as he can, and the zemindar to squeeze as much out of him as possible; and between the zemindar and his myrmidons on the one hand, and the money-lender on the other, the Bengal ryot appears to be always hovering on the verge of starvation. Moreover, such is the competition for land in many parts of Bengal, among a people wholly dependent on agricultural labours, that the landholder is enabled to dictate his own terms, to which the ryot must submit or starve. If the ryot had no higher sum to pay for the rent of his land than the amount of the Government assessment, he would be living in clover.

In corroboration of this statement, I would call your attention to the remarks of one of the ablest writers on Indian affairs:—"The testimony of hundreds of witnesses, and the records of litigation for half a century, present us with one dreary picture of landlords enhancing rents, forcing cultivators to purchase the necessaries of life only at their own markets; deciding disputes in the village on the principle that both disputants are to pay something into the judge's privy purse; levying every sort of illegal cess on the most frivolous pretences; and making of Eastern society only two divisions, those who suffer and those who inflict. It is idle to talk to a Bengalee peasant about defending his rights, and acting with a manly spirit. It is idle to say that there are courts open, European functionaries accessible, and prompt justice at hand, which neither



money can purchase, nor power defy. If, in our own England, it is well known that tenants have been ruined and driven forth houseless because at some election they would not vote with the lord of the manor, it may easily be conceived what sort of remedy would be possessed in law by that Eastern tenant who should dare to lessen, by one penny, the profits of his landlord, or cross the most trivial of his cherished aims."

You have very justly observed that, "if a country were found possessing a most fertile soil, and capable of bearing every variety of production, and that, notwithstanding, the people were in a state of extreme destitution and suffering, the chances were that there was some fundamental error in the government of that country." There was such a fundamental error in that settlement, yet it was considered at the time by all parties as the brightest act of our Government, a monument of wisdom and moderation, and for twenty years was regarded with something of the same kind of superstitious reverence as the Navigation laws of England. There was this fundamental error in that settlement, that it was not accompanied by any clear recognition of the prescriptive rights of the cultivators, and that no adequate provision was made for their protection. The fields of Bengal are covered with rich harvests; the portion of the rent demanded by Government is so moderate, that the defaulters do not exceed one per cent. in the course of the year; the trader who rises to opulence hastens to invest his capital in land, but the poor ryot pines in destitution and poverty, and drags on



an abject and wretched existence. It was this fundamental error in a revenue system which received the sanction of the most eminent statesmen of the day, Lord Teignmouth and Lord Cornwallis, in India, and Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, and Charles Grant, in England, which it was deemed so necessary to avoid in the settlement of the North-West Provinces. As a preliminary to that arrangement, the ablest men in the service were employed in investigating, fixing, and recording the rights of the various classes of the agricultural community, and those rights were incorporated with the settlement, which was made on the principle of a moderate assessment and long leases of thirty years. That settlement is the most stupendous administrative work of our own Government, and perhaps also of any preceding dynasty. It reflects credit on the Government under whose auspices it was undertaken, and lustre on the name of Robert Mertins Bird, to whose rare genius and indefatigable energy twenty-three millions of people are indebted for the inestimable blessings which it confers on them. When the Legislature is called to review the progress of the Indian administration through a long period of sixty years, with a view to prospective arrangements, it behoves its members not to regard exclusively the defects which may be apparent, but to look also at the triumphs which have been achieved. That grievous errors were committed, will not admit of a doubt; but they were errors of judgment, and were in some measure redeemed by the feeling of benevolence in which



they originated. Both Lord Cornwallis and Sir Thomas Munro, the respective authors of the Zemindary and the Ryotwarry system, were great and good men, notwithstanding the injuries that may have resulted from their plans. When the present Government is blamed for the continuance of these evils, it should not be forgotten how extremely difficult it is to deal with evils of long standing, which have taken deep root in the community, and created extensive interests and vested rights. The ablest and soundest Indian financiers would be staggered if they were called upon to propound a substitute for the ryotwarry system of Madras, or a plan for ameliorating the condition of the ryots of the Bengal zemindars. And it is certain that the simple transfer of the whole administration from the Company to the Crown, will not create this auspicious change, and restore plenty and happiness to the cultivators at either of these Presidencies.

To form a correct and honest opinion on the subject of the Indian Government, it is necessary to inquire, not only what errors have been committed, but, also, to what extent efforts have been subsequently made to avoid them. There is nothing more manifest or gratifying in the history of British India than the fact, that almost every successive administration has been an improvement on that which preceded it. So generally has this been the case, that to ascertain the character of the administration in any province, it might suffice to examine the date of its acquisition. Those which



have been the longest in our possession may be said to exhibit the least favourable aspect, while those which have been held for the shortest period present a picture of happiness and prosperity which cannot fail to inspire a feeling of delight. To illustrate this by a reference to the Presidency of Fort William, which extends through the length of fourteen hundred and thirty miles, and comprises three distinct divisions,—the Bengal and Behar provinces, which we have held for nearly a hundred years; the North-west Provinces, which have been occupied for fifty years; and the Punjab, which has been in our possession for five years. In Bengal, great mistakes were committed in the days of inexperience; and they have, unfortunately, so deeply penetrated the constitution of society, that the eradication of them is a task of no easy performance. In the Punjab we were enabled to bring the experience of the past—the experience of failure and of success—to bear upon our operations. A Board of Administration was appointed, consisting of the ablest men in the service. A body of civil officers, trained in the Thomason school, was drafted into the Punjab, and the Governor-General planted himself at Simlah, that he might be at hand to answer every reference, and to superintend the construction of this new machinery of government; and the happy result of this combination of experience, talent, and energy, has been the formation of the administration the like of which has never been seen in India, and which looks more like a picture of the imagination than a tangible reality.



Among a nation of soldiers, whose valour seven years ago shook our empire to its centre, Government has succeeded in establishing tranquillity to such an extent, that there has not been the slightest disturbance for four years, except among the wild tribes of the mountains on the borders, who have resisted every kind of control for ages. So entirely has the British Government acquired the confidence of the military class, that the men who are covered with the scars inflicted by our troops at Ferozeshah, and Sohraon, and Guzerat, have freely entered our service, conquered their repugnance to crossing the sea, and have assisted in planting our banner on the battlements of Prome and Pegu. In the Punjab, our Government has succeeded in organizing a more efficient police in three years than it has been able to create in Bengal in ninety years. Dacoity and gang-robbery, which were indigenous in a country where the founder of every noble family commenced his career as a leader of banditti, have been suppressed. These crimes have ceased to appear in the calendar, and may now be considered extinct. The existence of Thuggee was discovered about two years ago, and 550 of the offenders have been tried, convicted, and transported. A system of prison discipline has been introduced which would not disgrace Great Britain. In lieu of the ponderous, intricate, and technical code, drawn up after the most approved model of Westminster Hall, which is the legal incubus of the older provinces, the Board of Administration have compiled a short, clear, and simple code of procedure,



This train of reasoning appears plausible, and probably conclusive, when viewed from "the chair" in Leadenhall-street, or from the bureau in Cannon-row ; but those who sit in the Chamber of Commerce of Liverpool will ask themselves these questions.

When the landed proprietors of Ireland were convicted by the people of England of having neglected their duties as landlords, and when they, during a time of extreme difficulty, could find no method of saving their people from destruction, did the Imperial Parliament consider that difficulty a sufficient plea for not interfering? Did not the Imperial Parliament, supported by the public opinion of the people of England, pass stringent laws, which obliged the Irish landlords to do justice to their people? Our legislators did not suppose for a moment that when people are oppressed, the redress of their grievances can, with propriety, be left to the liberality or justice of their oppressors. The Government of India plead guilty, as rulers and proprietors, to the charge of having misused the prodigious and unheard-of powers which they have assumed ; and it now becomes the duty of the English people, no less than in the case of Ireland, to investigate, to deliberate, and to decide as to the measures which it may be necessary to adopt in order to introduce into the Government of India such changes as in the opinion of competent and disinterested parties may be conducive to the welfare of the inhabitants of that vast country. Almost every year since this century began, have similar plausible pretexts for delay been advanced, and similar promises of amendment made only to be as



often violated or forgotten. To grant any longer delay would be as unwise as to leave a blind man on the edge of a precipice. For the sake of India, for the sake of Great Britain, immediate and searching reforms are necessary. Indeed, the present Government of India can be considered only as a temporary one, which has been accidentally forced into existence by the unexpected and unexampled good fortune of a company of London merchants, who have, almost against their wills, been raised to the responsible situation they now hold by the success of their generals and governors. Such a government never was intended to be permanent; it cannot long exist; and the sooner it is replaced by one better suited to the altered state of Indian affairs, and based upon sound political principles, the better it will be for the people of both countries.

This letter was commenced with the intention of directing your attention, at some length, to other circumstances which prevent the extension of Indian commerce; amongst which are the want of a well organized and extensive system of irrigation throughout India, such as exists in Egypt, some parts of Spain, particularly in the Valley of Valencia, and other countries: and such as did exist in former ages in India itself, Mesopotamia, &c. Also, the expense, delay, and uncertainty of internal communication,—the imperfect administration of justice, and the want of an efficient police. But you will probably agree with me in thinking it hopeless to attempt to introduce any great improvement of a permanent character, so long as India is governed by irresponsible bodies of men, and so long as it is impossible for



public opinion to fasten the responsibility of any act of the Indian Government upon one individual.

There are many able local officers in India—there are well meaning governors, and frequently a talented governor-general over all ; there are twenty-four directors in the City of London, elected by proprietors of East India Stock, (who have as much right to interfere in the Government of India as the proprietors of the Blackwall railway,) and there is an India Board at Westminster, presided over by a cabinet minister, all checking and interfering with one another with a degree of activity and zeal which might be better directed. But where is the ruler of India ? where is the energetic, experienced, responsible head, indispensable for administering a despotic government ? There is none. India has the worst system of government which human ingenuity has ever devised ; *a despotic executive, under the control of an irresponsible democratic self-constituted body, residing at the distance of 7,000 miles from their subjects !*

The governor of a Presidency can undertake no important work for the improvement of the people without the sanction of the Governor-general ; he, in his turn, requires the approval of the Court of Directors, whose well-weighed and long pondered despatches may be thrown aside by the President of the Indian Board, who is, perhaps, a newly-appointed minister, quite ignorant of Indian affairs. For good, the Governor-general is powerless ; for evil, his will is absolute. He can spend millions of money, and sacrifice thousands of lives upon a war



form a road, build a bridge, or open a canal for enriching thousands of acres of land without a tedious and often harassing correspondence with the Court of Directors.

Although unwilling, as a merchant, to interfere in political struggles, I find myself driven to the conclusion that the first step towards extending the trade between Great Britain and India, is to reform the supreme governing power at home: to replace a government of confusion and irresponsibility by one simple and responsible, so that, instead of vacillation, delay and inaction, we may have decision, energy, and profitable activity.

It is often said by the supporters of the present system, that the funds at the disposal of the Indian Government are not sufficient to warrant the expenditure of large sums on great public works. It is not my intention to discuss this financial question, but I shall merely request your attention to the analysis of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Indian Government in the year 1849-50, which you will find below, and which represents, in a few figures, facts more conclusive than volumes of argument. You will there see, that out of a gross revenue of £27,757,853, partly drawn from very questionable sources, only £482,862 were spent on public works, whilst the large sum of £12,517,302 was devoted to the support of military establishments. If that large item be excepted, you will find that only £5,274,383 were spent on the internal Government of India, properly speaking, which includes the cost of judicial proceedings and police, which in this



GROSS REVENUE OF INDIA, 1849-50.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| From the monopoly of land | £15,178,676 |
| „ „ salt | 3,189,214 |
| „ „ opium | 4,562,586 |
| „ other sources..... | 4,826,777 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £27,757,853 |

EXPENDITURE.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Gross revenue : | £27,757,853 |
| Cost of collection..... | £3,602,712 |
| Payments to native Princes, &c. | 1,486,284 |
| Assignments under treaties | 982,644 |
| Dividend | 629,435 |
| Interest on debt | 2,410,535 |
| Home charges..... | 709,712 |
| Surplus..... | 64,846 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 9,866,168 |
| Net sum for current expenditure of India.... | £17,891,685 |
| Military | £12,517,302 |
| Civil and political establishments. | £1,806,627 |
| Judicial and police ditto..... | 1,943,550 |
| Public works | 482,862 |
| Sundries | 1,121,344 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 5,374,383 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £17,891,685 |

In addressing to you the preceding remarks, it is very far from my wish to blame individuals; on the contrary, I freely and gladly admit that there are many men of first-rate talents, and of very great administrative abilities and experience, engaged in the service of the Indian Government, who are influenced by the strongest desire to improve the condition of the people. Indeed, it may not be too much to say that there is no country in which the



boast of so large a proportion of able, conscientious, and zealous men as India. And there can be no stronger proof of the monstrous defects of the system under which they labour, than the fact that such men have been unable to carry into effect any great and permanent measures for improving the condition of the people, or for strengthening the position of the Government, by alleviating the pressure of taxation and diminishing the expenditure.

In conclusion, let me indulge in the hope that the facts which have been so imperfectly laid before you (or, rather, cursorily alluded to) will be considered sufficiently important to induce you to turn your immediate attention to what is commonly called the Indian Question, which is nothing more nor less than this: *Is India to be allowed to decay under the despotic rule of an incapable Government, or is she to be placed under the mild and paternal guardianship of the people of England!* Never let it be said that we interfere with other nations in matters in which we can have no direct interest, and run the risk of throwing Europe into a general war for the sake of a few wild political agitators, whilst we cherish in our own capital the most stupendous despotism that ever existed, a despotism which retains in a state of poverty and degradation millions of our fellow subjects, and which has for years adopted and acted upon the policy of preventing the introduction of European capital and enterprise into the interior of its dominions, lest its iniquities should be discovered and exposed.

AN EAST INDIA MERCHANT.



Part - VII

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CSL 16

HOW WARS ARE GOT UP IN INDIA.

THE ORIGIN
OF
THE BURMESE WAR.

BY
RICHARD COBDEN, ESQ., M.P.

Fifth Edition.

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Part - VII

CSL

P R E F A C E.

HAVING had occasion to read with attention the "Papers relating to Hostilities with Burmah," with the view of bringing the subject under the consideration of the House, (which circumstances prevented my doing) I have made an abstract of the leading facts of the case for publication, in the hope that it may induce the reader to peruse the original correspondence. This I was the more immediately tempted to do, from not having been able to meet with anybody, in or out of Parliament, who had read the "Papers." In fact, owing to the complex form in which they are printed—not giving letter and answer in consecutive order, but grouping them arbitrarily in batches—they require a considerable effort of the attention to read them with advantage. I may say, by way of explanation, that the whole of the narrative is founded, exclusively, upon the Parliamentary papers, and that all the extracts in the text, for which references are given at the foot of each page, are copied from the same official source.—Wherever I have inserted quotations not taken from the Parliamentary papers they are printed as notes. It should be borne in mind that the case, such as it is, is founded upon our own *ex parte* statement. A great many of the letters are mutilated; and remembering, that in the Afghan papers, it is now known that the character of at least one of the Cabool chiefs was sacrificed by a most dishonest garbling of his language, I confess I am not



CSL

PREFACE.

without suspicions that a similar course may have been pursued in the present instance. I will only add, then, bad as our case now appears, what would it be if we could have access to the Burmese "Blue Books," stating their version of the business?

The correspondence to which I have referred is—

- 1st. Papers relating to hostilities with Burmah, presented to both Houses of Parliament, June 4th, 1852.
- 2nd. Further Papers relating to hostilities with Burmah, presented to both Houses of Parliament, March 15th, 1853.



CSL

HOW WARS ARE GOT UP IN INDIA.

IN June, 1851, the British barque *Monarch*, of 250 tons, last from Moulmein, reached Rangoon, the principal port of the Burmese empire. On the second day after her arrival, Captain SHEPPARD, the master and owner, "was taken before the police to answer the charge of having, during the voyage, thrown overboard the pilot ESOPH, preferred by a man named HAJIM, a native of Chittagong, who stated that he was brother of the said pilot."* The accuser and the deceased were British subjects, both being natives of Chittagong, one of the provinces of our Indian empire, lying contiguous to the territory of Burmah. The answer to the accusation was, that the pilot having run the vessel aground, had jumped overboard. Captain SHEPPARD was mulcted in fines and fees to the amount of £46., and permission was then given him to depart; but when about to sail he was again detained, "owing to a charge brought by a man named DEWAN ALI, (a British subject, employed in one of the Moulmein gun-boats), calling himself a brother of the pilot, bringing forward a claim for a sum of 500 rupees, which he stated his brother had taken with him."† This led to a fresh exaction of £55.;—and, after a forcible detention altogether of eight days, the ship was allowed to sail.

The British vessel, the *Champion*, of 410 tons, Captain LEWIS, arrived at Rangoon, from the Mauritius, in August, 1851. Two Bengal coolies, who had secreted themselves on board his ship, with a view to return to their country, made charges against the captain of murder and other offences, and they were joined by some lascars and others of the crew, who deserted, and made an appeal to the authorities for the recovery

* Papers relating to hostilities with Burmah, presented to Parliament June 4, 1852, p. 5.

† Ibid.



of their wages. After being detained fifteen days, and compelled to forfeit £70. for fines, fees, and seamen's wages, Captain LEWIS was suffered to depart.

These two captains appealed to the Government of India for redress. They claimed together, £1920. for reimbursement of arbitrary fines, demurrage of ships, and compensation for ill-usage, and unlawful imprisonment. This claim was revised by the Indian authorities, and cut down to £920., or less than one-half; and it was in enforcing payment of this sum that the present war arose.

It must be borne in mind that all the parties to these suits were British subjects; the governor of Rangoon, had not been adjudicating in matters in which Burmese interests, as opposed to those of foreigners were at stake.

When these complaints were laid before the Governor-General of India, it happened that two of the Queen's ships, the *Fox*, and the *Serpent*, under the command of Commodore LAMBERT, were lying in the Hooghly. He was requested to proceed to Rangoon, and "in maintenance of the Treaty of Yandaboo, and the Commercial Treaty of 1826, to demand full reparation for the injuries and oppressions to which the above-named British subjects have been exposed." No other demand for reparation beyond the payment of this sum of about £920. appears at the outset of these proceedings. Vague allusions are made to other acts of injustice committed upon British subjects, but no specific complaint is formally made, and no individual grievances are officially adduced, excepting those of Captains SHEPPARD and LEWIS. We are informed, indeed, in a Minute, by the Governor-General of India, that "for many years past, complaints, from time to time, had been made of acts of oppression and of violation of treaty by the Burmese Governors. *None, however, had been brought forward of sufficient extent or significance, to call for the formal notice of this government.*"* It is important at the outset, to have the highest authority for the fact, that, up to this time, the Burmese authorities at Ava, were quite ignorant that the British government had any complaint to prefer against the Governors of Rangoon.

Before his departure from Calcutta, Commodore LAMBERT

received very precise instructions from the Governor-General, how to act under almost every possible contingency; and as these directions were disregarded the moment he reached Rangoon, without drawing on himself a word of censure or remonstrance, thus involving grave questions, as to the due assertion of authority on one side, and the observance of professional subordination on the other, I beg the reader's careful attention to this part of the narrative. It will, moreover, serve to illustrate the unsatisfactory working of the "double government" of India.

After recapitulating all the facts of the cases of Captains SHEPPARD and LEWIS, and requesting Commodore LAMBERT to proceed to demand reparation from the Governor of Rangoon, Lord DALHOUSIE suggests, that "although there seems no reason to doubt the accuracy of the depositions, or the veracity of the deponents,* it would be right that the Commodore should in the first instance be satisfied on this head."† He is then requested to demand from the Governor of Rangoon the just pecuniary compensation in favour of the injured parties. *Should that functionary refuse redress* (mark the proviso), the Commodore is then to forward to the King of Burmah, at Ava, the capital, a letter, with which he is furnished from the Government of India, calling his Majesty's attention to the subject, "in the full conviction that he will at once condemn the conduct of his officers by whom this offence has been perpetrated, and will make to the parties who have been injured that compensation which is most justly due to them for the injuries they have sustained."‡ So minute are the instructions given to the Commodore, by Lord DALHOUSIE, that the mode of forwarding the letter to Ava, and the proper way of disposing of his squadron during the necessary delay in receiving an answer, are carefully pointed out in these terms:—

"In the event of the Governor of Rangoon refusing, or evading compliance with the demands conveyed to him by the Commodore, the letter addressed by the President in Council to the King should be delivered by the Commodore to the Governor of Rangoon for transmission to Ava, accompanied by an intimation that an early reply from the Court of Ava will be expected; and that, if

* Why, then, reduce the claim to less than one-half?

† P. 13.

‡ Ibid



It should not in due time be received, the Government of India will proceed to take such measures as they may think necessary and right.

"The delay thus interposed is unavoidable in the present anomalous relations of the two governments. *It will, moreover, admit of the Commodore proceeding to the Persian Gulf, whither his Lordship understands he is under orders to proceed.*"*

The Governor-General's instructions conclude with the following emphatic injunction, to avoid any violent proceedings; it might have been penned expressly to guard against the course which the Commodore afterwards pursued:—"IT IS TO BE DISTINCTLY UNDERSTOOD THAT NO ACT OF HOSTILITY IS TO BE COMMITTED AT PRESENT, THOUGH THE REPLY OF THE GOVERNOR SHOULD BE UNFAVOURABLE, NOR UNTIL DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING SUCH HOSTILITIES SHALL BE GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA."†

Let us now recapitulate in the briefest possible terms, the instructions given to Commodore LAMBERT:—

1st. He was requested to inquire on the spot, whether the compensation claimed by Captains SHEPPARD and LEWIS, which had already been reduced to less than one-half of their original demand by the Indian Government, was founded in justice:—in a word, he was instructed to hear both sides.

2nd. To demand payment of the amount of compensation from the Governor of Rangoon, before applying to the Court of Ava; and to use the letter addressed to the King only, "in the event of the Governor refusing or evading compliance."‡

3rd. In case it was found necessary to forward the letter to the King, then the Commodore was to proceed to the Persian Gulf.

4th. In no case, until further definite instructions should be received from the Government of India, was any act of hostility to be committed.

We shall see under what circumstances Commodore LAMBERT, set aside all these instructions, and pursued the very opposite course to that prescribed by the Governor-General.

Towards the end of November, 1851, the Commodore sailed



with his squadron from Calcutta for the Rangoon River. The distance by sea, between the ports of Calcutta and Rangoon, is about 500 miles. On his arrival at the latter place, several of the residents,* who claimed to be British subjects, preferred further complaints against the Governor of Rangoon. He requested them to state their grievances in writing, which they did on the 28th November;† but on the 27th, *before a written declaration was in his hands*, (it is important to notice this, as the beginning of a series of impulsive and precipitate acts), he wrote to the Governor of Rangoon to the following effect.‡

“COMMODORE LAMBERT TO THE GOVERNOR OF RANGOON.

*“On board Her Britannic Majesty's ship of war Fox,
at anchor off Rangoon, November 27th, 1851.*

“The object of my visit to Rangoon was, at the request of the Most Noble the Marquis of DALHOUSIE, the Governor-General of British India, to demand redress for insults and injuries you have committed on subjects belonging to Her Britannic Majesty Queen VICTORIA.

“Since my arrival, so many more complaints have been made by persons residing at Rangoon, who have a right to claim British protection, that I have deemed it my duty to withhold my original demand, until I have again made known their complaints to his Lordship.”

It might naturally be expected that after dispatching this letter to the Governor, the writer would send one of the two steamers which, in addition to his own vessel, the *Fox*, now composed the squadron under his command, to Calcutta, for further orders. This was much too dilatory a mode of proceeding. On the very next

* The first person who came on board the Commodore's ship, (whose name is given in the Blue Book, and in the Parliamentary Report, but which, for obvious reasons, I suppress), is thus described by Lord ELLENBOROUGH:—

“One of the most considerable traders at Rangoon, is a person of the name of ———. That man, as soon as he knew of the probability of a war, freighted a schooner with arms, and sold them to the Governor of Rangoon, when the Governor refused payment for them, he had the effrontery to go to Commodore LAMBERT, and complain of the injury inflicted upon him. I suppose we shall hereafter see the amount of compensation claimed by that person in the bill to be paid by the Burmese government. The Governor of Rangoon offered in consequence £100. for this man's head; and I confess, I should not have been deeply grieved if he had got it. This is a description of one of the persons for whom this great war is to be undertaken.”—
House of Lords, April 5th, 1852.



By the Commodore commenced his diplomatic career, without credentials or authority of any kind, by sitting down and writing a letter to the "Prime Minister" of the King of Ava, enclosing the letter which had been entrusted to him for use, *in case the Governor had refused compliance with his demand*, and adding, that owing to the accounts he had heard, of the additional wrongs inflicted upon British subjects by the Governor, he passed him by, and appealed for his punishment directly to the Court of Ava.*

These two letters, the one from *The President of the Council of India in Council, to the King of Ava*, and the other from *Commodore Lambert to the Prime Minister of His Majesty the King of Ava*, were then forwarded to the Governor of Rangoon, with the following :—†

"COMMODORE LAMBERT TO THE GOVERNOR OF RANGOON.

"November 28th, 1851.

"I have the honour to transmit you a letter for His Majesty the King of Ava, together with one for the Prime Minister of the King.

"I shall expect that every dispatch will be used for forwarding the same, and I hold you responsible for an answer being delivered in these waters, within five weeks from this day."

Captains LATTEK and TARLETON were deputed to deliver this letter to the Governor. The following is the description of the interview as given by Captain LATTEK, who filled the office of interpreter to the Expedition.

"This letter was translated by me into Burmese. We landed, went to the Governor's house, escorted by some of the English residents and traders. I read aloud to the Governor, first in English, and then in Burmese, the letter, and Captain TARLETON delivered it. The Governor made his appearance in a somewhat informal dress; being dressed in nothing but common white clothes, and smoking a cheroot; whilst all the under Governors were in their court dresses. This was the more to be remarked, because the Governor has several gold crowns, which he wears on State occasions. The European officers were of course in full uniform. The Governor wished us to stop and sit down, but Captain TARLETON thought it more prudent to say that we had only been charged to read and deliver the letter to him, and that we had received no instructions about holding any other communication. We then bowed, withdrew, and returned to the frigate. We received no opposition either going or coming."‡

* P. 24.

† Ibid.

‡ P. 30.



From Rangoon to Ava, is about 450 miles, and Government Expresses perform the journey in from ten to twelve days, so that to receive an answer in five weeks, was quite practicable, provided the Cabinet of his Burmese Majesty did not require so long a time for deliberation as is sometimes found necessary in Europe.

As soon as he had dispatched his letter to the Governor, the Commodore sat down and wrote a laconic account of his proceedings to the Government of India, which he sent off to Calcutta, by a steamer in charge of Captain LATTER, the interpreter, who was deputed to explain the circumstances which had induced him to depart from his instructions.

Let us now see what those circumstances were :—

We have already stated, that on the arrival of the squadron in Rangoon river, an additional list of grievances was presented to the Commodore, on behalf of the British residents.* The state-

* The Earl of ELLENBOROUGH, made the following observations upon these proceedings :—(*House of Lords, February 16th, 1852*).

"He also wished to know whether, before any requisition was sent to the King of Ava, for reparation for the injuries inflicted on British subjects in Rangoon, any trustworthy officer of ours was sent there to ascertain the truth of their representations, and the extent of the injuries inflicted? He could recollect—it was not so distant an era—he could recollect the circumstances of a complaint which was brought under the notice of the British Government, by a certain Don Pacifico. Athens rejoiced in one Pacifico; but he could assure their lordships, that there were dozens of Pacificoes at Rangoon. If there were not the grossest ignorance of, or the strangest misrepresentations about Rangoon, on the part of those who have written about it, Rangoon was the sink of Asia—the Alsatia to which all men went who could not keep a footing elsewhere. Persons of European origin, who had discovered that Asia was too hot to hold them, lived in Ava, and generally went to Rangoon, and there, under the same, or perhaps some other name, endeavoured to gain a new reputation or a new fortune. He should not wish the Government to take any political measures with regard to Ava, without sending an officer there to inquire into the circumstances. He regretted that this had not been done in the first instance; for it was reported that when the Commodore went to Rangoon with his fleet, he found circumstances very different from those which had been represented to him. The Don Pacificoes pushed off their boats, and went on board with representations of the damage which they said they had sustained."

[Commodore LAMBERT had directions to inquire into the justice of the demand, which he was sent to make upon the Governor of Rangoon; but, instead of doing so, he took for granted the truth of fresh complaints brought against that officer, and acted upon them, without allowing the accused party the opportunity of answering one or the other of the charges.]



ent, professes to emanate from the "undersigned merchants and others, resident in Rangoon," but there are no signatures appended to the document, which contains a list of thirty-eight grievances, separately numbered, and mostly without dates. I am sorry that it is not compatible with that brevity, which is above all things my object, to copy every one of these cases from the Blue Book, but I will give the first four on the list, as a fair specimen of the whole :—

LIST OF GRIEVANCES.

"1. A short time ago a charge was brought against AGA SADDUCK, merchant in this town, by his wife, who had been separated from him fifteen years. No less a sum than 5,500 rupees was extorted from him by the present Governor.

"2. In the case of GOOLAM HUSSAIN, a merchant of Rangoon, against whom a charge was brought of alleged faithlessness of his wife, the sum of 1500 rupees was extorted from him.

"3. In the case of GOOLAM HUSSAIN (deceased), who was the owner of some mineral said to have had the virtue of completing the art of alchemy, the Governor wanted to get the mineral, which was refused him. In consequence of this a charge of theft was trumped up against him. The unfortunate man was seized, flogged in the most cruel manner, from the effects of which he died soon after.

"4. Against NICHOLAS JOHANNES, an Armenian merchant, a story was got up, that in a piece of ground which he had lately purchased, there was buried a jar of silver. The Government people were ordered to dig for the jar in question, when Mr. JOHANNES detected them in the act of slipping money into the jar. The Governor decreed that he should pay 1000 rupees for these proceedings of his own men."

The absurd list of grievances, of which the above are a sample, and which bring to recollection a popular volume of reports of our own police courts, called "*Mornings at Bow Street*," was, as I have before stated, placed in the hands of Captain LATTE, who proceeded to Calcutta to offer an explanation of the occurrences which had taken place at Rangoon. Arrived at his destination, he was requested to make his statement in writing, and I find in the Report presented by him to Mr. HALLIDAY (the Secretary to the Government) that he gives as the reason why Commodore LAMBERT departed from the instructions laid down by the Governor-General for his guidance, that "the Commodore appeared to think that when the Governor-General of India came to know of these fresh instances of the Governor of Rangoon's misconduct, he the



Governor-General, might not consider the taking satisfaction for merely Messrs. SHEPPARD and LEWIS's cases sufficient, but might wish to take further steps."* Let us see what the Governor-General has to say in reply.

The letter from the Government Secretary, Mr. HALLIDAY, in answer to Commodore LAMBERT's communication, has been mutilated at the Board of Control, and an *Extract*, only, appears in the Blue Book. It may be therefore charitably hoped that the scissors in Cannon Row, and not the pen of the able Secretary at Fort William, are responsible for the inconsistency, not to say the absurdity of its contents.

"*The statements contained,*" says the *Extract*, "*in the memorial presented by the British subjects at Rangoon must be received with caution; not having been made the subject of complaint at the time, these additional cases cannot now be made the groundwork of an increased demand for compensation.*" It might naturally be supposed, that after this implied reflection upon the incautiousness of the Commodore, there would follow an expression of regret on behalf of the Governor-General at his having upon such insufficient grounds departed from the instructions laid down for his guidance; but the reader will find with astonishment the following paragraph in the same *Extract*:

"*Having regard to the additional long list which was delivered to you, of unwarrantable and oppressive acts committed upon British subjects by order of the Governor of Rangoon, as well as to the personal bearing of that functionary towards the Commodore of the squadron, and to his obvious intention of resorting to the usual policy of the Burmese Court by interposing endless delays, and disregard of official communications addressed to him; his Lordship is of opinion that you exercised a sound discretion in cutting short all discussion with the local Governor, and in transmitting at once to the King of Ava the letter addressed to His Majesty by the Government of India.*"

The logic of this is akin to that which the wolf resorted to, upon a certain occasion in an argument with the lamb. "Be cautious how you listen to those Rangoon merchants," (says Mr. HALLIDAY), "do not make their complaints the groundwork of a demand for compensation from the Governor of Rangoon: but you did right in making those complaints the "groundwork" of a resolution to



pass by the Governor of Rangoon, and send the Governor-General's letter to the Court of Ava, *asserting that he had refused all redress*, and demanding his recall." And again, for another specimen of the same logic:—"So many fresh complaints were made to me by resident merchants on my arrival in the river of Rangoon," says Commodore LAMBERT, "that I resolved to hold no communication whatever with the Governor upon the business which I came here to settle."—"You were quite right in cutting short all discussion with the local Governor," replies Mr. HALLIDAY, in the name of the Governor-General; "for it is very evident from his personal bearing towards you, and from his obvious intention to resort to the usual policy of the Burmese Court, by interposing endless delays, and disregarding official communications addressed to him, that you would have accomplished nothing by entering into negotiations with him."

Heaven defend me from ever finding myself in the position of the Governor of Rangoon, with no other appeal but to round shot and shells against the conclusions of such logicians, as the Governor-General of India, and Commodore LAMBERT!

The Commodore's brief and peremptory communication to the Governor of Rangoon, requiring him to forward to his Sovereign at Ava a letter demanding his own disgrace, and which I have given in a preceding page, is dated November 28th, 1851. An answer was demanded in five weeks. It arrived on the 1st January, being a day within the limited time. This having been the only instance in which the British Commander had preferred any request to the Governor, the promptitude of his compliance is a sufficient commentary on the passage quoted from the despatch from the Government of India, accusing him of "endless delays and disregard of official communications addressed to him." It is but fair to adduce this fact, in favour of one who now disappears from the scene, without having been heard in his own defence.

The following letter from Commodore LAMBERT, to the President of the Council of India, opens the second act in this drama:—

"COMMODORE LAMBERT TO SIR JOHN LITTLER.

"*H.M.S. Fox, off Rangoon, January 1st, 1852.*

"I have the honour to acquaint you, that an officer from the Court of Ava, arrived on board of Her Majesty's ship under my command this



morning, and delivered a letter from the King to the Government of India, in reply to the letter which I forwarded on the 28th of November.

"I also had the honour of a reply from his Majesty's Minister to my communication of that date; a copy is enclosed: from the purport of which it appears the Burmese Government have dismissed the Governor of Rangoon, and *promised to settle the demand made on them by the Government of India.*

"I AM OF OPINION THAT THE KING IS SINCERE, AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL FULLY ACT UP TO WHAT HE HAS PROMISED.

"The future Governor of Rangoon, vested with full powers to settle the demands, is daily expected from Prome.

"In order that the Governor-General of India may be informed, as early as possible, of the state of affairs, I have dispatched the *Tenasserim* steam-vessel to Calcutta with the letter from the King of Ava, which has been translated by Mr. EDWARDS, in compliance with the directions he states he received."

It will be seen by the above, that the Burmese Government complied instantly with the demand for the dismissal of the Governor of Rangoon, and promised redress for the injuries he had inflicted upon British subjects. But I beg the especial attention of the reader to the paragraph printed in capitals, which expresses the belief of the writer in the sincerity of the King, and to which I shall again have occasion to refer. The whole case, as between the Governments of Burmah and of India, may henceforth be said to turn upon this passage.

The letter from the Burmese Government to the Government of India, and that to Commodore LAMBERT, are written not only in a courteous but a deferential tone. I will merely give the concluding sentence of the letter to the Commodore, showing, as it does, that the Court of Ava were under the impression that he would himself be the bearer of the answer to the letter of the Indian Government: "We have to request," say the Burmese Ministers, "that Commodore LAMBERT will, with friendly feeling, apprise us of the date of his departure from Rangoon, with the reply to the letter of the President of the Council of India."* I ask the reader to bear this in mind in connexion with what is to follow.

"On the 4th of January, the newly-appointed Governor, or

Special Commissioner from the Court of Ava, arrived at Rangoon, with a numerous suite.”* On the 5th, Commodore LAMBERT “sent Mr. EDWARDS, the assistant-interpreter, to ascertain when it would be convenient for him to receive an officer with a letter, stating the nature of the claims which the Government of British India had made on that of Burmah, and to say that when all had been adjusted, he should do himself the honour of personally paying his respects to him: the reply to which was, that the Governor was ready at any time to receive communications from him; and the following day was fixed.”† On this visit Mr. EDWARDS, who was clerk to Captain LATTER, the interpreter to the squadron, and himself familiar with the Burmese language, was admitted to a personal interview with the new Governor, who at once consented, at the instance of Mr. EDWARDS, to remove the embargo by which the inhabitants had been hitherto prevented from holding communication with the ships or boats of the squadron.‡ It is important that this fact should be borne in mind, as an answer to the vague statements, for which no official proofs are afforded, that the new Governor had, on his first arrival, by his proclamation and other acts, shown an unfriendly disposition towards the British residents.

On the following day, the 6th, “the Commodore directed Captain FISHBOURNE, commanding Her Majesty’s steamer *Hermes*, Captain LATTER, and two officers of the *Hermes*, with Mr. EDWARDS, to proceed and deliver to the Governor the letter containing the demands he was charged to make. Captain LATTER was at the time on board the *Proserpine*, finishing the Burmese translation of the letter which was to be given to the Governor; and to give him due warning of their approach, on his own responsibility, as there was no time to spare, he sent Mr. EDWARDS on shore to him, to give notice of their coming, and charged him to say, that as he had already shown his friendly feelings by his amicable expressions of the day before, with reference to the time of receiving a communication from Commodore LAMBERT, there would be no necessity for making any display in receiving them, so that there could be no necessity for any delay.”§

* P. 26.

† Ibid.

‡ P. 44.

§ Ibid.



Mr. EDWARDS landed and proceeded to the Governor's house; and now follows an incident which is of the utmost value as illustrative of the temper and disposition of the Governor towards his English visitors. The narrative is in Captain LATTEE's own words:—"At the foot of the outer steps, one of the Governor's suite drew his dagger on him, and threateningly asked him how he dared thus to approach the Governor's house. Mr. EDWARDS replied that he had no intention of entering without the Governor's permission. On being called into the Governor's presence, he stated that his life had been threatened, and mentioned what had occurred. The Governor sent for the offender, and punished him in the presence of Mr. EDWARDS in the usual Burmese manner, namely, by having him taken by the hair of the head, swung round three times, his face dashed to the ground, himself dragged out by the hair and pitched down stairs."*

(I ask the reader to observe that, within six hours of the infliction of this severe punishment for an insult committed upon a clerk, Commodore Lambert will have declared Rangoon in a state of blockade for an insult alleged to have been offered by the Governor to the superior officers of the squadron.)

Mr. EDWARDS now delivered his message to the Governor, informing him of the deputation which was preparing to wait upon him:—the Governor said, "he wished to receive the communication through him and nobody else." Mr. EDWARDS replied "that that could not be for two reasons; first, that a communication of such importance could not be made through a person holding his subordinate position, being only a clerk under Captain LATTEE's orders; and secondly, that even if it could be so made, it was too late now, as the officers entrusted with it, one of whom was in rank next to the Commodore himself, were now preparing to come."† Mr. EDWARDS took his leave, and returned to the vessel.

Before we accompany the deputation to the Governor's house, let it be understood that no previous arrangement had been come to for its reception. To all who are acquainted with the customs of the East, and the childlike importance which Oriental nations, and especially the Burmese, attach to the ceremonial of visits, it must be evident that the course about to be pursued was pretty



certain to end unsatisfactorily. The Governor had expressed his readiness to receive a *communication*, not a *deputation*, from Commodore LAMBERT, and he had entreated the clerk of the interpreter to bring it himself. Mr. EDWARDS could run in and out of his house freely, as bearer either of a message or letter, because, for a person of his inferior rank, no formal reception was necessary; but how "the Governor of all the lower Provinces, from Prome to the sea, including Rangoon," was to receive a body of officers of subordinate rank, without either offending them,* or for ever degrading himself in the eyes of his own people, was a question of etiquette not to be decided in a day. An Englishman, in such a dilemma, would order his servant to tell an unbidden caller he was "not at home." In the East, if the unwelcome visitor present himself in the middle of the day, the answer is, "My Master is asleep."

The deputation "landed at about noon, and proceeded to Mr. BIRRELL's house to procure horses to take them up, as the distance (about two miles) was too much to walk in the sun."† They were bearers of a letter from the Commodore, stating that "the object of his visit to Rangoon had been so satisfactorily met by the prompt course the Government of Ava had adopted in the permanent removal of the late Governor of Rangoon,"‡ that he felt assured of the amicable arrangement of the further matters to be discussed, and he concluded with a demand for the payment of 9,948 rupees, (a fraction under a thousand pounds), and suggesting that a Resident Agent at Rangoon should henceforth be appointed by the Governor-General of India, to avoid a recurrence of differences between the two countries. *There was nothing in the contents of the letter, which in the slightest degree called upon the writer to force the Governor to receive it by the hands of a deputation.*

It is right that the leader of the deputation should be allowed to relate in his own words what followed:—

* The reader will have seen a symptom of this in the allusion to the absence of a "crown," to the "common white dress," and the smoking of a cheroot, on the occasion of the interview of Captains LATTER and TARRANT with the former Governor—*ante*, p. 10.

† P. 45.

‡ P. 37.



"COMMANDER FISHBOURNE TO COMMODORE LAMBERT.

"H.M.'s steam-sloop 'Hermes,' off Rangoon,
January 6th, 1852.

"I have the honour to represent to you that, in pursuance of your orders of the 6th instant, to me, to wait on the Governor of Rangoon, with a letter from you, and also to inquire why it was that Mr. EDWARDS, while bearing a friendly message, had a sword placed at his breast, and threatened within the precincts of the Governor's house ?*

Sic in orig.

"I beg to state that I proceeded accordingly, accompanied by Captain LATTER, and Mr. EDWARDS, as interpreter, and Lieutenant LAWRENCE and Dr. McLEOD, surgeon of Her Majesty's steam-sloop *Hermes*.

"When we arrived within a very short distance of the Governor's house, two sub-officials endeavoured to stop us. Captain LATTER assuring me that this was intended rather as a slight, I did not deem it proper to stop. Mr. EDWARDS, however, communicated with them, on which they said that we could not see the Governor, but must go and wait on the Deputy-Governor.

"On arriving at the gate of the Governor's compound, there appeared to be a reluctance on the part of two or three, that we should enter.

"On arriving at the foot of the stairs leading to the Governor's ante-chamber, there appeared at the top, MOUNG POGAN, a man who had accompanied each deputation to the *Box* in the professed character of interpreter, and another, I presume, one of the Governor's retinue, the latter of whom stated that we could not see the Governor, as he was asleep, and asked if we could not wait till he awoke. This he was informed by Captain LATTER that we could not do, and that the Governor, if asleep, must be waked up, and informed that the Commander of one of the ships of war, bearing a letter from Commodore LAMBERT, waited to see him; on this, he, together with MOUNG POGAN, went into the Governor's house, apparently to convey the message.

"They soon after returned, the one stating that the Governor was a great man, and was asleep and could not be awaked, but MOUNG POGAN called Mr. EDWARDS on one side and asked him to go up and speak with the Governor; understanding this by his grimace, without waiting to be confirmed in the correctness of my conclusion, I said he could not go, whereupon Captain LATTER asked me for your letter (which I gave him), that he might point to it while explaining that it was one of a most peaceful kind, and insisted upon the necessity of our being received; whereupon the attendant and MOUNG POGAN went again, as it were, to see the Governor, saying, that we had better go and stand under the shed, a place where the common people usually assembled.

* Remembering the summary punishment already inflicted upon the wretched offender in this case, a recurrence to it as a grievance looks very much like a desire to find a ground of quarrel.



"Meanwhile, expressing the great inconvenience of staying in the sun, I was going up stairs with a view to sit in the Governor's waiting-room, but Captain LATTER interposed, and said it was not according to etiquette ; I was informed also that my going under the shed alluded to, for protection from the sun, would be considered by them as degrading ; I refrained from going, or rather returned to my original position at the foot of the stairs, for I had gone under the shed.

"The attendant and MOUNG POGAN returned, the former again repeating that the Governor was asleep, and MOUNG POGAN again expressed a wish that Mr. EDWARDS should go up, and, on this being again refused, proposed that your letter should be sent to the Governor by them, which I considered it my duty to refuse ; Captain LATTER, at the same time, explaining that if it were proper to send the letter by them, it were unnecessary to have sent the captain of an English man-of-war, and the next in command to the Commodore, with it.

"About this time, an officer came up, whom I recognised as one who had been on a deputation from the Governor to the Commodore ; and, being anxious to have matters settled amicably, I requested Captain LATTER to explain to him how improper the treatment we had received had been ; that he must be well aware that every deputation from the Governor and Deputy Governor had been received by the Commodore at all times, and with courtesy ; and, if it had been that the Commodore had been asleep, his principal officer would have had him awakened, and made acquainted with the fact of a deputation being in waiting for an audience with him, that he might receive it ; and to impress upon him the propriety and necessity for me, bearing a friendly letter from the Commodore, being received immediately ; for if I was not, I must consider it a premeditated insult, and go away and report the circumstance.

"I was quite satisfied of the insincerity of the statement relating to the Governor being asleep, from the manner of the attendant, and from the fact of MOUNG POGAN asking Mr. EDWARDS to go up to the Governor, and indeed from his appearing at the Governor's when we arrived—for, when we were getting our horses, to ride up, this MOUNG POGAN appeared, and was asked by Captain LATTER if the Governor knew we were coming, and he said he did not know ; then Captain LATTER said, 'You had better go up, and say that we are coming ;' to which he answered, 'I am a subject of Burmah, and cannot take a message to my Lord the Governor, unless I had permission from him.'

"Finding, after some little time, that the officer alluded to above did not return, I conceived it to be my duty to return, and report the circumstance ; in doing so, I returned most leisurely, to give them time to send after me with an apology ; and not finding my boat at the landing-place, I waited her arrival (for the same purpose), rather than come off earlier in a merchant-ship's boat, which was offered me.



On their return to the frigate, Commander FISHBOURNE reported (as above) to Commodore LAMBERT, the treatment the deputation had received. The Commodore appears to have instantly decided upon the course he would pursue:—without affording time or opportunity to the Governor to explain or apologise for what had occurred, without referring the matter to the government of India, which he might have done in a few days, or to the government of Ava as he had done before, he resolved, that very day, to enter upon hostilities with the Burmese nation. “The Commodore forthwith directed a boat to be sent to summon some of the English residents from the shore. On their arrival, he warned them to be prepared to leave the town during the afternoon, and requested them to give notice to all other British subjects. He ordered all the boats of the squadron to assist in bringing them off, and a steamer to be off the wharf to cover their embarkation.”* They were allowed to leave, without molestation.

“The British subjects, men, women and children, to the amount of several hundred, took refuge during the afternoon on board the shipping in the river, and before the evening had set in, the vessels had commenced dropping down the river.”†

“It was dark before the Commodore issued orders to seize what was usually styled, the ‘Yellow Ship.’‡ This ship, which belonged to the King of Ava, was anchored a little above the squadron. The same day, the following notification of blockade appeared:—Let the reader recollect that all these occurrences took place on the afternoon and night of the 6th January, in consequence of the deputation of that day *‘having been kept waiting for a full quarter of an hour in the sun.’*”§

“NOTIFICATION.

“In virtue of authority from the Governor-General of British India I do hereby declare the rivers of Rangoon, the Bassein, and the Salween above Moulmein, to be in a state of blockade; and, with the view to the strict enforcement thereof, a competent force will be stationed in, or near, the entrance of the said rivers immediately.

“Neutral vessels, lying in either of the blockaded rivers, will be permitted to retire within twenty days from the commencement of the blockade.

* P. 46.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ P. 72. Captain Latter's Narrative.



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“Neutral vessels, lying in either of the blockaded rivers, will be permitted to retire within twenty days from the commencement of the blockade.



Given under my hand, on board Her Britannic Majesty's frigate
For, off the town of Rangoon, the 6th of January, 1852.

"GEORGE R. LAMBERT,

"Commodore in Her Britannic Majesty's Navy."

"By command of the Commodore,

"J. L. SOUTHEY, Secretary."

Let us now pause for a moment to recapitulate the facts which we have been narrating. It has been seen that Commodore LAMBERT, setting aside the instructions he had received, refused to communicate with the former Governor of Rangoon, on the plea of a long list of fresh complaints having been preferred against him; and that the Governor-General of India, whilst refusing to espouse those grievances, had sanctioned the course which, the Commodore had taken upon himself to pursue. We have seen how Commodore LAMBERT entered into correspondence with the Court of Ava, although instructed not to do so, until he had been refused reparation by the Governor; and how he remained off Rangoon, waiting the reply, which he peremptorily demanded in thirty-five days, notwithstanding that the Governor-General had intimated to him that, pending the return of an answer, he might proceed to the Persian Gulf; and we have seen that these deviations from his instructions received the sanction of the Governor-General of India.

Need we wonder at what followed? In the teeth of an express injunction, that, even should the reply to his demand for redress be unfavourable, no act of hostility was to be committed, "*nor until definite instructions regarding such hostilities shall be given by the Government of India.*"* Commodore LAMBERT commenced hostilities, by seizing the King's ship, and declaring the coast in a state of blockade, and this, notwithstanding that he had himself five days previously in his letter to Sir JOHN LITTLER, declared his belief *that the King of Ava was sincere in his promise of reparation "and would fully act up to what he had promised;"* and to crown all, let it be added that those hostile acts were committed before the answer from the King of Ava (which the latter believed Commodore LAMBERT, was himself carrying to Calcutta) could have been received by the Governor General of India, he being at that



being in Camp at Benares. It may be added, that when received, it elicited from the Indian Government, the following testimony to its pacific and conciliatory character.

"The letter addressed by the Ministers of the King of Ava to the Government of India, was friendly in its tone, and entirely satisfactory in its tenor. The Court of Ava promised at once to remove the Governor of Rangoon, and to inquire into, in order to redress, the injuries complained of.

"If there had been any good reason to doubt the sincerity of these assurances, their prompt fulfilment must have cleared away those doubts. The offending Governor was at once removed, and his successor took his place at Rangoon."*

And here I will only mention for future comment, the fact, the almost incredible fact, that there does not appear in the whole of the papers presented to Parliament, one word or syllable of remonstrance or remark on the part of the Governor-General, in vindication of his own authority—no not even after Commodore LAMBERT, as if in very derision and mockery, had in his notification declared the coast in a state of blockade, "*in virtue of authority from the Governor-General of British India.*"†

The conduct of the Governor of Rangoon is now a subject of minor importance;—the question for the statesman, the historian, and the moralist is—were we justified, whatever his behaviour was, with the known friendly disposition of the King, in commencing war against the Burmese nation? Let us, however, see if the papers before us will throw any light upon the origin of the treatment which the English deputation received at the house of the Governor.

And in the first place, as it is only fair that he should be heard in his own defence, I insert a letter of explanation addressed by the Governor of Rangoon to the Governor-General of India. The letter bears no date, but it was delivered to Commodore LAMBERT on the 8th January:—

"LETTER DELIVERED TO COMMODORE LAMBERT BY A DEPUTATION FROM THE GOVERNOR OF RANGOON.

"I, MAHAMENGHLA MENG KHANNYGYAN, appointed by the King of Ava (here follow the Royal titles) and by the great Ministers of State,



after due consultation, to rule all the Southern Districts (i. e., from Prome to Martaban, including Rangoon), and to have my residence at Rangoon, inform the English rulers and war-chiefs :

"That in conformity with the demand made by the English rulers, that the former Governor of Rangoon should be removed from his situation, on account of having oppressed and maltreated British merchants trading with the Port of Rangoon, and in order that a proper person might be appointed as Governor of Rangoon who would be capable of protecting the merchants and poor people, the former Governor was recalled to the royal presence. A letter was sent to the English rulers, informing them that a proper investigation into all complaints should be made, and I arrived at Rangoon.

"Being actuated by the highest feelings of friendship to Commodore LAMBERT, whilst I was intending to send for him, the interpreter, EDWARDS, came and told me that he had come to acquaint me that Commodore LAMBERT wished to have an interview with me ; and, as I was fearful that any of the others might behave discourteously, and not according to the rules of etiquette, I decreed that the interpreter EDWARDS, might come with the letter or communication. But after some time, four inferior officers, an American clergyman, called KINCAID, and the interpreter EDWARDS, came in a state of intoxication, and, contrary to custom, entered the compound on horseback ; and whilst I was asleep, and the Deputy Governor was waking me, used violent and abusive language. They then went away, and conveyed an irritating message to the Commodore ; and that officer, listening to their improper and unbecoming representations, and with a manifest inclination to implicate the two nations in war, on the 6th of January, 1852, at night, with secrecy, took away the ship belonging to His Majesty the King of Ava.

"I however, in consequence of there being a treaty of peace between the two nations, did not re-seize the vessel ; and though they were the bearers of a Royal message, on account of their unjustifiable conduct. The frigate stuck on the shore near Dallah. I did not, however, molest them, or destroy them, but acted worthily to these unworthy men ; and I now represent this conduct of Commodore LAMBERT to the English rulers, who came from one country to another, and behaved in a manner unbecoming an Ambassador."

Passing by the charge of "intoxication" as unworthy of notice, we come to the real ground of offence in the fact of "four inferior officers" having, "contrary to custom, entered the compound on horseback," or in other words, having rode, without invitation, into the open court of the Governor's palace. The reader, if he has perused Mr. Crawford's interesting narrative of his mission to Ava, in 1826, or if he enjoy the pleasure of the acquaintance of

that best living authority upon the habits of the Burmese, will have no difficulty in understanding the cause of the unseemly wrangle which took place between the British deputation and the Governor's attendants. One of the gravest questions of Burmese etiquette was involved in the approach of a visitor, whether on an elephant or on horseback, to the Governor's residence. The English officers outraged, perhaps unconsciously, his most cherished sense of dignity and decorum, in riding into the Governor's compound. They had no right, being subordinate in rank, to a formal reception. Commodore LAMBERT was alone entitled to that honour, and the preliminary arrangements for their meeting would have, perhaps, called for the display of great tact and temper. In all probability, the settling of the ceremonial of an interview would have taken more time than the negotiation for the payment of the thousand pounds. But, surely, Englishmen, who have the most formal Court in Christendom, ought not to be the least tolerant of Asiatic ceremonies. Commander FISHBOURNE seems to have thought it quite sufficient that Captain LATTEY dispatched MOUNG POGAN a little in advance of the deputation "to say that we are coming." What should we think of an American deputation who required us to dispense with our Lord Chamberlains, Goldsticks, and Beef-eaters, and receive them after the simple fashion of the White House at Washington? Might we not probably doubt if they were sober?

In a word, the Governor was "asleep," *anglice*, "not at home," to avoid the embarrassment and danger of an interview. But he did not refuse to receive the Commodore's letter; he requested Mr. EDWARDS to bring it, and moreover, according to Commander FISHBOURNE's statement, MOUNG POGAN and the attendants in the Governor's compound begged to be allowed to convey the letter to their master. But I find that the Governor-General of India, in a long and elaborate Minute of February 12th, in which the incidents of the rupture are recapitulated, admits the breach of etiquette on the part of our officers:—

"Assuming," says the Governor-General, "that there was in the deputation of these officers a neglect of strict form, although (be it observed) no such forms had been attended to on his own part, by the Governor of Rangoon, whose letter had been conveyed to the Commodore by officers



of the humblest rank, and admittance had been freely granted to them; admitting, I say, that ceremonial had not been duly observed, the omission affords no justification whatever, for the insult and contumely which were publicly heaped upon these officers, the known agents, for the time, of the Government they served."

And again,

"The persons of the officers were known, their mission was known, their approach had been announced; and although the omission of ceremonial form to which I have alluded, might have given to the Governor a plausible pretext for declining to receive the officers in person, his own conduct in the transmission of his communications had greatly weakened that pretext; while nothing could justify the gross, deliberate, and studied affront which was put upon the British Government, in the person of its officers, conveying a communication on its behalf to the Representative of the King of Ava."*

The same loose and illogical reasoning which I have before had to notice, characterises these passages from the Governor-General's "Minute." What could possibly be more inconclusive than the argument, if I may call it so, in the above extract, where, after admitting the breach of etiquette on the part of our officers, it is contended that the Governor of Rangoon had no right to complain, because he had himself sent letters to Commodore LAMBERT, "by officers of the humblest rank, and admittance had been freely granted to them." This might have been a valid plea if the complaint of the Governor had been that his visitors were of too low a rank; but it was just the reverse—the very thing desired by him was, that the Commodore would follow his example, and forward his letter by a person in the humble position of Mr. EDWARDS, or one of his own attendants. The embarrassment of the Governor, arose from his being called on to give audience to visitors who were not his equals in rank, and who yet could not be treated as inferiors, or messengers. To Englishmen, all this appears excessively childish, and it is because it does so, that an English Governor need not trouble himself about such matters;—not so with the Burmese:—"With them," says the Governor-General in the same "Minute," "forms are essential substance, and the method of communication and the style of address, are not words but acts."† And it is worthy of notice, that at a subsequent stage of this affair, in the "Minute" for the guidance



of General Godwin, when he was dispatched in command of the expedition to Rangoon, the Governor-General, after ordering him in a certain contingency to arrange a meeting with the chief officer of the King of Ava, adds:—"the forms of such meetings should be arranged previously, and a record made of them; it being understood that they are to be the recognized forms of reception of the British agent for the future."* It is a most perplexing fact throughout these papers, that although it is apparent that the Governor-General perceives the rashness of the acts of Commodore LAMBERT, and even provides against their repetition in future, and whilst it is impossible to doubt that he must feel the humiliation of having his authority entirely set aside—yet not one word falls from him, to show that he was more than a passive looker-on at the contemptuous disregard of his own instructions!

But to return to the scene of operations before Rangoon, where, as will be recollected, Commodore LAMBERT had declared the coast of Burmah in a state of blockade, and seized the King's ship, because his officers had been kept a "full quarter of an hour" waiting in the sun.

Much has been said about the arrogance of the Burmese, their contempt for other nations, and their desire to enter upon hostilities with the English. The papers before us prove, on the contrary, that they felt the utmost dread of our power. A covey of partridges with a hawk in view, ready to make its fell swoop, or a flock of sheep with a wolf's eyes glaring into the fold, could not shrink more timidly from their terrible and irresistible foe than did the Burmese officials at the prospect of a hostile collision with England. Captain LATTER says, that so great was their apprehension when the Commodore seized the King's ship, that "they even seemed alarmed for the safety of their own heads."†

"On Wednesday, the 7th January, at day-break, Her Majesty's Steamer, *Hermes*, took the King's ship in tow, and the whole squadron proceeded down the river a short distance, the frigate remaining a little below Dallah."‡ I must here introduce the reader to an interesting personage, in the Governor of Dallah.

"But whilst the conduct of the Rangoon authorities was so unsatisfactory," says Captain LATTER, in his narrative of the earlier events



Before the arrival of the new Governor, "a marked exception existed in the person of the Governor of Dallah, a town on the other side of the river. Commodore LAMBERT, from information he had received of the favourable disposition of the Governor, had paid him an unofficial visit, in order, personally, to impress upon an officer of his rank and respectable character, his (the Commodore's) peaceful views and wishes. The Commodore was received by the Dallah Governor with the greatest courtesy and respect; and throughout the whole of the subsequent annoying transactions, the conduct of the Dallah Governor was all that could be expected from a good man and a gentleman."

Let us now continue the narrative of the events of the 7th of January, as they are given to us by Captain LATTER.

"During the morning of this day, the Dallah Governor came off, being sent by the Governor of Rangoon to see what he could do in the business. The Commodore informed him, that in consideration of his (the Commodore's) personal regard for him, and as a mark of the appreciation in which he held his admirable conduct during the whole time the expedition had been lying off Rangoon, he would in a measure, deviate from his first intentions, and that he would again open communications with the present Governor, if that officer would come himself on board his frigate, and express his regret for the insult that he had offered to the British Flag, in the persons of the deputation sent to him the previous day. The Dallah Governor took his leave, and after some hours, the Under-Governor of Rangoon, with the interpreter, MOUNG POGAN, made his appearance. He was the bearer of a letter† from the Governor, declaring that he really was asleep when the deputation reached him; that he did not wish to see a deputation of inferior officers; that he would see the Commodore, and wished the Commodore to go to him. He did not in the slightest degree express any regret or sorrow for what had occurred. The Commodore informed the Under-Governor, that he would not swerve from the ultimatum he had already given through the Governor of Dallah, and he gave him till noon of the next day to make up his mind. A good deal more conversation took place, owing to the Under-Governor endeavouring to shake the Commodore's determination. Both he and the others contradicted themselves every few minutes; now asserting that the Governor was asleep at the time the deputation came to his door; next asking why Mr. EDWARDS did not come to him when he sent to call him. At one time the Under-Governor denied being at the interview in which Mr. EDWARDS complained of having been threatened with a dagger; then, when pressed, acknowledging that he was at the interview, but that he had neither seen or heard anything about it. It would be as tedious, as it would be unnecessary, to enter into a detail



of all the lies and subterfuges they were guilty of, till at last they left the frigate, when they complained of the seizure of the King's ship. The Commodore informed them that he had seized it because it was the King's ship; that had it been a common Burmese merchant-ship, he would not have taken possession of it; and that he seized it, as much for the purpose of showing them that the acts of subordinates, if not promptly disowned and punished by those whom they represented, would be inevitably visited on the principals; *that he had no doubt, that when the King of Ava became acquainted with the insolent conduct of his subordinates to those who came to make a friendly communication, refusing to receive such communication, and thus jeopardizing his Throne, he would visit them with condign punishment; that if the Governor of Rangoon wished to avoid such a fate, he had only to accede to his, the Commodore's demands in everything; that then, when all his demands had been fully complied with, he would give back the King's ship, and salute the flag of Burmah with a royal salute. He furthermore impressively added, that until further instructions came from the Governor-General of India, of which they would be duly informed, nothing should induce him to act aggressively, unless they commenced hostilities themselves; and he concluded by saying, that should any detriment occur to the King of Ava, from what had occurred, it would wholly rest upon the head of the Governor of Rangoon.*

It will be seen that the difficulty between the Commodore and the Governor turns still upon a point of etiquette. The Governor complains of the deputation of "inferior officers"—wishes to see the Commodore himself, and asks him to come on shore to him; the latter insists upon the former going on board his ship to make an apology; instead of which, the Governor of Rangoon sends his deputy Governor, for he himself would probably prefer death to the dishonour which he would suffer in the eyes of his people, if he were to submit to the humiliating terms proposed to him. And I will here mention the fact, that when these conditions were made known to the Governor-General of India, he, *without comment*, expunged from the ultimatum the harsh condition requiring a visit to the Commodore's ship, and merely demanded a written apology.* But this altercation between two subordinate officers is a matter of secondary importance; the real question being, was Lord DALHOUSIE, the Governor-General of India, who adopted as his own all Commodore LAMBERT's acts, justified in commencing hostilities against the Burmese nation, after the proofs afforded



of the fair and conciliatory disposition of the King? The passage in the above extract which I have marked with italics, appears to me to decide the question; for there we find the Commodore himself declaring, *after* he had seized the royal ship, his belief that the King was still actuated by such just and friendly feelings, that he would visit with condign punishment those who had insulted the deputation. *What possible pretence could there be then for committing an act of hostility against him?*

During the next day, Thursday, the 8th, the Dallah Governor came on board the frigate, and stated that "he was very anxious that the Commodore should give up the King's ship, as that any punishment the King might inflict upon his servants for its loss might be partially visited upon him, as the ship was taken away in the waters between his government and that of the Governor of Rangoon." * This request was refused, but as a mark of esteem for the Governor of Dallah, the Commodore prolonged the time for the Rangoon Governor to accede to his terms from noon till sunset. The Commodore now received a message from the Governor of Rangoon, "to the effect, that if he attempted to take the King of Ava's ship out of the river, he would fire on him." †

I have already stated, that on this day, a letter of explanation from the Governor of Rangoon ‡ to the Governor-General of India was delivered by a deputation to Commodore LAMBERT, to be forwarded to Calcutta.

Now follows the catastrophe, which must be described in Commodore LAMBERT's own words:—

"Shortly after daylight this morning (January 10th) I weighed, and caused the merchant-vessels to follow me. They were assisted and guarded by the East India Company's steam-vessel *Phlegethon*, and the boats of this ship. *On my arrival off the great stockade, I anchored, and found it occupied by a considerable force.* An immense number of large war-boats, with guns mounted in them, were also lying close to the shore, and at the entrance of a small creek, under the walls of the stockade, and were fully manned. Their behaviour was exceedingly threatening, but I refrained from interfering with them, as I had promised yesterday that I would not fire on the Burmese first.

"Her Majesty's steam-sloop *Hermes*, with the King of Ava's ship in



passed us at half-past nine, when the stockade opened a sharp cannonade on Her Majesty's ship *Fox*, which was instantly returned with shot and shell, and the Burmese battery was in a short time silenced. On the smoke clearing away, not a person was to be seen on the shore or in the boats.*

"Our fire, I have no doubt, must have done great execution, for I have reason to believe that at least 3000 men were opposed against us. One or two of the enemy's shot struck the *Fox* but did very trifling damage. Their shot in general fell short, a few only passing over us, and their small arms did no execution.

"I then sent the *Phlegethon* and the boats of the *Fox* close in shore, to destroy the war-boats, which was easily accomplished, and their guns spiked, or thrown into the river. Their crews, being unable to stand our fire, had fled on the first broadside.

"The *Hermes*, in the meantime, engaged a stockade on the opposite side of the river, which had opened a fire on her; her heavy guns and a few rockets soon silenced this battery, and compelled the Burmese to retire."†

A word or two in the way of recapitulation. On the 6th, at night, Commodore LAMBERT seized the King's ship which he held in his possession at anchor opposite the town for three days, during which time the Burmese made no attempt to retake it; but, on the contrary, conciliatory visits were paid to the Commodore, by the authorities of the highest rank in the neighbourhood, (short of the Governor of the district); and letters of explanation to the Governor-General and to Commodore LAMBERT, as well as friendly messages, were forwarded from the Governor of Rangoon himself. There is no reason to suppose that any act of hostility would have been committed, had the King's ship been merely kept at anchor, in the power of the British. But to have allowed a Burmese ship of war to be towed out of the river by foreigners, passing under the great stockade, or battery, without molestation, would have involved the disgrace and destruction of those who were responsible

* On the news of this event reaching England, it gave rise to a discussion in the House of Lords, when the following remark was made by Lord DERBY, then Prime Minister (April 5th, 1852):—

"On receiving information of the insults offered to Commander FRANKBOURNE, Commodore LAMBERT said it was impossible that he could continue communications with such a government, and actually withdrew;—but unfortunately, as I think, by way of retaliation for the insults offered to his officer, taking on himself without previous instructions, to seize a vessel of the King of Ava, which he carried with him."

to the King of Ava, for the protection of his property. Notice was therefore given, that if the Commodore attempted to remove the King's ship out of the river, he would be fired upon: upon which, as if determined to force a collision, taking his own vessel the *Fox* opposite the great stockade, he there dropped anchor; the *Hermes* passed with the King's ship in tow, and the stockade opened a fire, apparently with no other object but to save the honour of the Burmese flag, for upon the discharge of a broadside from the *Fox* the battery was silenced, and its garrison fled. "Great execution," we are told, was done by our fire: I hope not; for in the eyes of God, and of just men, every life sacrificed must, I fear, be regarded as a case of murder.

Let us suppose that, instead of Rangoon, the scene of these operations had been at Charleston. There is at present pending between this country and the United States a question of difficulty and delicacy, arising out of the conduct of the authorities of South Carolina at Charleston, who have seized a British sailor, on no better plea than that his skin is not so white as that of his captors, and subjected him to confinement in a common gaol, until the departure of his vessel. We shall suppose that the commander of our squadron on that station, Commodore LAMBERT by name, has been dispatched to demand redress. On his arrival at Charleston, he finds the Governor such an impracticable pro-slavery character, that he addresses a letter of complaint to the Federal Government at Washington, in reply to which he receives a conciliatory answer, assuring him that everything possible shall be done to remedy the grievance. On announcing the receipt of this communication to his own government, the Commodore adds, "I am of opinion that the *President* is sincere, and that his government will fully act up to what he has promised."* Before this announcement has reached London, where it would be made the subject of complimentary remark by the Minister of the Crown,†

* *Ante*, p. 13.

† When the news of the removal of the Governor of Rangoon reached England, and before the subsequent events were known, it elicited from the representative of the then Whig Administration in the *House of Lords* the following remarks:—"The events proved," said the Marquis of LANSDOWNE, "the propriety and justice of the Commodore's mode of proceeding; for that letter addressed to the King of Ava was taken into consideration by him



we will suppose that an insult has been offered by the Governor of South Carolina to some officers of the British squadron—the bearers of a letter from the Commodore. A ship of war belonging to the Government of the United States, lying at Charleston, is instantly seized, and, notwithstanding notice was given, that if an attempt should be made to carry her off the Commodore's ships would be fired upon from the shore, she is towed out to sea, the American battery opening fire as they pass, and receiving in return a broadside which does "great execution." What would have been the response to this news when it reached England? Can any one doubt that one unanimous cry would have been raised for the disgrace and punishment of Commodore LAMBERT? And why is a different standard of justice applied in the case of Burmah? Ask your own conscience, reader, if you be an Englishman, whether any better answer can be given than that America is powerful, and Burmah weak.

It might be expected that having carried off a ship of war and killed a number of the Burmese forces, sufficient "satisfaction" had been obtained for a claim of £920. But the coast of Burmah was still declared in a state of blockade.

On the day after the removal of the King's ship, the following petition from the resident merchants, prepared at the instance of the Governor, was sent by a flag of truce to Commodore LAMBERT, but no answer was returned:—*

PETITION FROM THE ARMENIAN, MOGUL, SOORATTEE, NURRAPOOR, PARSEE, CHULIAH, AND MUSSULMAN INHABITANTS AND MERCHANTS OF RANGOON TO COMMODORE LAMBERT.

"January 11th, 1852.

"THE two great countries being in peace, your petitioners have continued with their wives and children for many years to reside and trade in this country.

and his Majesty felt that reparation was due to us, and immediately removed the Governor from his post. *I have no reason to presume that the redress asked for will not fairly be given. The course taken by the King has been extremely just; and he has sent two persons to the spot, in order to inquire into the various acts of injustice, and settle the amount of compensation to be paid in respect of them.*" Long before these observations were made (February 16th, 1852), Commodore LAMBERT had carried off this "just" king's ship and done "great execution" amongst his subjects.



The late Governor (of Rangoon) having been dismissed for unjustifiable and improper conduct, was taken to the Golden Feet (capital of Ava), in obedience to the royal order, for punishment.

"Subsequently, the Aye Bain (present Governor) having arrived, was prepared to meet and discuss with the Commodore whatever remained to be adjusted. *Not having been enabled to do so, he has sent for and desired your petitioners to make the following representation respecting the communication made to the Governor of Dallah, viz.*

"That he is willing to abide by the provisions of the Yandaboo Treaty.

"To agree to a Resident being appointed.

"To pay the sum of upwards of 9000 rupees.

"And to have a Residency House erected.

"In accordance with the Royal order, the above subjects were to have been discussed by the two great men in an amicable and friendly manner, but Commodore Lambert has not given him an opportunity of doing so.

"Your petitioners and the merchants, both great and small, at Rangoon and at the capital of Ava amount to upwards of 600 souls, 'who are in a condition of being stranded in shallow water.'

"Your petitioners, therefore, most humbly entreat you, in the name of Almighty God, to have pity upon them, and to save and protect them from ruin and destruction."

Abandoning in despair any further attempts to propitiate Commodore LAMBERT, the Burmese now addressed themselves to *Colonel Bogle, Commissioner in the Tenasserim Provinces*, a territory which was wrested from Burmah in the war of 1826, and which lies upon the frontier of that empire. To him the Governor of Rangoon forwarded, on the 16th January, a letter for the Governor-General of India, the contents of which were almost a repetition of the letter delivered by a deputation from the same functionary to Commodore LAMBERT on the 8th. The Governor of Martaban, a Burmese port situated opposite to Moulmein, the principal sea-port of Tenasserim, forwarded also at the same time the following letter to Colonel BOGLE:—

"THE GOVERNOR OF MARTABAN TO THE BRITISH COMMISSIONER AT MOULMEIN.

"January 21st, 1852.

"TIKLA MYO TSA MOTAMA MYO MINGYEE (Martaban Governor) Mingyee Maha thinka yab, informs the Moulmein Mingyee and Aya-bing Ming (Commissioner and Principal Assistant Commissioner), that,

so much as peace and tranquillity is the sole object in view between the two great kingdoms, a friendly intercourse being established, traffic has hitherto been carried on between the merchants of the two countries without interruption. In consequence, however, of complaints having been preferred against the former Rangoon Myowoon, that he oppressed foreign merchants, certain English officers were dispatched on a mission to represent them. These officers arrived, and thirty-five days being fixed as the period within which their despatches were to be transmitted, and the Royal answer received, *while yet the mandate issued from the Shway Shoot Tah (the Golden Royal Court) was on its way to India, there came the intelligence that the English officers had attacked and carried off the King's ship out of the port of Rangoon. Now the Governor-General of India simply appointed the Mission to treat; they had no instructions to fight; and, should this capture of His Majesty's ship prove the occasion of a fierce war, the trade between the two countries will be sacrificed for an unprofitable quarrel. It is not right that there should be a war. The character of those in authority depends upon peace, and a free and uninterrupted trade; hence, therefore, the dispatch of these letters; and it is requested that the English Government will return a full and explicit answer to them.*

The common sense and logic of the above, as well as its philanthropic sentiments, present, I am sorry to say, a most favourable contrast to the Christian side of this correspondence. This letter ought, in fact, to have been written by the Governor-General of India to Commodore LAMBERT, calling on him to justify his seizure of the royal ship, whilst the King of Ava's letter was still on its way to India, and reminding him that he was sent on a mission to treat, but that he had strict injunctions not to fight.

In this and the other Burmese letters written after the rupture, the seizure of the King's ship is alluded to with an emphasis which shows that, although certainly unacquainted with the writings of VATTEL or PUFFENDORF, the writers are well aware that it constituted an act of war; and since no declaration of war had been published, and seeing that they still regarded Commodore LAMBERT as merely the bearer of a communication to their Government from a superior power, to whom an answer conceding all that was demanded had been returned by the King of Ava, they were perplexed at the conduct of the English Commander, and sometimes almost doubted whether he was really the person he represented himself to be. "Unlike a man of the world, son of a great country," says the Governor of Rangoon, "and actuated

only, by a wish to create a quarrel, he *covertly unmoored and carried off the great ship.*"* And in another letter he says, "On the 6th January, at midnight, Commodore LAMBERT took away the ship belonging to His Majesty the King of Ava. On the following day, I sent the Deputy-Governor of Rangoon to represent to Commodore LAMBERT, that the act of taking His Majesty's ship *by stealth, and unjustly, was in no wise in accordance with the acts proper to two great nations.*"† "In a manner unbecoming the sons of a great nation," says the Governor of Bassein, "*you secretly stole and took away the ship belonging to the King of Ava.*"‡ And again, to quote from another letter from the Rangoon Governor: "Commodore LAMBERT expresses surprise at having been fired at by the officers in charge of the stockades of Dumont and Thilawa, but it is a matter of greater surprise that the Royal Ship of His Majesty should have been seized at midnight, contrary to the custom of great nations and the rules of justice."§ In fact, throughout all the subsequent correspondence, there is on the part of the Burmese, a constant recurrence to this outrageous act of violence. They attached comparatively little importance to the blockade of their ports;|| but neither the French, nor the Americans could apparently have felt more keenly than they did, the insult offered in the seizure, "at midnight" of the King's ship.

Let the reader of the few remaining pages of this narrative, always bear in mind that the two contending parties, from this moment, stand in the following relative positions towards each other. The English complain that the Burmese have extorted 9948 rupees, (a fraction under a thousand pounds) from British subjects, and that a deputation of their officers has been kept waiting "a full quarter of an hour" in the sun; and on the other side, it must be remembered that the English have carried off the only ship of war belonging to the Burmese Government, (worth probably ten times as much as 9948 rupees,) doing in the act "great execution" amongst their troops, without suffering any loss or injury themselves, and that they have established a blockade of all the Burmese ports.

I have said that a letter was sent by the Governor of Rangoon,

* P. 58.

† P. 63.

‡ P. 71.

§ P. 56.

|| P. 68.



through Commodore LAMBERT, to the Governor-General of India, on the 8th of January, two days after the seizure of the King's ship. The reader is requested to reperuse that letter.* It will be seen, that after an explanatory allusion to his own conduct towards the deputation, which he charges with having been intoxicated, the Governor makes a complaint that the Commodore had a "manifest inclination to implicate the two nations in war;" and he concludes with these words, "I now represent this conduct of Commodore LAMBERT to the English rulers, who came from one country to another, and behaved in a manner unbecoming an ambassador."

The reply of the Government of India, is dated January 26th. The letter begins with an expression of extreme surprise that the Governor of Rangoon had listened to the falsehoods of his servants respecting the inebriety of the officers composing the deputation, and then proceeds to complain of the disrespectful conduct shown to them "at the gates of the Governor's palace."†

"If," continues the despatch, "those officers were inferior in rank, as the Governor now declares, and if the customs of his country were thereby violated, or any apparent disrespect were shown to the Governor, or his Sovereign, the departure from custom ought to have been properly represented by the Governor, when the error would, doubtless, have been corrected."

After declaring that the Government of India would not allow its officers to suffer insult, without requiring reparation, the letter concludes with the following specific demands :—

"1. The Governor will express, in writing, to the Government of India, his deep regret that Commander FISHBOURNE and the officers deputed by Commodore LAMBERT to the Governor, should have been treated with disrespect, and exposed to public insult at his own residence, on the 6th of January.

"2. He will consent to pay immediately the compensation already demanded of 9,948 rupees, for injuries done to Captain SHEPPARD and Captain LEWIS.

"3. He will consent to receive with the honour due to the Representative of the British Government, the accredited Agent whom, in accordance with the 7th clause of the Treaty of Yandaboo, the Government is prepared to appoint.

"If these concessions shall be made, the British Government will agree as follows :—

"1. The Government of India will depute an officer of rank to proceed to Rangoon, in order to adjust the final settlement of the questions



above mentioned, and to arrange the details for the reception of the Agent. The preliminaries having been settled by the subordinates of the chiefs, a meeting shall take place, and all differences shall be composed.

"2. On this settlement being completed, the ship belonging to the King of Ava, which has been seized by the squadron, shall be released.

"3. The blockade shall be removed, and entire concord shall be restored.

"If these demands shall be refused, the British Government will thereafter exact for itself the reparation which is due for the wrong it has suffered."

The reader will observe that not the slightest allusion is made to the complaint of the Governor of Rangoon respecting the seizure of the King's ship. On the contrary, it is assumed that the British are still the aggrieved parties, to whom reparation is due, notwithstanding the capture of that vessel, and the slaughter which accompanied its removal. I ask the reader again to suppose that a similar despatch, under the like circumstances, had been received from America, would the complaint in such a case have passed unnoticed?

I give the answer of the Rangoon Governor in full. The letters of the Burmese authorities, translated into English, be it remembered, by a hostile pen, are remarkable for their terseness and clear common sense, and offer a striking contrast to the lengthy, rambling, and inconclusive reasoning which characterises the British part of the correspondence:—

"THE GOVERNOR OF RANGOON TO MR. HALLIDAY.

"Rangoon, February 2nd, 1852.

"MAHAMENGLA MENCKHOMGYAN (with titles), Governor of Rangoon, informs Mr. FREDERICK JAMES HALLIDAY, Secretary to the Government of India (with titles).

"With reference to the demand of an expression of deep regret for the circumstance of the deputation of officers sent by Commodore LAMBERT on the 6th of January last, being said to have been publicly treated with disrespect:

"With reference to the being willing immediately to make good the sum of 9,948 rupees, said to have been extorted from Captains LEWIS and SHEPPARD, by the former Governor of Rangoon;

"With reference to being willing to receive a Resident with all honour due to his rank and station, in conformity to the VIIth Article of the Treaty of Yandaboo;



first, the Governor of Rangoon, first, the ship belonging to the King of Ava, which has been seized, will be given back; secondly, the blockade now existing will be raised, and perfect concord restored.

"With reference to the above points contained in your letter, I, the Governor of Rangoon, taking them into my careful consideration, give the following reply:—

"On the 6th of January, 1852, Commodore LAMBERT, at midnight, took away the ship belonging to His Majesty the King of Ava. On the following day, I sent the Deputy-Governor of Rangoon to represent to Commodore LAMBERT, that the act of taking his Majesty's ship by stealth, and unjustly, was in no wise in accordance with the acts proper to two great nations.

"Commodore LAMBERT stated in reply, that his reason for seizing the King's ship was, because a deputation of subordinate officers sent by him had not been received.

"Commodore LAMBERT then wrote a letter to the Prime Ministers of Ava, as also transmitting one to myself, which were delivered to one of my subordinate officers. These letters were to the effect, that he, Commodore LAMBERT, had seized the King's ship, because the pecuniary claims under discussion had not been satisfied.

"What Commodore LAMBERT expressed, as above stated, both verbally and in writing, was not in conformity with the custom of great nations. This the Government of India are aware of; moreover, being aware of it, they have written a friendly letter, evincing their wish that the long-existing good understanding between the two nations should be renewed, and commerce and communication restored as they were before.

"Therefore, as soon as the officer which the Government of India is prepared to appoint in conformity with existing treaties, shall arrive, a satisfactory and amicable arrangement can be made of the payment of the 9,948 rupees extorted from Captains LEWIS and SHEPPARD; also with reference to the re-delivery of the King of Ava's Ship, seized by Commodore LAMBERT.

"With reference to the question of the disrespect said to have been shown to the deputation sent with a letter by Commodore LAMBERT, it should be borne in mind, that the English officers have been stating their own version of the case, and consequently, whilst shielding themselves, they have thrown all the blame on the other side."

Considering the sense of grievance felt by the writer, and which upon every principle of international law he was justified in feeling, remembering that not one syllable had been vouchsafed in explanation of the seizure of the King's ship, the above must be regarded as a conciliatory, nay, a most submissive communication.

What would America have said under the same circumstances?



No sooner did it reach the Governor-General of India than he, (with the Burmese ship of war still in his power) resolved to "exact reparation by force of arms;" orders were given for fitting out an armed expedition, and he now proclaimed as his ultimatum that, in addition to a compliance with the preceding demands, the Burmese should be compelled as the price of peace, "in consideration of the expenses of the expedition, and of compensation for property,* to pay ten lacs of rupees, or one hundred thousand pounds.

The "Minute," or rather the "Extract" from Lord DALHOUSIE's Minute, professing to give reasons in justification of these hostile proceedings, extends over nearly five pages of the Parliamentary papers. In justice to his own reputation, its author ought to call for the unabridged publication of this "Minute." In the emasculation which it underwent at the Board of Control, it must surely have lost the essential qualities of the original. It has none of the dignity or force which properly belong to a State-paper. It dwells with a minuteness quite feminine upon details respecting points of ceremonial, and breaches of etiquette; but in arguing the main questions at issue, the "Minute," in its present form, must be pronounced an unstatesmanlike, immoral, and illogical production.

These are strong words, but their truth can unfortunately be proved by evidence as strong.

The date of the Minute, is February 12th. Now let it be borne in mind, that up to this time there had been no ground for suspecting that the King of Ava had authorised the perpetration of any act of rudeness or injustice on the part of his servants at Rangoon, towards the British officers, or that he had abandoned his intention, in the sincerity of which Lord LANSDOWNE, and the Governor-General of India, and Commodore LAMBERT themselves, had expressed their belief, of satisfying the just demands of the Indian Government. Lord DALHOUSIE knew that on the 7th January, the day after the rupture at Rangoon, Commodore LAMBERT had written to the Burmese Ministers at Ava, informing them of what had occurred, and concluding his letter with these words: "Any explanation the Court of Ava may wish to make on the subject, I shall be ready to forward to the Governor-General of India."



A copy of this letter was in Lord DALHOUSIE's hands. He knew that an interval of thirty-five days was required for the receipt of an answer to a despatch sent to Ava, from Rangoon, and there was the additional time necessary for sending a steamer from Rangoon to Calcutta, which, with delays, could not fairly be calculated at less than another week, making together forty-two days. Now from January 7th, the date of Commodore LAMBERT's letter, to February 12th, the date of the "Minute," is just thirty-six days; so that this hostile expedition against the Burmese nation was resolved upon before sufficient time had been allowed to the King to offer the explanation which he had been invited to give. A letter from the King was, as we shall by and by see, on its way, and actually reached the Governor-General's hands within a week of the date of his "Minute."

But the unstatesmanlike fault (to use the mildest term) of the "Minute," lies in this—that whereas the specific charges are directed against the Governor of Rangoon and him only, an assumption pervades the whole argument, that the *Burmese Government* is the offending party :—hence the vague and confused phraseology which sometimes speaks of the "King," in some places of "Burmah," and in others, of the "Governor of Rangoon." But the sole object of the paper being, to justify an armed expedition against a country with which we had a treaty of peace and commerce, it must be evident that the acts and conduct of the Imperial Government, and not of one of its local officers, could alone justify a resort to hostilities; provided always, that the Government did not assume the responsibility of the acts of its servants. What would Lord DALHOUSIE have said, if the King of Ava had insisted upon treating with the Governor of Bombay, instead of himself?

The "Minute" professes to give a very detailed recapitulation of all that had occurred at Rangoon. Entire pages are devoted to disquisitions upon controverted points of punctilio. The offence offered to the majesty and power of England, in keeping the deputation waiting in the sun "a full quarter of an hour," is discussed in all its bearings; *but there is not one syllable of allusion to the fact that Commodore Lambert had, in the teeth of instructions to the contrary, carried off a Burmese vessel of war, and done "great execu-*

tion," among those who attempted to oppose him. Now, as this recapitulation of facts is intended to justify the despatch of a hostile expedition, to demand redress for certain injuries and insults, what must be said of the suppression of the one all-important fact, that we had already retaliated by force of arms, by seizing and carrying off ten times the amount of our pecuniary claim, and inflicting a hundred fold greater insult than that which had been offered to us,—thus in fact, changing the relative position of the two parties, and placing the Burmese in the situation of appellants for reparation and justice? What shall we say when after this *suppressio veri*, the Governor-General draws the following complacent deduction in favour of his "moderation and justice." *

"The recital I have given in the preceding paragraphs of the course of recent events, [omitting the chief event] will show that the original demand of the Government of India for redress was just and necessary; and that it was sought in a manner respectful to an independent nation. It will show, that a gross insult having been put upon this Government in the persons of its officers, the Government has not been eager to take offence, or perverse in refusing amends. It has shown itself sincerely desirous to open a way to reconciliation; it has practised the utmost moderation and forbearance." †

* The following description of the "execution" at the Stockades, when the King's ship was carried off, is extracted from *The Second Burmese War*; a volume by Lieutenant LAURIE, written at Rangoon. I give it as an illustration of the Governor-General's "moderation and forbearance."

"At length, the *Hermes* came in sight, rounding the point with the Burmese prize-vessel in tow. As she passed the Stockade, guns in rapid succession were opened on the vessels of war; at the same time, volleys of musketry were discharged upon them. The *Fox* immediately returned the enemy's fire by a terrific broadside; she likewise thundered forth against the war-boats which had ventured into the river. The *Hermes* then came up, and poured forth her shot and shell into the line of Stockade. The *Phlegethon* steamer, likewise, did vast destruction to the works. For nearly two hours were our vessels employed in spreading ruin and dismay around. During the conflict a large gun-boat having on board a gun of considerable calibre, and upwards of sixty armed men, was sunk by a broadside, when nearly all on board perished. Altogether, about three hundred of the enemy were killed, and about the same number wounded, in this first encounter with the Burmese. As the vessels proceeded down to the next Stockade, they were again fired on, but only by musketry. It was remarked, at the conclusion of these operations, that the enemy probably had no intention of serious resistance, but felt themselves obliged to make some show of defence, when they saw the King's property taken off, as the heads of the leading men were at stake."—pp. 30-31.



The reader will hardly think that more need be said to justify my charge of immorality : and now for a specimen of the illogical character of the "Minute."

In alluding to the blockade which had been established by Commodore LAMBERT, the "Minute" seeks to justify that act by reference to the instructions he had received.

"The act of the Governor of Rangoon," says Lord DALHOUSIE, "in refusing admittance to the deputation, under the circumstances of insolence and contumely which I have described, and in withholding all amends for his conduct, was rightly viewed by the Commodore as a rejection of the demand he had been sent to make. *He at once established the blockade which had been enjoined as the consequence of such rejection.*"*

Here we have it laid down, that the refusal of redress by the Governor of Rangoon was rightly considered as a justification of the hostile proceedings which followed. The following extract from the original instructions given to Commodore LAMBERT for his guidance, by the Governor-General, will show that the very opposite course was previously enjoined :—

"The refusal of the Governor of Rangoon," says Lord DALHOUSIE (October 31st), "to accede to a demand of reparation for a distinct breach of the treaty with Ava, *if it should be upheld by his Government*, would doubtless entitle the Government of India to proceed to exact reparation by force of arms, or to inflict such punishment on the Burmese State as circumstances might seem to require. *But the Government of India could not, with justice, proceed to such extremities, until it had communicated with the Court of Ava, respecting the conduct of its servant, the Governor of Rangoon, and had thereby afforded it an opportunity of disavowing his acts, and of making the reparation which he had refused to concede.*"†

And on a subsequent occasion, on the receipt of the intelligence that Commodore LAMBERT, having determined to hold no communication with the first Governor of Rangoon, had sent a letter to that effect to the King of Ava, the Governor-General again enjoined that the blockade of the Burmese ports should be made contingent only upon his receiving an unfavourable answer from the King :—

"*If the King's reply should be unfavourable,*" says Lord DALHOUSIE (December 27th), "*the only course we can pursue, which would not, on the one hand, involve a dangerous submission to injury, or, on the other*



and precipitate us prematurely into a war which moderate counsels may still enable us with honour to avert, *will be to establish a blockade of the two rivers at Rangoon and Moulmein, by which the great mass of the traffic of the Burmese empire is understood to pass.*"*

Nothing could be more clear or consistent with international law than these instructions for the guidance of the British commander; but no sooner does he set them aside, and begin hostilities in retaliation for the alleged acts of the Governor of Rangoon, than the Governor-General tries to justify him by an illogical deduction from his own previous despatch.—“He at once established the blockade which had been enjoined as the consequence of such rejection” (by the Governor of Rangoon) says Lord DALHOUSIE. There was, I repeat, no authority given to the Commodore to blockade the ports in retaliation for any act of the Governor of Rangoon,—*his instructions were precisely the reverse.*

I have before alluded to Colonel BOGLE who, at the time of the rupture at Rangoon, filled the post of Commissioner in the Tenasserim Provinces, bordering on the Burmese territory. His chief residence was on the Salween river, at the port of Moulmein, nearly opposite to, and a few miles distant from Martaban, one of the principal Burmese ports. The letters of this officer are almost the only part of the correspondence which an Englishman ought to read without blushing. In perusing his despatches, it is impossible not to detect, in spite of his official reserve, and the restraints which a sense of subordination imposed on him, that he had no sympathy for the violent proceedings which were being carried on in the neighbouring port of Rangoon, and that if the affair had been left in his hands, it might have been amicably settled in a few hours. In style as well as matter, his letters present a striking contrast to many of the loose and desultory compositions which accompany them; and his conduct appears to have been characterised by an energy and a forbearance which bespeak at once a humane and yet resolute man.

At the commencement of the misunderstanding with the Burmese, Colonel BOGLE was instructed by the Government at Calcutta to prepare against a sudden attack upon his Tenasserim

frontiers.* But far from any hostile attempts having been made on his territory, the Burmese authorities seem to have shown the most nervous anxiety to avoid a collision. On the 30th January, 1852, Colonel BOGLE informs the government of India that two messengers had come over to him from Martaban, bringing a letter to say that a party of British police had attacked the Burmese village of Pagat, that the people had driven back the police; but being apprehensive that a more serious collision might take place, the Burmese authorities earnestly requested that measures might be taken to repress any aggressive disposition on the part of the British, and to preserve peace.

"It appearing to me," continues Colonel BOGLE, "from the tone of the Burmese authorities, that the intelligence they had sent was true, and that they were actuated by a very friendly feeling, and not having received any report of the matter from any other source, I thought that the best way of settling the affair was to get into a steamer, and proceed to the spot at once." In proceeding up the river, *"the steamer,"* (continues Colonel BOGLE) *"took the ground close to the Martaban fortification, and remained fast for twenty minutes, within short musket-shot of the walls. The place was well filled with men, and I observed a couple of guns mounted on the ramparts; but no advantage was taken of the steamer being aground; and we remained unmolested until the tide rose, and the Phlegethon proceeded on her voyage."*† Let the reader bear in mind, that this incident, illustrating so strongly the pacific disposition of the Burmese, occurred three weeks after Commodore LAMBERT had seized the King's ship, and declared the whole coast of Burmah in a state of blockade, and whilst Martaban itself was actually blockaded by a couple of gun-boats:—

"Nor did the Burmese," continues Colonel BOGLE, "appear to entertain any fears that we would annoy them; the wharf near their large pagoda, and their walls on which, when passing a fortnight before, I did not see a single soul, were now crowded with men sitting quietly looking at us; the red flag—emblem of war—was flying arrogantly enough at many points all along the line; but women were also to be seen seated along the bank, which indicated perfect confidence that the steamer had not suddenly appeared within pistol-shot of the place with the intention of harassing any one."‡



The next day at noon, the steamer reached Pagat, her place of destination, when, to the astonishment of Colonel BOGLE, the first person that put off in a boat, was the identical Martaban official, who had the day before brought the letter, respecting the collision at Pagat, over to Moulmein. I cannot better describe what followed than in Colonel BOGLE's own clear and concise language:—

“ From him I learnt, that during the night he had been dispatched by the Governor of Martaban, to summon the chief of Pagat to his presence, and to take every possible measure to prevent hostilities; and he assured me, that having pulled all night, he had arrived that morning, and had, in conformity with his instructions, dispatched the chief to Martaban, and caused it to be intimated to all the inhabitants of Pagat and the neighbourhood, that they were to conduct themselves in the most peaceful manner possible, and to do nothing that could be offensive to the English authorities; and he begged that the people on the British side might receive similar orders.

“ He was immediately assured that I had no other desire than that all should remain quiet and peaceful, and, as a proof of my reluctance to avail myself of the power at my command, I directed all the boats which had been taken from Pagat, to be cast adrift from the stern of the *Phlegethon*, and restored to the Burmese, at the same time administering a stern warning to the recipients, that if the people of Pagat, who are notorious robbers, put a foot on the British side of the river, under the present state of affairs, they might chance to receive a less agreeable visit from the steamer, at whose crew and armament they gazed with considerable interest.

“ Having settled this matter to the entire satisfaction of the Burmese functionary, and received his earnest protestations of a desire to remain at peace, I visited several of our police ports and villages, where Lieutenant HORKINSON issued such orders as seemed proper; we then returned towards Moulmein, but again got aground under the walls of Martaban, and remained six hours hard and fast, within pistol-range of the shore; during the time (it was night) we could distinctly see crowds of Burmese around their watch-fires, but except just when the steam was blowing off with the remarkable noise which it always makes, they took no notice of us.

“ Now, coupling all the circumstances of this trip with the recent communications from the Governors of Rangoon and Martaban, noticed in my letter of the 27th instant, it appears to me probable that the pacific tone assumed by the Burmese is in consequence of orders from the Governor of Rangoon, to whom Martaban is now subordinate, or it may be dictated by weakness, and a backward state of preparation.”

Remembering that at the moment when this despatch was penned at Moulmein, Commodore LAMBERT was actually engaged in hostilities with the Burmese at Rangoon, (seventy miles distant) that he, the accredited representative of British power in Burmah, was forwarding to the government of India, accusations against the Burmese of the most hostile designs—bearing these circumstances in mind, it is apparent how strong must have been the sense of justice which prompted Colonel BOGLE, even at the risk of being charged with travelling out of his province, to bring to the knowledge of the Governor-General of India, the above facts, showing the pacific disposition of the Burmese authorities. This feeling was still more strongly evinced in the events which followed.

On the 7th February, two Burmese officials, called *Tsoetkays*, with "gold umbrellas," crossed over from Martaban to Moulmein, with a letter from the King of Ava to the Governor-General of India, which had just arrived in eleven days direct from the Capital, with a request from the Governor of Martaban that Colonel BOGLE would transmit it to Calcutta. After delivering the letter, inclosed in an ivory case and a red velvet cover, with all proper ceremony, "they entered into some discussion on the present state of affairs, and expressed the great anxiety of their government, that the existing differences should be amicably arranged, and the Treaty of Yandaboo maintained."

In perusing the following account of what passed at this interview, as given in the despatch of Colonel BOGLE, it will be well to bear in mind the delicate position in which he was placed. The letter from the government at Ava to the Governor-General of India, was written in reply to the despatch sent by Commodore LAMBERT, from Rangoon, on the 7th January, apprising them for the first time, of the rupture which had occurred the day before, and offering to be the medium for transmitting any explanation or answer from the Court of Ava, to the Government of India. The ministers of the "Golden Foot," feeling puzzled on learning that Commodore LAMBERT, instead of, as they had supposed, being on his way back to Calcutta, with the friendly answer to the Governor-General's letter, was blockading Rangoon, and holding



possession of the King's ship, they determined naturally enough to forward their next letter through Colonel BOGLE. The latter although he was evidently too conscientious to conceal his conviction of the pacific disposition of the Burmese, yet felt bound by a sense of official duty to avoid the appearance of favouring the cause of those who were regarded at that moment as in a state of actual hostility against the government under which he served; and hence in the following account of the interview, an admonitory rebuke of the Tseetkays, and a vindication of the authority of Commodore LAMBERT fall from him, which however, whilst leaving his own opinion as apparent as ever, serves only to bring out more strongly the repugnance of the Burmese to enter into further relations with that officer:—

“They were most particularly desirous,” says Colonel BOGLE, “that further negotiations should not be conducted through Rangoon; and that I would do all in my power to procure a reply from the Governor-General, and transmit it through Martaban; in reply to which I told them, that I could do nothing more than send on the King's letter; that if an answer came to me I would, of course, forward it to Martaban with all dispatch; but that I thought it more probable it would be sent through Commodore LAMBERT and the shorter route of Rangoon; and that I had no control whatever in a matter of the kind. They did not seem at all pleased at this, but at once suggested that I might at least enable them to communicate direct with the Indian Government, by sending the Principal Assistant Commissioner (Lieutenant HOPKINSON) with them to Calcutta, in which case they were prepared to do without negotiators, and go and deliver the letter themselves. Of course I declined to depute my Assistant with them, but offered them a passage in the steamer.

“They expressed great regret that affairs had not been settled peaceably at Rangoon, and that the King's ship had been taken; but I clearly pointed out to them, that I had no power to enter upon the discussion of matters connected with that place; and explained to them, that, if there was any sincerity in their professions of a desire for peace, they should shape their conduct more in accordance with them; and that if their Government really desired a settlement of differences, it should lose no time in forwarding proper persons with sufficient powers to Commodore LAMBERT, with whom alone negotiations could be carried on.

“To this the Tseetkays expressed some dislike, and strongly dwelt upon the circumstance, that everything having taken an unsatisfactory turn at Rangoon, it would be much better to forget all that had occurred there, and to begin the negotiations at the beginning again. I took

Some pains to have it clearly explained to them, that I had no power to do more than simply forward the King's letter ; but that, as regarded all negotiations, the duty of conducting them had been assigned to Commodore LAMBERT, and it was to him that their Government must address itself ; but the more I dwelt upon the propriety of following this course of proceeding, the more they urged the expediency of setting aside all that had already occurred, and beginning anew.

"The circumstance of the King of Burmah having sent a letter to the Governor-General at all, and with such haste, is remarkable ; and that he should have chosen this route, probably under the supposition that, with a blockade established, there might be difficulties on the Rangoon side, would indicate much anxiety to obtain an early reply ; and from what the Tsetkays said, there is no doubt that the answer will be looked for with great impatience. I may as well mention, that on my alluding to the stoppage of trade and intercourse as one of the evils that had already overtaken them, consequent on the acts of their rulers, the Tsetkays expressed the most perfect indifference to that, and treated it as a matter of no moment whatever."

"Colonel BOGLE forwarded immediately the letter to Commodore LAMBERT at Rangoon, with a request that it might be dispatched by a steamer to Calcutta. "The circumstance," says he, in his letter to the Commodore, "of the Burmese Government having sent a letter to the Governor-General at all, and the speed with which it has come, would certainly indicate a desire that hostilities may be averted, at least for the present ; and the very convenient opportunity which this letter will afford the Indian Government of categorically detailing its demands and intentions, induces me to attach more importance to it than it would otherwise, perhaps, deserve."*

The King's letter was written to bring to the knowledge of the Governor-General the events which had occurred at Rangoon, and with which the reader is already familiar. Considering that the seat of government is nearly five hundred miles from the sea-coast, and that the means of obtaining correct intelligence are very inferior to those in countries where the publicity of the press checks the reports of local functionaries, the occurrences seem to have been known with remarkable accuracy by the Burmese Ministry. This may probably be attributed to the high rank of the Commissioners deputed to meet Commodore LAMBERT, who, we now learn for the first time, were "the Perpetual Privy Councillor,



MAIYAMENG GRAM, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, MINGGYEE MENGTEG RAZA.* After narrating the occurrences which led to the rupture at Rangoon, and the seizure of the King's ship by Commodore LAMBERT, the Burmese Ministers conclude with the following very natural inquiry:—

"This communication is now made with the view of eliciting, in reply, the intentions of the English Government; and it cannot be determined whether it has deputed Commodore LAMBERT simply to dispose of the question relating to the merchants, or whether he has been sent to begin by an attack, which should have the effect of bringing on hostilities between the two countries."†

Before this letter reached Calcutta, Lord DALHOUSIE had, as we have seen, determined upon dispatching an armament to the coast of Burmah, and had written his long "Minute," containing the reasons for the course he was about to take.

His Lordship's reply to the King of Ava's communication contains merely a repetition of the arguments in the "Minute;"—there is, again, the same uncandid evasion of the real question at issue, the seizure of the King's ship,—and once more we have a lengthened dissertation upon the breach of etiquette on the occasion of the visit of the deputation to the Governor's palace. Upon this latter point the Governor-General is really unfashionable; for he denies to the Governor of Rangoon the privilege which every body in "good society" in London, if not in Calcutta, exercises every day. To be able to answer "not at home" with a good grace is one of the qualifications for the hall-porter of a lady patroness of Almack's; but who ever heard of such an answer being made a *casus belli* between Carlton Terrace and Belgrave Square, or even the ground for an exchange of "Minutes," or any thing more warlike than a few visiting cards? The Governor-General has admitted that the informal visit attempted by the officers composing the deputation might have given a plausible pretext to the Governor of Rangoon for declining to receive them,‡ but he complains of the mode in which it was done. Now I humbly submit that no course less insulting could possibly have been adopted. Mr. CRAWFORD, in the interesting account of his mission to Ava, informs us, that owing to the great heat of the

* P. 69

† P. 70.

‡ P. 65.

weather, all classes in Burmah, from the King to the meanest peasant, suspend their labours and seek repose in the middle of the day. To call upon a person of rank at noon on business, without a previous arrangement, is as much an act of *mauvais ton* as if a Burmese deputation (and I think they would do wisely to send one) were to come to England to see the President of the Board of Control, and insist on an interview at nine o'clock in the evening, when he was at dinner. In such a case he would be "not at home." Whether the answer were "not at home," or "asleep," it would be deprived of all offensiveness if it were in harmony with the custom of the country. In making use of the excuse which the hour of the day afforded him, the Governor of Rangoon shewed a well-bred desire to avoid offering an affront to his ill-timed visitors.

One feels painfully affected, almost to humiliation, at reading page after page of such disquisitions as the following, from the pen of a Governor-General of India, in State papers, upon every sentence of which hangs the solemn question of peace or war:—

"When Commodore LAMBERT," says Lord DALHOUSIE to the King of Ava, "on the arrival of the new Governor, proposed to renew negotiations relative to the merchants who had been oppressed, the Governor intimated his readiness to receive, at any time, a communication from Commodore LAMBERT upon the subject. On the following day, a letter written on behalf of the British Government, was addressed by the Commodore to the Governor of Rangoon. Although the present Governor and his predecessor had not observed the respect which was due, nor the custom of their own country, and had sent their letters by the hands of men of no rank or consideration whatever, yet these persons were not rejected by the Commodore. And when he dispatched his letter to the Governor of Rangoon, it was sent, not by the hands of any such inconsiderable persons, but by the officer next in rank to himself, accompanied by officers of the army and of the fleet.

"Yet the Governor of Rangoon presumed to refuse all admittance to these officers, bearing a letter to him on the part of the British Government.

"He not only presumed to refuse to them admittance, but he offered to them insult and indignity. The Deputy Governor did not approach them, as your servants have falsely reported to your Majesty. No officer was deputed to them. They were approached only by the lowest; they were compelled to remain beyond the door; and were publicly subjected to disrespect and insolence, such as would have been

regarded as ignominious by the meanest subordinate in your servant's Durbar."*

The answer to this is, that the Governor's visitors were informed by his servants that he was "asleep," which, between gentlemen in Burmah, was sufficient to avoid unpleasant consequences; and between men of sense and of masculine characters, whether Burmese or British, who did not want to quarrel, it might have sufficed as an excuse for both parties to keep the peace.

The letter of the Governor-General, after announcing to His Majesty the formidable preparations that were going on, to "enforce his rights and vindicate his power,"—preparations which, he added, would not be suspended in consequence of the receipt of the King's letter, concludes with the following ultimatum :—

"1. Your Majesty, disavowing the acts of the present Governor of Rangoon, shall, by the hands of your Ministers, express regret that Captain FISHBOURNE, and the British officers who accompanied him, were exposed to insult at the hand of your servants at Rangoon, on the 6th of January last.

"2. In satisfaction of the claims of the two captains who suffered exactions from the late Governor of Rangoon; in compensation for the loss of property which British merchants may have suffered in the burning of that city by the acts of the present Governor; and in consideration of the expenses of preparation for war, your Majesty will agree to pay, and will pay at once, ten lacs of rupees (one hundred thousand pounds) to the Government of India.

"3. Your Majesty will direct that an accredited Agent, to be appointed in conformity with the VIIth Article of the Treaty of Yandaboo, and to reside at Rangoon, shall be received by your Majesty's servants there; and shall, at all times, be treated with the respect due to the Representative of the British Government.

"4. Your Majesty will direct the removal of the present Governor of Rangoon, whose conduct renders it impossible that the Government of India should consent to any official intercourse with him.

"If, *without further delay, negotiation, or correspondence*, these conditions shall be consented to, and shall be fulfilled on, or before, the 1st day of April next, hostile operations shall be stayed, peace between the States shall be renewed, and the King's ship shall be restored.

"But if—untaught by former experience; forgetful of the irresistible power of the British arms in India; and heedless of the many additional proofs that have been given of its might, in the successful fall of the powerful Sovereigns of Bhurtpore, of Scinde, of the Sikhs, and of



many other Princes, since last the Burman Rulers vainly attempted to resist the British troops in war—the King of Ava shall unwisely refuse the *just and lenient conditions* which are now set before him, the British Government will have no alternative but immediate war.

“The guilt and the consequences of war will rest upon the head of the Ruler of Ava.”

Let it be borne in mind that up to this moment the King had been charged with no unfriendly act towards the British Government. His former letter, and the disgrace of the Governor of Rangoon, inflicted at our instance, had elicited the approbation of the Government of India, and of the British Ministry. Nay, in the very letter before us, the following tribute is paid to the “justice and sagacity” of the King :—

“The reply which your Majesty addressed to the letter from the Government of India was, in all respects, worthy of a just and sagacious Ruler. It admitted the justice of the claims which had been advanced, directed the removal of the Governor of Rangoon, and promised redress by the hands of a new Governor fully armed with powers to afford it.

“That redress has not been granted by your Majesty’s servant at Rangoon; on the contrary, gross and repeated insults have since been offered by him to the British Government, in the person of its officers, and every amende has been evaded or refused.”*

Let it also be borne in mind that in retaliation for the insult alleged to have been offered by His Majesty’s servant at Rangoon, we had already carried off the royal ship, and that the above ultimatum was the reply to an inquiry from the King, as to the authority of Commodore LAMBERT, to commit that act of violence, but to which inquiry no answer was given :—bearing all this in mind, there could be but one result expected or intended from this high-handed appeal to force against the claims of reason and justice. The Governor-General’s ultimatum was forwarded to Colonel BOGLE at Moulmein; the same “Tseetkays” crossed over from Martaban to receive the despatch; they “appeared to be much grieved”† at its purport; it was at once forwarded to the capital, but no answer was returned.

It is no part of my plan to give any account of the war which

* P. 74.

† P. 80.

followed; respecting which some particulars will be found in the Further papers relating to hostilities with Burmah," presented to Parliament during the present session. A war it can hardly be called, a rout, a massacre, or a visitation, would be a more appropriate term. A fleet of war-steamers and other vessels took up their position in the river, and on the 11th April, 1852, *being Easter Sunday*, they commenced operations by bombarding both the Rangoon and Dallah shores. Everything yielded like toy-work beneath the terrible broadsides of our ships. The Burmese had about as fair a chance of success in contending against our steamers, rockets, detonating shells, and heavy ordnance, of which they were destitute, as one of their Pegue ponies would have had in running a race with a locomotive. Whole armies were put to the rout, with scarcely the loss of a man on our side; and fortified places, when scaled by a few sailors or marines, were found entirely abandoned. There is neither honour nor glory to be gained, when a highly civilized nation arrays the powers of mechanical and chemical science against a comparatively feeble, because ignorant and barbarous people. There is small room for the display of courage where there is little risk; and even muscular force has not much to do with a combat, the result of which depends almost entirely on the labours and discoveries of the workshop and laboratory. There is no doubt then as to the result of the Burmese war. Our troops may suffer from the climate, the water, or provisions; but the enemy has no power to prevent their subduing and annexing the whole or any part of the country. *But success however complete will not obliterate one fact respecting the origin of the war.*

God can alone know the motives of man. But looking back upon the acts of Commodore LAMBERT, I must say that had his object in visiting Rangoon been to provoke hostilities, his conduct, in first precipitating a quarrel, and then committing an act of violence certain to lead to a deadly collision, could not have been more ingeniously framed to promote that object.

It has been urged in vindication of Lord DALHOUSIE'S part in these proceedings, that owing to the anomalous relations which exist between the Royal Navy and the Government of India, he



had no power to compel Commodore LAMBERT to obey his orders. This is true, and is illustrative of the absurdity of the double government of India. But this should have induced Lord DALHOUSIE in the first place to have selected another envoy. India has a navy of its own. But where was the necessity for sending a squadron at all, until after a demand for redress had been made through a civilian, or at least a Company's officer, who, like Colonel BOGLE, understood the customs of the country; and the more especially so, as it was the first complaint that had been officially presented to the Government of Burmah? Besides, it was in the power of his lordship, after the first proofs of Commodore LAMBERT's rashness, to have withdrawn the instructions with which he sailed from Calcutta. Instead of which, not content with silently acquiescing in the proceedings of the Commodore, he adopted and justified his acts, with the full knowledge that he thereby shared his responsibility.

But there are other and very serious aspects to this business. Commodore LAMBERT, whilst owing no allegiance to the Government of India, made war upon the Burmese with the Queen's ships, without having had any orders from the British Admiralty to enter upon hostilities—and the question naturally arises, to what superior authority was he responsible for the discreet fulfilment of the task he had undertaken? Why, in a strictly professional sense, to nobody. Acting under no instructions from the Admiralty, and standing towards the Government of India "in the position of the commander of an allied force,"† he was virtually irresponsible for the proper performance of the special duty which he had volunteered upon. It must be admitted that a state of things more ingeniously contrived to enable us to involve ourselves in wars, without the unpleasantness of feeling accountable for the consequences, could hardly be imagined.

But the "anomaly" does not end here. The most important point remains to be noticed. These wars, got up by a Queen's

* This subject was referred to in the House of Lords, and the "anomaly" pointed out by Lords ELLENBOROUGH and BROUGHTON, the latter of whom stated, that before leaving the Board of Control, he had received a letter from Lord DALHOUSIE, expressing a hope that it would be remedied under the new Charter Act.—(*See Hansard, March 25th, 1852.*)

† Lord ELLENBOROUGH, House of Lords, 25th March, 1852.



officer in the teeth of instructions to the contrary from the Governor-General of India, whose orders he is no more bound to obey than those of the Emperor of China, *are carried on at the expense of the people of India.* Hence the difficulty of rousing the attention of the English public to the subject. We have an army of twenty thousand men now in Burmah, who have seized a territory as large as England, and their proceedings have attracted less notice from the press and public of this kingdom than has the entry of a few thousand Russian troops into the, to us, far more inaccessible Danubian Provinces. And the reason is obvious. The *bill* for the payment of the cost of the Burmese war is presented not to us, but to the unhappy ryots of Hindostan. To aggravate this injustice in the present case, it must be remembered that the war originated in a dispute between the Governor of Rangoon and the captains of a couple of English merchant ships. What exclusive interest had the half-naked peasant of Bengal in the settlement of the claims of Captains SHEPPARD and LEWIS, that he should alone be made to bear the expense of the war which grew out of them? And not merely the cost of the war, heavy as it will be, but the far more serious burden to be entailed upon our older possessions in India, from the permanent occupation or annexation of the whole or a large part of the Burmese empire. To the latter evil, growing out of our insatiable love of territorial aggrandisement, we shall probably be wilfully blind, until awakened from a great national illusion by some rude shock to the fabric of our Indian finance.

It is now placed beyond a doubt, for we have it on the evidence of the East India Company themselves, that our recent acquisitions of territory in the East have been unproductive. Scinde, Sattara, and the Punjaub, which have been annexed at the cost of so many crimes, are one and all entailing a charge upon the Indian revenue. Yet these countries are, as it were, within the basin of Hindostan, and lie contiguous to our possessions. But Burmah is no *part* of Hindostan. The people are semi-Chinese; and as a proof how little intercourse we have had with them, it may be mentioned, that when Lord DALHOUSIE wished to print some proclamations to be distributed in Pegu, it was found that there was no press in Calcutta where the Burmese character could be printed.



The distance from Calcutta to Rangoon by sea is as great as from London to Hamburg; and it must be borne in mind that troops in Burmah will be entitled to extra pay for being stationed "beyond sea," which will add much to the expense of its occupation.

But I need not press this view of the subject; for it is avowed on all hands that the acquisition of territory in Burmah is not desirable: and Lord DALHOUSIE recorded in express terms, at the outset of the contest, his opinion, that "conquest in Burmah would be a calamity second only to the calamity of war."* And when contemplating the possibility of being obliged to extend his military occupation even to the capital, he says, that, in such a contingency, "the Government of India can no longer regard its financial position with the confidence it is now warranted in entertaining," and that instead of surplus revenue, we must in that case expect to hear of "exhausted cash balances, and reopened loans."†

Yet it is not a little perplexing to find in the teeth of all these solemn disavowals of a desire for seizing more territory, that the Governor-General's policy aims directly at the annexation of Pegu, and will admit of no other terms; and if "a real necessity for advance" should arise, then, in spite of its ruinous consequences, "let us," says his Lordship, "fulfil our destiny, which there, as elsewhere, will have compelled us forward in spite of our wishes:"‡ or, in plain English, let us take the whole of Burmah, even if it should prove ruinous to our finances, because it is our destiny.

Now, if we are to have credit for the sincerity of all this, what will be said of its statesmanship? I put aside the pretence of "destiny," which is not to be tolerated as a plea amongst Christians, however valid it may be in Mahometan casuistry. But where lies the necessity for annexing any part of Burmah, if it be not our interest to do so? I find but one argument put forth, but it is repeated in a variety of forms:—we are told, that if we do not seize a portion of the enemy's territory we shall be disparaged in his eyes. In other words, unless the Government of India, with three hundred thousand troops, and backed by the whole power of the British empire, pursue a policy

* Further papers, p. 44. † Ibid, p. 87. ‡ P. 98, Further papers.



injurious to its own interests, it will suffer in the estimation of the Burmese, who, we are told, have in the present war "betrayed a total want of enterprise, courage, power, and resource; large bodies of them retiring at the mere sight of a steamer, or in the presence of a few Europeans as soon as they are landed."* Admitting, I repeat, the sincerity of this argument, what shall we say of the policy which it seeks to justify? Lord DALHOUSIE begins with a claim on the Burmese for less than a thousand pounds; which is followed by the additional demand of an apology from the Governor of Rangoon for the insult offered to our officers; next, his terms are raised to one hundred thousand pounds, and an apology from the king's ministers; then follows the invasion of the Burmese territory; when, suddenly, all demands for pecuniary compensation and apologies cease, and his Lordship is willing to accept the cession of Pegue as a "compensation" and "reparation" for the past, whilst at the same time he pens long minutes to prove how calamitous it will be to us to annex that province to our Indian empire! Conceding, I say, the *bonâ fides* of all this—ought not we to advertise in the *Times*, for a Governor-General of India who can collect a debt of a thousand pounds, without annexing a territory which will be ruinous to our finances?

But the fact is, and the sooner we all know it the better, nobody gives us credit for sincerity when we protest our reluctance to acquire more territory, whilst our actions are thus falsifying all our professions.† Nor, speaking nationally, are we entitled to such credit.

* P. 65.

† That the reader may see how a policy which we declare to be unprofitable to ourselves, in a pecuniary sense, weakens our moral influence in the eyes of other nations, I give the following extract from a speech, delivered by General CASS in the Senate of the United States, December, 1852.

"Another of the native Powers of Hindostan has fallen before the march of a great commercial corporation, and its 8,000,000 or 10,000,000 of people have gone to swell the immense congregation of British subjects in India. And what do you think was the cause of the war which has just ended in the swallowing up of the kingdom of Burmah? The whole history of human contests, since the dispersing of the family of man upon the plains of Shinar, exhibits no such national provocation, followed by such national punishment. Political arithmetic contains no such sum as that which drove England to this unwelcome measure. Had we not the most irrefragable evidence, we might well refuse credence to this story of real rapacity. But the fact is



Public opinion in this country has not hitherto been opposed to an extension of our dominion in the East. On the contrary, it is believed to be profitable to the nation, and all classes are ready to hail with approbation every fresh acquisition of territory, and to reward those conquerors who bring us home title-deeds, no matter I fear, how obtained, to new Colonial possessions. So long as they are believed to be profitable, this spirit will prevail.

But it is not consistent with the supremacy of that moral law, which mysteriously sways the fate of empires, as well as of individuals, that deeds of violence, fraud and injustice, should be committed with permanent profit and advantage. If wrongs are perpetrated in the name, and by the authority of this great country, by its proconsuls or naval commanders in distant quarters of the globe, it is not by throwing the flimsy veil of a "double government" over such transactions, that we shall ultimately escape the penalty attaching to deeds for which we are really responsible. How, or when, the retribution will react upon us, I presume not to say. The rapine in Mexico and Peru was retaliated upon Spain, in the ruin of her finances. In France, the *razzias* of Algeria were repaid by her own troops, in the massacres of the Boulevards, and the savage combats in the streets of Paris. Let us hope that the national conscience, which has before averted from England, by timely atonement and reparation, the punishment due for imperial crimes, will be roused ere it be too late from its lethargy, and put an end to the deeds of violence and injustice which have marked every step of our progress in India.

indisputable, that England went to war with Burmah, and annihilated its political existence, for the non-payment of a disputed demand of £990. So says the *London Times*, the authoritative expositor of the opinions and policy of England. 'To appreciate,' says that impersonation of British feeling, 'correctly the character of this compulsory bargain, the reader must recollect that the sum originally demanded of the Burmese for the indemnification of our injured merchants was £990., and Lord DALHOUSIE's terms, even when the guns of our steamers were pointed against Rangoon, comprehended, in consideration of the expenses of the expedition and of compensation for property, a claim only of £100,000.' *Well does it become such a people to preach homilies to other nations upon disinterestedness and moderation.'*



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BRITISH INTERESTS

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IN THE

CANALISATION

OF THE

ISTHMUS OF SUEZ.

GLASGOW:

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BRITISH INTERESTS

IN THE

CANALISATION OF THE ISTHMUS OF SUEZ.

CHAPTER I.

It is scarcely possible to look at a map of the world without perceiving that there are two great engineering operations, of paramount interest to all nations, which should be carried out, if possible. Two narrow strips of land in the West and in the East intercept the communications of important seas, and force the traffic of the world into circuitous, expensive, dilatory, and, in many instances, dangerous channels. One of these great barriers in the highway of waters is the Isthmus of Panama, the other is the Isthmus of Suez. The latter, we hope, is most familiar to the majority of our readers, though probably under another name, and connected with associations altogether foreign to the affairs of modern Egypt. The Isthmus of Suez and the districts adjoining are the pleasant land of Goshen, in which the children of Israel received the permission of the Pharaohs to dwell—a land of abundance, great in pasturage, and famous for the breed of horses reared therein. This strip of land, now neglected and barren, and of the breadth of about eighty miles, divides the Mediterranean from the Red Sea, and blocks up the direct road from Europe to India and Australia. Navigation, turned back in this direction, is compelled to follow the circuitous route round the Cape of Good Hope. It has of late years been proposed to shorten the road to India and Australia by piercing a canal, fit for the passage of the largest ships, through the Isthmus of Suez, and thus enable the regular commerce and heavy goods traffic of the world to follow the route taken by the Overland Mail, and thereby to effect a corresponding saving of time and expense. We all recollect what a great revolution was effected by the first opening of the Overland Route to India. How much closer the ties were drawn between that distant empire and the mother country; how our Indian possessions

obtained a value before unknown, and how, ever since, British power in that distant hemisphere became more consolidated, and its civilising action more apparent, and at the same time more real. Thus much good has been done by the successful plan (the credit of which is solely due to the spirit, enterprise, and perseverance of the late Lieutenant Waghorn) of shortening the route to India for passengers, for news, and for remittances of money and of small parcels of valuable goods. It is almost impossible to conjecture how far these beneficial effects might not be extended, if the whole of the traffic with the East and the Antipodes, shortened in distance by 5000 miles, could follow the short, expeditious, and safe track now reserved for the Overland Mail. Since the opening of that track, the great task of covering India with a network of railways has been commenced. Important lines of rail have already been opened in that country, and in a few years—the companies being formed, and past successes stimulating to further exertions—we may expect to see all the important towns and provinces joined and traversed by lines of rail. The whole of the interior of India, hitherto closed against trade with Europe, will be opened, and possibly we may find that the heavy goods traffic from that empire, the trade in bulky raw produce, will be as important and remunerative as the trade in those lighter and costlier productions which have hitherto formed the staple of imports from India; not because these are the only productions, but because these alone could bear the journey from the inland provinces to the seaboard. To mention a few articles only, it is not too much to say, that a great future is open to the commerce in Indian cotton, wool, hides, and, strange as it may sound at this moment, in breadstuffs. The transport of these bulky goods to the sea is now possible, and a ship canal through the Isthmus of Suez would shorten the voyage from the Indian harbours by 5000 miles, make it more practicable for steam-ships and sailing vessels with an auxiliary screw, and more safe and expeditious for sailing ships. For the voyage to India, through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, is one performed within reach of good harbours, in calm waters and tranquil latitudes, and with convenient coaling stations at the end, if need be, of almost every four day's run.

What we have said of India is equally applicable to Australia. The treasures of that continent, scarcely known, and altogether lost even 12 years ago, have only just commenced developing themselves; and those who watched the Australian trade from the beginning will hardly contradict us when we say that in 1870 that trade is likely to employ four times the tonnage it employs at this present moment. A population increasing at the rate of the Australian colonies must, within a few years, make extraordinary demands upon imports from home. A population of labourers—in a great and small way—will soon develop the natural resources of those colonies, and the trade in Australian produce, partly interrupted by the interlude of the gold discoveries, will rapidly assume dimensions stupendous, colossal, and almost fabulous. This is what all



who have any experience of the subject plainly foresee; and to men conversant with these matters, it is equally plain how much the opening a direct road between England and Australia would facilitate and increase that trade in heavy Australian produce, which will one day enlist the services of a whole commercial navy, the fabrication of which will turn hamlets into towns, and afford labour and bread to thousands upon thousands.

These considerations almost force themselves upon the mind in contemplating the direct and easy route which would be opened to the commerce of the world by the breaking through of the Isthmus of Suez. They are brought to public notice by the efforts made by a distinguished Frenchman, Mons. de Lesseps, to enlist the sympathies of all the civilized nations of Europe in the great work of completing the direct water-road to India and Australia. The interest which the British, of all other nations, has, or ought to have, in this attempt, is so natural and obvious that the first announcement of this plan calls forth astonishment, not on account of its being formed, but on account of the man who forms it. The cutting a straight road to India and Australia concerns, above all, the British nation; it may benefit other nations; it may increase the importance of the French and Italian ports in the Mediterranean: but it is Great Britain which, of all others, must profit from any successful attempt to shorten the distance between her and her dependencies. It is therefore astonishing that this plan, of all others so congenial to the British mind and feeling, should be matured and carried into execution by a Frenchman; that none of the countrymen of Waghorn should complete the work which he commenced. It may perhaps lessen our surprise to reflect on the difficulties which Mr. Waghorn had to surmount; the coldness and superciliousness of officials, the hostile sneers of a portion of the press, the indifference of the public. Most Englishmen and Scotchmen know a little too much of what Mr. Waghorn did, what benefits he conferred on the nation, and what was his reward, to devote their time, means, and energies to a similar undertaking.

Mons. de Lesseps is perhaps the only man who can succeed in the task he has in hand. A diplomatist, and having held a high official position, he can make his way in quarters which, for years and years, might remain inaccessible to a pioneer of humbler station; and his past experience enables him to defy that official circumlocution which would waste the time and energies of one of the uninitiated. And though our natural self-love may shrink from giving a hearty support to a British object advocated by a foreigner, we should not forget that that foreigner follows in the footsteps of an Englishman, and that Mons. de Lesseps but completes the work which Mr. Waghorn commenced.



CHAPTER II.

Few of our readers, if any, will deny the immense present, the incalculable prospective benefits, of the realisation of the projected Suez Canal. But to men who think and reflect, the question must naturally suggest itself, whether the thing is possible—whether it can be effected with the means which science has placed at our disposal; and whether the immediate results of the undertaking would offer a proportionate reward to those whose capital, industry, and intelligence are devoted to the execution of this great enterprise. That the canalisation of the Isthmus of Suez is desirable; that, if effected, it would lessen the distance and the risk of a voyage to India, Australia, and China; that it would create new markets and fresh sources of supply; that it would consolidate and confirm the British power in India,—all this, we believe, is indisputable and self-evident. But so distant from the ordinary range of vision is the Isthmus of Suez—so little is generally known of its approaches, its soil, and its adaptability for the purposes of canalisation—that doubts as to the possibility of the undertaking are reasonable and almost natural.

The first question, based upon a doubt, which will suggest itself is, Why has the navigation of Europe, for these several hundred years past, taken the route round the Cape of Good Hope, and why, supposing it was possible to cut through the Isthmus of Suez, has so desirable an undertaking not been accomplished before this? The idea will also suggest itself to the minds of the majority of readers that there must be some great obstacles in the way of the work proposed by Mons. de Lesseps; for unless such obstacles existed, it will be argued, the canal through the Isthmus of Suez would have been made long ago. For centuries past the configuration of the world has always been what it is now. For centuries past the Isthmus of Suez was the only bar to a short cut from Europe to the Indies; and if the undertaking were at all practicable, it ought to, and it would, have been carried out a couple of hundred years ago.

The reply to this very reasonable doubt is, firstly, that a couple of hundred years—that even a hundred years ago—the Ottoman Empire, of which Egypt forms a part, was hermetically sealed against the trade and against travellers from the western world. Even a hundred years ago, no permission would have been granted by the Pashas of Egypt or their Suzerain to survey a mile or turn a sod in their dominions. A hundred years ago the coasts of the Ottoman Empire and its dependencies continued their old established practice of piracy in the Mediterranean. Fleets of galleys from Constantinople, Smyrna, the Barbareque States, and the



coasts of Egypt, carried on a perpetual warfare against the trading ships of the Christian nations, and threatened even the coasts of Italy and France. A hundred years ago Great Britain had no military establishments, no squadron of war steamers, no fortifications at Aden at the mouth of the Red Sea. British power in India, at war at once with the French and the native chiefs, was but a small and insecure holding. The islands of the Eastern Archipelago were hardly explored, China was hermetically sealed, Australia peopled by savages, and Japan a mere name and spot on the map. The nations of Europe, at war with one another, had no leisure to think of peaceful conquests over time and space. The Indian trade, then in its infancy, offered no sufficient inducement for the gigantic undertaking of a crusade for the canalisation of the Isthmus of Suez: for not less than a crusade against the fierce and indomitable power of the Turks, such as they then were, would have sufficed for the undertaking. It was necessary to conquer Egypt and to break the power of the Sultan, in order to begin those works of canalisation, which now are invited and supported by the Viceroy of Egypt, who offers money, privileges, and armies of labourers to those who will undertake to pierce the Isthmus, and convert his country into the highway to the East.

We need not refer to the series of events which, during the last hundred years, tamed down the ferocity of the old Turkish Empire. Napoleon opened Egypt by the battle of the Pyramids; and since 1829, France, having conquered Algeria the most powerful of the Barbarous States, has been extending her empire and that of civilisation on the Algerine coast. Tunis and Tripoli, once the terror of every merchantman in the Mediterranean, are now mere names of coast towns. The British empire in India comprises one hundred millions of subjects, and its influence reigns paramount over fifty millions of adjacent tributaries and allies. China, opened since the last war, contains not less than 350 millions of inhabitants, inclined to industry and peculiarly addicted to traffic. Australia is what we all know it to be—an enormous continent, fast acquiring a European population, and with resources the commencement only of whose development has been the greatest commercial event of the century. A hundred years ago the Isthmus of Suez Canal could not have been effected without the overthrow of a mighty empire, and it would have given a short route to a disputed territory in India, to the closed ports of China, and the howling savages in the forests of Australia. At the present day, the proposed canal has no serious political obstacles to encounter, and it offers to shorten, by 5000 miles, the distance between Europe and the five hundred millions of human beings inhabiting Hindostan and China, and the still more important and rapidly increasing population of Australia.

What we have said will suffice to convince earnest and impartial inquirers (and it is to such alone we address ourselves) of the reasons why the great work which Mons. de Lesseps urges upon the attention of the



nations of Europe was not executed a hundred years ago. History was not as it is now, ripe for it.

But it will be said that the Ottoman empire, that Egypt, was not at all times closed against the enterprise and industry of the West, and that in the earlier ages there were many periods in which no obstacles existed to the piercing of the Isthmus of Suez. This is certainly true, and accordingly we find that the junction of the Mediterranean and the Red Seas by a navigable canal has occupied all the great men who have reigned in, or who have conquered Egypt. A canal, not indeed straight across the Isthmus of Suez, but one communicating with the Nile, was in existence in ancient times: first, for a period of one hundred years, down to about the middle of the ninth century before the Hegira; secondly, for a period of four hundred and forty-five years, from the reign of the first successors of Alexander the Great, down to about the fourth century before the Hegira; and thirdly and lastly, for a period of one hundred and thirty years after the Arabian conquest.

Napoleon, upon his arrival in Egypt, immediately organised a commission of engineers to ascertain whether it would be possible to re-establish the ancient channel of navigation. The question was resolved in the affirmative, and when the learned M. Lepere delivered to him the report of the commission—just at the time when the advance of the English, and the intrigues hatching against him in France, compelled him to relinquish his conquests in Egypt—he said, “It is an important affair. It is not now in my power to accomplish it, *but the Turkish Government will perhaps one day owe its preservation and its glory to the execution of this project.*”

The Viceroy Mehemet Ali, who did so much for the development of the resources of Egypt, cherished the plan of a canalisation of the Isthmus of Suez, but during his reign the political condition of his country and of the States of Europe was such that the execution of the plan was altogether out of the question. Mehemet Ali had to fight for his rights and privileges as a Viceroy; while acknowledging the suzerainty of the Porte, he had to repulse the ruinous interference of the Divan in the internal administration of Egypt. It was his to seek out and revive the last faint traces of that cultivation of land by inundation and irrigation, which, in olden times, made Egypt the granary of the adjacent countries and of Europe. It was his to send his half-naked savages to Paris and London to have them educated and transformed into physicians, engineers, architects, and soldiers. It was his to prepare his country for railways and extensive systems of irrigation. The result is the partial cultivation of Egypt, in ancient times the most fruitful, in modern history the most barren of countries. At this present moment a railroad connects the chief cities, and this railroad is in course of extension to Suez, nor is it too much to anticipate that it will, in due time, be extended to Aden. At this moment Egypt, but a hundred years ago accessible only to adventurous travellers

of the Bruce kind, is the highway for passengers, letters, and light goods from India. Thanks to the enlightened and vigorous administration of Mehmet Ali, the ground is prepared for that greatest work of all, which will open the Red Sea to the trading ships of Europe, and make Egypt really and truly the highway to India, Australia, and China.

We have said that the first survey of the Isthmus of Suez, known in modern times, was made by a commission of engineers, appointed by Napoleon. The labours of this commission were carried on amidst the din of warfare, in hurry, under all the privations which the French army had to encounter while marching through and camping in deserts, and with rude and unreliable instruments. It is not, therefore, astonishing that the report of this commission should contain some inaccurate or erroneous statements, and among these was one which though Napoleon certainly did not consider it conclusive against the practicability of the undertaking, has yet, in after times, been frequently quoted for the purpose of demonstrating the insurmountable difficulties the project would have to encounter. This statement is, that the level of the Red Sea is considerably higher (by nearly 10 French metres) than the level of the Mediterranean. It was argued, and with some show of reason, that upon opening a canal between the two seas, the waters of the Red Sea would rush with irresistible force into the Mediterranean, to the utter destruction of the works. More careful surveys which have since been executed under circumstances most favourable to correctness, have altogether disproved this assertion of Napoleon's engineers. In 1847, a society, established for the investigation of the Isthmus of Suez, and presided over by Messrs. Negrelli, R. Stephenson, and Talabot, caused a complete survey to be made of the Isthmus. It was found that the difference between the waters of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea is slight, the level of the latter being about $2\frac{1}{2}$ metres higher than those of the former. The correctness of this result of the survey of 1847 was proved by another survey made in 1853, at the instance of Mons. Sabatier, the Consul-General of France in Egypt.*

* The verification was made in 1853. It resulted in favour of the surveyors of 1847. For the new levels only differ 6 metres 1817 from those of 1847, and give as the difference of level between the station on the quay of the hotel at Suez and low water in the Mediterranean 2 metres 4286, instead of 2 metres 6106, found by the operations in 1847.—*M. de Lesseps on the Isthmus of Suez Question.*



CHAPTER III.

M. DE LESSEPS, the first who, in our own times, mooted the question of a ship canal across the Isthmus of Suez, travelled in Egypt in 1854. He is an old friend of the Viceroy, Mohammed Said, and his visit to Egypt was made in consequence of an invitation he received from that prince, who, upon his accession to power, desired to avail himself of the advice of his friends among the Statesmen of Europe, for the advancement and the civilization of the country he was called upon to govern. Mehemet Ali in his time, by energetic and sometimes by cruel measures had roused the population of Egypt from the poverty, the neglect, and the barbarism of centuries. Mohammed Said, pursuing the same object, in a milder and more enlightened spirit, desires above all to regenerate and develop those natural resources which made ancient Egypt a land of peace and plenty. On the tour which the two friends made through the Viceroy's dominions, the subject of the Suez Canal was first mooted between them; and, in consequence of a lengthened and animated discussion on the subject, M. de Lesseps, accompanied by two of the Viceroy's engineers, made an exploring expedition over the whole of the Isthmus. The report of the engineers was favourable. Its sum and substance was to the effect, that "a maritime canal, direct from Suez to Pelusium, ninety miles long, 330 feet wide at the waterline, and 26 feet deep, was practicable, and ought to be constructed." The Viceroy, on receiving this report, expressed a desire to have the labours of his engineers submitted to the judgment of engineers chosen from England, France, Holland, Germany, and Italy. A Commission of Engineers, selected from among the authorities of the profession in all countries of Europe* was consequently selected, under the auspices of M. de Lesseps; and this commission proceeded to Egypt in autumn, 1855, and examined the localities, and effected surveys, borings, and soundings, along the whole length of the track of the proposed canal, and in the portions of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea into which the canal is to open. The report of this commission was handed to the Viceroy on the 3d January, 1856. It declares that the direct canal from Pelusium to Suez is the only solution of the problem, and that there is no

* The following are the names of the members of this commission:—For England, Messrs. Rendel and M. Lean; for Holland, Myrner Conrad, Chief Engineer of the Water Staat; for Prussia, Herr Lenz, Chief Engineer of the Hydraulic Works in Prussia; for Austria, Herr Negrill, Inspector-General of Austrian railways; for Sardinia, Signor Paley, Engineer and Minister of Public Works at Turin; for France, M. Renaud, Inspector-General and Member of the Council of Bridges and Highways, and M. Leloussou, Engineer Hydrograph of the Imperial Navy.

Other practical method of joining the Red Sea with the Mediterranean, that the execution of the maritime canal is easy, and its success certain; and that the two harbours required to be constructed at Suez and Pelusium present no extraordinary difficulties. Upon the report of this Commission, the Viceroy signed a charter, authorising M. de Lesseps to form a company for the construction of a ship canal joining the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. This charter is, of course, conditional on the ratification of the Sultan, who, as Suzerain, has a voice in a matter so strongly affecting the prosperity and greatness of Egypt. As, however, the obtaining the Sultan's formal consent is a mere question of time, we can proceed to give a summary of the contents of a document which is destined to exercise so vast an influence on all nations of the world.

The Universal Company to be created by M. de Lesseps, is to be formed with the concurrence and by the co-operation of all nations of Europe. This company is authorised and shall be bound to execute the following works:—1. A canal navigable by large vessels, between Suez on the Red Sea and the Gulf of Pelusium in the Mediterranean. 2. A canal of irrigation adapted to the river traffic of the Nile, joining that river to the above-mentioned canal. 3. Two branches for irrigation and supply, striking out of the preceding canal in the direction respectively of Suez and Pelusium. These works shall be completed within six years. Four-fifths of the workmen employed shall be natives of Egypt. The company shall, moreover, be bound, if necessary, to construct a harbour of refuge at the entrance of the maritime canal into the Gulf of Pelusium, and to improve the port and roadstead of Suez so that it shall equally afford a shelter to vessels. The Egyptian Government also stipulate, that for the right of passage through the canal, the maximum toll shall be ten francs per measurement ton on ships, and per head on passengers, and it reserves to itself a claim of 15 per cent. on the nett profits of every year.

These are the stipulations against the company; and to these must be added the important clause, that the canal from Suez to Pelusium shall always remain open as a neutral passage to every merchant ship crossing from one sea to another, without any distinction, exclusion, or preference of persons or nationalities.

The grants and concessions made by the Viceroy are: the grant to the company, free of impost or rent, the use and enjoyment of all lands not the property of individuals, which may be found necessary for the construction of the canal and its dependencies; also, the use and enjoyment of all waste lands, the property of the Crown, which shall have been irrigated and cultivated under the auspices of the company. The company shall have the privilege of drawing from the mines and quarries of the Crown, without paying duty, impost, or compensation, all necessary materials for the construction and maintenance of the works and buildings of the undertaking. They have also the right of importing, free of duty, all the machinery and materials they may require. The term of the company's existence is fixed at 99 years, renewable under certain conditions.



We have perhaps unduly drawn upon the patience of our readers in making these statements. Our object was to give ample evidence of the anxiety with which the present ruler of Egypt, intent upon developing the resources of his country, invites the assistance of the West. The Viceroy of Egypt has, moreover, laid the financial basis of the undertaking, by constituting himself the first shareholder of the company to the amount of 30,000,000 francs, or £1,200,000; and, encouraged by his example, the Egyptian army—the troops which conquered on the Danube at Kalafat, and defended Silistria—have made a subscription of £80,000. And the Viceroy has also promised to supply the Company with whatever number of native labourers their engineers shall consider necessary for the works at the daily pay of 8d. per man—a higher wage than has ever been given to native workmen. The clause in the charter stipulating that four-fifths of the labourers employed on the works shall be natives of Egypt, coupled with the promise of supplying the number of labourers required by conscription, is perhaps the most substantial benefit which the Viceroy confers upon the promoters of the undertaking. Independent of the very low pay of 8d. per man—which, however, is considered as liberal in the extreme by the natives—the transport of many thousands of European labourers to and from Egypt would in itself involve an enormous expense. Besides, the climate of Egypt is such that Europeans cannot work there, at least not in summer, while disease and death would be rife among an army of navvies, unaccustomed to changes of climate and of habits, the reverse of that sobriety which is an essential condition to health in the East, while the *fellahs* or native workmen of Egypt are skilful and experienced in the execution of earthworks. To quote a great and respected authority:—"No nation can more easily, or on more favourable terms, furnish disciplined armies of robust, active, and intelligent workmen, equally fit for the construction of canals, for hydraulic, and for agricultural operations." *

The Austrian Government justly appreciating the benefits to be derived from M. de Lesseps' scheme, has become a shareholder to the amount of one million of pounds, to be allotted to the Chambers of Commerce of Trieste and Venice. The Government of Holland has appointed a Commission to decide on the extent in which the Dutch nation is to participate in the undertaking. The British Government has, up to the present, treated the scheme with a want of sympathy, amounting to indifference, and when the question was mooted at the late Conferences at Paris, Lord Clarendon declined entering upon its discussion.



CHAPTER IV.

THE works to be executed for the canalisation of the Isthmus of Suez are certainly great, and their execution requires a large amount of capital. The estimates of the Commission of Engineers fix that capital at eight millions of pounds—about the sum expended on the railway from London to York, or that from Paris to Lyons—about the sum which England and France spent each month during the Crimean expedition. It may be said that engineers' estimates have but too frequently proved deceptive; that very moderate sums were often mentioned as required previous to the commencement of great works, but that the undertaking once in progress, it was found out that a sum far exceeding the original estimate would be necessary for its completion. Examples are odious, and we refrain from quoting cases of the kind which obtrude themselves upon our recollection. A multitude of such cases will readily suggest themselves to every man who has been interested in railway speculations: for the history of railways more especially abounds in cases of insufficient estimates. But it should be recollected that in the construction of railways, engineers and speculators had to pay for their apprenticeship—the difficulties as well as the advantages of railway traffic were at one time under-estimated, until a juster appreciation of either was taught by experience. The digging of canals—the construction of jetties and breakwaters is not a new science—the cost of such works is well known, and there is every reason why the greatest faith may be placed in the estimates of expenses to be incurred by the construction of the Suez Canal—framed as these estimates are by a commission of the most eminent engineers in Europe, who had, moreover, the benefit of the advice of two engineers, equally eminent in their profession, and familiar with the cost of the construction of similar works in Egypt. And a further proof that the estimate of eight millions of pounds is correct is given by the Viceroy of Egypt, who has undertaken to complete the two fresh water canals at his own expense, and to hand them over to the company for the sum set down in the estimates of the Commission of Engineers. So that, if these estimates are too low, it is the Viceroy who will have to bear the brunt of the mistake thus committed.

That the estimates are not too low, and that, independent of the benefits to trade and civilization to be expected from the Suez Canal, the undertaking rests upon a sound commercial basis, is proved by the readiness with which the Governments and great capitalists of the Continent have come forward to subscribe the funds necessary for the execution of the project. By far the greater part of the eight millions required is



actually subscribed. As the company is to be an universal one—as it is desirable that *all* the nations and Governments of Europe should be among its shareholders and directors—shares to the amount of £1,500,000 have been reserved for Great Britain, while an equal amount has been allotted to France. In advocating the scheme of the Suez Canal we have no intention whatever to excite a demand for these shares, or to recommend their purchase to the British public. The reasons which make it desirable that the scheme should be fully understood and appreciated, are not commercial but political. The practical adhesion of our great capitalists and Steam Navigation Companies has, in part, been given; nor is it an idle boast to say that if the shares of the Suez Canal were brought into the market, the instincts of speculators would soon lead to their appropriation. The difficulties in the way of the execution of the Suez Canal, as we understand them, are entirely of a political nature. It is not money that is wanted, but the sanction of the Sultan and the concurrence of the British Government.

We have already adverted to the fact that the Sultan, as Suzerain of Egypt, has a decisive vote in all matters so nearly affecting the prosperity of that country. Since there cannot be two opinions on the advantage that would accrue to Egypt from the execution of the project; since the Isthmus of Suez Canal would make Egypt the connecting link between Europe and India, Australia, Japan, and China; since the execution of the project would supply the desert districts of Egypt with water—the only means wanted to restore them to their ancient and far-famed fertility; and since the power and prosperity of so important a province as Egypt must of necessity add to the power and prosperity of the Turkish empire, it would seem that the Sultan's Government, of all others, should readily grasp at the means of increasing the prosperity of so important a province as Egypt undoubtedly is. And in this light did Abdul Medjid consider the scheme of the canalisation of the Isthmus of Suez when the details of that scheme were first communicated to him by M. de Lesseps. But since last year invidious counsels have made themselves heard at Constantinople, and now that the scheme is ripe for execution, the Sultan, as Suzerain does not indeed refuse his consent, but for the present he withholds. Some of his Ministers are of opinion that the Sublime Porte has to complain of a want of deference in the promoters of the scheme. The first steps, they say, ought to have been taken at Constantinople. Other high dignitaries of the Turkish empire there are who grudge the large share of independence in matters of internal administration which has enabled Mehemet Ali, and his successors, as hereditary Viceroys of Egypt, to reclaim the country from the state of poverty and barbarism in which it had sunk during the reign of the Mameluke Beys. These Ministers forget that they have to thank the convention on which the present viceroyalty of Egypt is based, for the important internal reforms which have made that country—at one time unproductive of money and armies—a source of wealth and



strength for the Turkish empire. They forget that it is owing to the present form of Government in Egypt, that that country is enabled to pay a large annual tribute to the Sultan's exchequer, and that during the war with Russia, before the Western Powers stepped in to protect the Sultan, the Viceroy of Egypt sent money, ships of war, and an army of 40,000 picked troops, to enable his Suzerain to carry on the war, and defend his capital. All these substantial benefits, for which thanks are due to the system of government, which in less than forty years wrought such miracles in Egypt, are disregarded, and official opinion at Constantinople is averse to the execution of the Suez Canal, because the execution of that project might possibly make Egypt too prosperous and independent. Though assured of the fidelity of the present Viceroy, they pretend that wealth and prosperity might possibly inspire his successors with a desire of complete independence. They forget that the chief powers of Europe are already guarantees for the strict fulfilment of the compact between the successors of Mehemet Ali and their Suzerain, the Sultan, and that the Isthmus of Suez Canal—impossible unless its neutrality is guaranteed by the chief powers of Europe—would be an additional pledge for the continuance of that relation, which has already made Egypt the mainstay of the Turkish empire.

It will be said that these are matters in which we cannot pretend to interfere, and that whatever difference there may exist on the subject of the Suez Canal must be left to the Sultan and his vassal, the Viceroy of Egypt. But it should not be forgotten, that the opening a direct ship route to India and the East generally, is a question which concerns all the nations of Europe, and that the British nation, as the possessors of India and the greatest traders with the East, are more interested in it than any other nation. If, therefore, it is found that the fears or prejudices of politicians at Constantinople obstruct the progress, not of Egypt, but of Great Britain and her dependencies, we are surely entitled to advise and remonstrate. We have asserted this right in matters of communication through Egypt, long before the war with Russia enabled England and France to establish a claim on the gratitude of the Sultan. We are more than ever justified in asserting it now.

But—we repeat it again—our Government, far from supporting the Isthmus of Suez Canal at Constantinople, declined—at the Paris conferences—to enter into a discussion of the subject, or to entertain the all-important question of an European guarantee for the neutrality of the proposed canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.



CHAPTER V.

WE have endeavoured to show the advantages likely to result from the canalisation of the Isthmus of Suez: advantages in which all the nations of Europe are destined to participate, but of which by far the greatest share must fall to Great Britain, the possessor of India and Australia, and the greatest trader with China and the Indian Archipelago. We have also described the leading features of the undertaking, and shown that neither in the magnitude nor the expense of its works can the Isthmus of Suez canal be considered as an adventurous, unprecedented, visionary, and impracticable scheme. On the contrary, the works to be executed have, in extent and difficulties, frequently been equalled, and in some cases surpassed, by the railway works of England and France, and few of the first-rate harbours on the coasts of either country are what they are without jetties and breakwaters, at least as expensive as those planned for Suez and Pelusium. We have shewn, that in an engineering point of view, the scheme of the Isthmus of Suez canal has stood the test of the inquiries, and obtained the sanction of the ablest engineers of the chief countries of Europe; that its prospective value to trade has been acknowledged by the hearty concurrence of the East India Company, and that the commercial soundness of the scheme has, as it were, produced the capital required, without the necessity of an appeal to the speculators on the Stock Exchange. Hence it appears almost incredible that a scheme, so easy of execution, of such certain and profitable returns, and promising such vast benefits to Europe and the East, should have met with an opposition so determined as that which it has been the fate of the Suez canal project to encounter. We do not allude to the objections raised at Constantinople. Turkish officials, like their betters, may now and then object to improvements. It is their nature to do so. But whatever obstacles the Sultan's Ministers at present place in the way of M. de Lesseps and the Viceroy of Egypt, we have no doubt but that these obstacles will be surmounted, and that, on reconsideration, the Sultan's Cabinet will understand that the best interests of Turkey, as well as of Egypt, are bound up in the execution of the Suez canal. It is a fact that the Sultan personally, and that many members of his Cabinet, are in favour of this and any measure calculated to improve the state of Egypt, and reward the fidelity of Said Pasha—the Viceroy. But, we regret to say, it is also a fact that the obstacles which the project encountered at Constantinople are mainly owing to the opposition of Lord de Redcliffe, who, instead of representing British interests at the Sultan's Court, represents nothing but his own



petty animosities and jealousies. Among his colleagues and patrons in England there is the same repugnance to the scheme, but its manifestation is more cautious. We could understand such a repugnance on the part of Austria or Naples. But that the British Government, of all others, should have refused to discuss the political questions connected with this undertaking is a circumstance suggestive of the most serious reflection. It shows once again that in the present apathy of political parties, nothing like energetic action is to be expected from men in office. It is true that Mr. Waghorn's scheme of the overland route had in its time to contend with a similar indifference in high quarters, that he and his project were before the public for many years before the Government of the day consented to even look at the matter, and that it took near twenty years, and three Parliamentary Committees, before the overland route was officially recognised and supported. But it might have been expected that the very success of the overland route, that its great, almost incalculable benefits, would have smoothed the way for and opened official understandings to the importance of M. de Lesseps' scheme, which is nothing else but a proposal to make the overland route practicable for the whole of the carrying trade between Great Britain and her Indian and Australian Colonies. That the present Government fully appreciates the advantages of the overland route is shown by the fact that the new contract for carrying mails between England and Australia, made this year, expressly stipulates that the mails shall go *via* Egypt, and that under this condition alone an annual subsidy of £183,000 is paid by Government to the Company which has undertaken the carrying of these mails. And yet the Government, when desired to give their support to a scheme of opening this short route to trade and commerce in general, decline to discuss the questions in connexion with the scheme! The position taken is one of indifference; the proposal of the Suez Canal is not combated; no political reasons are urged in opposition to it; but up to the present, Lord Palmerston and his colleagues refuse to say anything on the subject.

While this is the position taken officially by the Government, a marked hostility to the scheme of the Isthmus of Suez Canal has been shown by a periodical, which, though not a Government organ, has of late professed to shape its course according to the direction of the wind in Downing Street and Whitehall. The *Edinburgh Review*, at one time the champion of progress, has done its worst to discredit the projected canalisation of the Isthmus of Suez. Its opposition might be valuable to the promoters of, and the sympathisers with the scheme, if the article which the *Edinburgh Review* has published on the subject contained a clue to the political grounds on which the Government take their stand in treating this project with a coolness amounting to hostility. But, on this point, the *Edinburgh Review* is either very discreet or very ignorant, for it professes that its opposition has nothing whatever to do with politics, but that it cannot consent to M. de Lesseps' scheme, because it considers that



...be impracticable and unnecessary. Impracticable, because, according to the *Edinburgh Review*, the harbour works required at Pelusium are too difficult for execution, and because the Red Sea is a most dangerous sea for navigation: unnecessary, because a monster steam-ship, fit for the voyage round the Cape, is building at Blackwall.

As for the impracticability of the harbour works necessary at Pelusium, we need not trouble our readers with technical details. Enough that the best engineers of Great Britain and the Continent—engineers who have gone over and examined the ground—have arrived at conclusions utterly at variance with those of the writer in the *Edinburgh Review*. Enough, also, that even that writer, whose arguments may be assumed to contain the sum and substance of all that has ever been objected to the Suez Canal, admits the practicability of the canal itself, and the ease with which the long neglected port of Suez might be converted into a first-class harbour. But then it is said that the Indian and Australian trade is chiefly carried on in sailing vessels, and that the Red Sea, if not actually impracticable for sailing vessels is, at least, full of dangers and delays. In support of this proposition, the *Edinburgh Review* quotes one of the Fathers of the Church, a distinguished divine, but a sorry sailor. As well might we attempt to demonstrate the dangers of the Mediterranean by quoting the disastrous voyage of Ulysses and the dangers of the Scylla and Charybdis. It is a fine thing to be able to quote the Classics and the Fathers, but we have yet to learn that either of them are authorities on navigation. An authority of a very different sort, the traveller Bruce, at the end of the last century, declared his conviction that the dangers of the Red Sea had their existence chiefly in the ignorance of classical and mediaeval navigators, and modern experience has confirmed the verdict of that clear-sighted Scot. The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, who have now for years had their vessels passing through and stationed in the Red Sea, have not had a single accident in those waters. It is true that the Red Sea may be dangerous to the overloaded boats of the natives, manned by ignorant and superstitious mariners, but every sea would be dangerous and fatal to such vessels and such sailors. Fancy a ship loaded to within an inch of the water navigating the Baltic or the British Channel! Fancy such a ship manned by sailors who take no soundings and know no charts, braving the dangers of the Gulf of Lyons or of the Bay of Biscay; and consider, also, for one moment what the inhabitants of Siam and Japan would say of the British Channel, if they judged it according to the accounts to be found in the writings of classical authors, and of the missionaries of the early Christian Church. Bruce, a most impartial authority on the subject of the Red Sea, declares its navigation to be both safe and expeditious to those who take advantage of the trade winds and monsoons. The fact is, to modern civilised ships, manned by efficient crews, and navigated by able captains, the Red Sea is no more dangerous than the British Channel, which most assuredly would

full of dangers to sailors from Mexico or the Brazils, who would put up without charts or pilots. In the Channel, too, hundreds of sailing vessels are often compelled to run into some harbour of refuge and remain there for shelter; and steam-tug stations, to enable vessels to reach their destinations in spite of contrary winds are by no means unfrequent either in the Channel or the Straits of Gibraltar. So much for sailing ships. But it should be recollected that the combination of steam and sails introduced at a comparatively recent period, has already made such progress, that it is not unreasonable to assume that in less than twenty years, hardly any ships dependent on sails alone will be sent on long voyages. And that the Red Sea is either impracticable or dangerous for screw steamers is a proposition which even the *Edinburgh Review* wants the boldness to maintain.

But, it is said, even if the Isthmus of Suez were cut through, the carrying trade to India would still be carried on round the Cape, because at sea the shortest route is not always that which takes least time. Thus, for instance, we are asked to compare the quick passages of clippers round the Cape with the time it takes a sailing ship to go from England to Alexandria. But it should not be forgotten, that none but the few quick and favourable runs are quoted in favour of the Cape route, while the slow passages of the bulk of the commercial navy employed in the Indian and Australian trade are passed over in silence. Unfortunately such screw steam clippers as the *Royal Charter* and the *Frances Henty* do not run between Southampton and Alexandria, for the very reason that from Alexandria they cannot go farther. The antagonists of the Suez Canal support their assertion—that the shortest route to India is the longer one—by comparing the exceptional runs of the quickest vessels, combining the advantages of sails and steam, with the ordinary runs of sailing vessels on a route on which, at present, no great speed is attained, because no great speed is required.

On the other hand it is said, vessels will still go round the Cape, because a quick postal communication being established between India, Australia, and England, it matters little whether cargoes, of which advices and samples have been transmitted per mails, arrive sooner or later. On the contrary, their arrival is almost a misfortune, for it entails all sorts of expenses upon the consignees, and therefore, the later a cargo comes into port, the more satisfactory is it for all parties. This is actually one of the arguments used by the *Edinburgh Review*, in its attempts to demonstrate the uselessness of the Isthmus of Suez Canal. We will not refute it, but leave it to the appreciation of our commercial readers.

In short, the Suez Canal, like every other great improvement of our means of locomotion and transport, has against it not only vested interests, but the great mass of those whose motto is, *Quia non movetur*. Or, as Lord Melbourne translated it, Never do to-day what can be put off till to-morrow. The same sort of opposition which the *Edinburgh Review*

represents, was flung in the path of the first promoters of railways, and even of steam navigation. A man need not be old to remember how the plausible and wise proved by word of mouth, and in print, that steamers were fit only for river traffic and the coasting trade, and that railway trains could never run at the rate of twenty miles an hour. Many of the men—men eminent in science—who used all their authority to stop the progress of the age, are still living: many of them have lived to cross the Atlantic in steamboats, and to travel forty miles an hour by rail. Let us hope that, now they see, they believe. But their race is not extinct. The Isthmus of Suez Canal has met the same sort of antagonists as those who despaired of steamers and railways, and it may probably have to fight Mr. Waghorn's battles over again. If this were to be the case, none would lose more by the delay than this country. But such a delay is impossible, if but a few politicians and merchants fully appreciate the scheme, and press it upon the notice of Government. Let us hope that the next session of Parliament is not to pass without some public discussion of a question which affects the best interests of Great Britain and her dependencies, and which, inasmuch as it has a direct bearing upon ship-building, and the trade in wool, iron, and coals, is of especial interest to Glasgow and the Clyde districts.

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