

India

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NOTES AND NEWS.

TO judge from the copious lamentations which the British Press, without distinction of party, has poured forth over the re-condemnation of Captain Dreyfus, one would think that injustice was impossible under British rule, and that our newspapers are always on the alert to redress wrong. Unfortunately there is the Natus case, which our reactionary journals conceal from the British public as diligently and as successfully as reactionary journals in France have concealed the truth about Dreyfus from a great part of the French public. Captain Dreyfus has at least been tried and, save by military tribunals, has had his innocence vindicated. But the Natus have never been brought to trial, though the grave accusations uttered against them in Parliament by Lord George Hamilton have not been withdrawn. Moreover, it is clear that there is in France a considerable party of able and fearless men prepared to risk everything in the effort to secure justice for Dreyfus. What are our British Pharisees risking to secure justice for the Natus? A Tory journal the other day deplored the fact that if at this juncture anybody in France told his countrymen unwholesome truths he was called a bad Frenchman. Our officials of course refrain from such language. They prefer to call their critics liars.

Sir John Woodburn has decided to swim in the stream. The Government of India has made up its mind on the Calcutta Municipal Bill, and the Local Government has finally concurred. But Sir John combated the Hon. Surendra Nath Banerjea's contention that "the measure was a death-blow to the prospects of local self-government in Calcutta."

Local self-government may be carried out and carried forward in many different forms and fashions, and the man who should refuse to amend the system of local self-government which was not fulfilling his expectations would be the most deadly enemy of the whole system of local self-government. The friend of local self-government is the man who accepts experience and makes modifications accordingly. Therefore, I must take the liberty to differ from my honourable friend, and I can assure him, that so far from this measure being a death-blow to local self-government, it is the greatest help that local self-government can possibly receive.

One would infer from such a statement that "experience" had been carefully consulted in the matter. Yet, as we indicate elsewhere and have often stated before, there has been no enquiry whatever to discover the faults and the right remedies. Not only so, but it has been amply shown that the Government has acted right in the teeth of all the teachings of experience. But the proof of the pudding is the eating of it, and we await developments.

Looking forward to the passing of the Calcutta Municipal Bill into an Act, the *Anurita Bazar Patrika* recalls the harsh and oppressive acts of the Corporation under Sir Stuart Hogg, when it was a purely official body. "The ratepayers groaned under his autocratic rule—not only the Indians, but also the Europeans." The latter joined heartily with the former in praying for an elective system. Then, when the elective system was obtained, "the houses of the representatives every day presented a strange appearance"—besieged by people asking for redress of their grievances. Whatever may have been the shortcomings of the Corporation, the representatives at least "succeeded in affording protection to thousands of the aggrieved." As the Hon. Surendra Nath Banerjea has

pointed out, it will be impossible for a single representative from each ward to do justice to the people having a claim on his attention. Now that "the Government is going to revert to the old system," says our contemporary, "the oppressions are sure to commence again"; and even if some Natives agree to serve as Commissioners they will have no real power, and "we very much fear that the introduction of the new system will be followed by the groans of the poor." Our experiments in local self-government do not seem to be exhilarating to those that are on the spot and know the needs and the feelings of the masses of the population.

The Telegraphic Press Messages Bill explains that "publication for the purpose of this Act" includes (1) publication (a) of any part of a foreign telegraphic press message or (b) of the substance thereof or—whatever the difference may be—(c) of the intelligence contained, or (d) any comment upon, or (e) any reference to, such intelligence. We have already dealt with the preposterous claims thus advanced. We wish now to point out how far the Indian Bill is beyond the highest demands of those newspaper proprietors who seek protection from the British Legislature. The Indian Bill creates a temporary property in the fact itself. But even Mr. Moberley Bell, of the *Times*, stops short of that; that, he thinks, "is impossible." In his evidence Mr. Bell said:—

My claim is this: a fact has taken place in a certain locality. That is communicated to us necessarily in a literary form. That news should have a copyright. You can refer to it in the way a book is at present referred to; you can quote it; you can criticise it; but you cannot take it bodily. That is all the protection I want.

But under the Indian Bill you cannot refer to it, you cannot quote it, you cannot criticise it; the limit is, not that you cannot "take it bodily," but that you cannot even "refer" to it. Mr. Bell practically bargains only for protection against infringement of the literary form. The Indian Bill creates a property in the fact itself.

Mr. Bell usefully illustrated his meaning by a specific example. He said:—

We had a telegram the other day from Peking, which was of an important character; it was also expensive. The *Westminster Gazette* began an article by saying that the *Times* correspondent in Peking was excessively inopportune, and in a very long article gave certain portions of the telegram, and commented upon it, agreeing with parts and disagreeing with others. We have no objection to that.

Yet from the course of the discussion that went on between the Committee and the witnesses it seems more than doubtful whether even Mr. Bell's wishes will be accorded to by the Legislature. There is no such force of public criticism or of jealousy for public rights to stay the legislative perversity of Simla or Calcutta. But the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Lords Committee will operate against the Bill as an Act, and it remains to be seen how the Government will face the odium of enforcement of such a stringent and foolish law.

The *Champion* has discerned all this and set it forth cogently. It cites most appositely a remark of Lord Thring's which goes to the very root of the question. Lord Thring said:

My trade, as you know, has been drawing Acts of Parliament, and I have always found that the whole difficulty in an Act of Parliament . . . is in drawing the line of demarcation, and in practically declaring how, without gross injustice, you can give a remedy when you think that remedy just. I do not deny that you have a grievance, but my difficulty is, How you can give a remedy without creating greater injustice.

This difficulty is always overlooked by people that have no sense of the complexity of obstacles to be faced by the legislative draftsman, and that regard exclusively their own side of the question without consideration of the public interest. The *Champion's* conclusion is irrefragable:

We think that the price newsgagents ask for the protection of their

property is too great, and, although we dislike to see any class suffer, we are obliged to say, "No, what you ask for is impracticable, unfair, and against public policy. It cannot be granted. It may be annoying to you that your telegrams are cribbed, but, after all, some of you do make fortunes and you must put up with the annoyance."

We print elsewhere a circular letter signed by a large number of British Indians in Durban on the recent condition of their fellow-countrymen in Natal under the operation of the Dealers' Licences Act. One effect of Mr. Chamberlain's communications with the Natal authorities has been that the Natal Government has advised local boards "to exercise caution in refusing Indian licences so as not to interfere with vested interests, as unless this was done the Government would be obliged to introduce legislation giving Indians right of appeal from the decisions of local boards to the Supreme Court." This may prove a moderating influence. Still, as the circular points out, "the town councils and the local boards have got certain powers under the Act, and they are entitled to use those powers without let or hindrance." They may indeed take the hint of the *Times of Natal* and perform the process of "gradual weeding out" in such a judicious manner as not to cause a commotion. In any case, the relief from this source can only be temporary, if even temporary. What is needed is just this power of appeal to the Supreme Court, which the boards are cautioned not to render inoperative.

The operation of the Dealers' Licences Act is stated to be "of an extremely discouraging nature." The instances reported indicate much arbitrary treatment. In some cases traders have been compelled to sell off their stock and buildings, necessarily at a loss, and it is but small comfort under such circumstances to be allowed some time to effect the sale. It is indeed, as the writers say, "a serious matter when one man, because he is an Indian, cannot sell his business to another because that other is an Indian, for the refusal to grant the licence in such cases is tantamount to forbidding a purchase and sale unless it were done in an underhand manner." Many traders have been reduced from reasonable comfort to poverty, and the servants have suffered with the masters. The uncertainty of renewal is cruelly oppressive. "In a state of such insecurity business naturally becomes paralysed and uneasiness takes hold of our minds. The sole hope lies in something being done by and through the Imperial Government." But, hard as are the uncertainty and the certainty alike, the British Indian will have to wait till the Uitlander has been provided for. Meantime he may comfort himself with his share in the pride of British Imperialism.

The treatment of British Indians in South Africa, as we have frequently intimated, has caused much soreness throughout India. Such a result was obviously inevitable. *Power and Guardian*, recurring to the subject, turns from Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Curzon, and points out that the remedy lies in the hands of the Government of India. "The prosperity of the South African Colonies depends to a large extent upon the free supply of Indian labour." The Government of India, therefore, "can easily force the Colonies to reason by refusing to send a single emigrant to South Africa except on condition of adequate justice being done to the British Indian settlers." The remedy has been pressed on the Government of India, but hitherto without success, and there is too much evidence of co-operation between Mr. Chamberlain and Lord G. Hamilton to allow one to anticipate that the proposal will be listened to. *Power and Guardian* says:—

No economic reason demands the expatriation of a number of Indians every year. Or if movement of people from the congested parts is at all necessary, why cannot the Government devise some efficacious means of settling them on the extensive areas which are now lying waste on all sides within the country and which require only to be broken to bring forth a golden harvest? There is a great and increasing demand for Indian labour in India itself; why should then the people be shipped off to a distant inhospitable and hostile country for a living? There is absolutely no economic reason for that. Why cannot then the Government stop it even for a time? Under this development, the Natal legislator that declared the right of the Indian to clear out would pretty quickly be brought to his bearings.

A military correspondent of the *Times* (September 13) prefaces a sketch of the Indian contingent destined for South Africa with some historical and speculative remarks.

He recalls how the *Times* pointed out, when Lord Beaconsfield brought Indian Native troops to Malta in 1878, that their presence constituted an additional proof that we were "prepared to exert the whole military force of our Empire, alike in Asia and Europe, in support of our interests." But, really, who in the world ever wanted any such proof? The remark is the merest journalistic mouthing. Then comes Sir Herbert Macpherson's contingent in 1882. "But India has never before afforded such an impressive example of its immense strategical importance as an outlying Imperial stronghold from which, at most times, a purely British force sufficient to maintain our supremacy pending the arrival of an army from England can be thrown into the balance of South and East African, as well as Far Eastern, affairs." But those that use this sounding argument ought not at the same time to cry aloud about the seditious tendencies of our fellow subjects in India. The plain fact is that we could spare 10,000 British troops from India all the year round, any year, even as things now stand; while, with a sympathetic administration bringing real prosperity to the country, there would be no practical use for a single British soldier in India, any more than there is in England itself, except for the edification of possible external enemies. If, however, the Indian garrison is so enthusiastically contemplated as a British reserve, it does seem rather hard that it should be maintained at the sole expense of the Indian taxpayer.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* reviews the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions, on the suggestion of Mr. Pickersgill's amendment on the occasion of the Indian Budget debate. Our contemporary is of opinion that the reform would have been welcomed by a larger section of the executive branch of the Civil Service some forty, or even twenty years ago, than now, and ascribes the change of attitude to the official opposition stirred up by the vigorous promotion of the reform in the Press and by the Congress. If this diagnosis be correct, it casts a very serious reflection upon the official sense of justice and honour. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* adds:—

At the present day, although many judicial officials are in favour of the reform, there are scarcely half-a-dozen Executive Civil servants who are not opposed to it on vague and unassignable reasons of State policy, declaring that the present union is either "the mainstay" or "the keystone" of the British power in India, however disastrous it may be to the pure and efficient administration of justice. A strong Viceroy, who has the courage to disarm this opposition and carry out this reform, will not only be removing a serious blot from the administration of justice in India, but placing the real "mainstay" or "keystone" of British rule in India on a much firmer basis than is generally imagined by those who are reluctant to part with their own power.

With this conclusion we are in entire agreement, and only hope that Lord Curzon's statesmanship may rise to the occasion.

Commenting on the "Report on the System of Trial by Jury in Courts of Session in the Mofussil," the *Englishman* is led to moralise on the way in which men's views of institutions are inevitably coloured by the situation from which they observe them. The Report contains a great number of opinions from Indians and Europeans, the latter consisting of District Officers, high officials and High Court Judges. Now it is remarkable that, whereas the Indians are all in favour of trial by jury and wish its extension, the District Officers condemn it entirely. This makes the opinion of the higher officials and judges all the more important, and it is satisfactory to find that they are on the whole sympathetic to this institution. Thus Mr. J. Nugent, Commissioner of the Southern Division, Bombay, writes:—

I should be sorry to see the system of trial by jury entirely abolished where once it has been introduced. This would, I think, be a retrograde, impolitic and unpopular step, for which no justification exists. We have from time to time called attention to cases in which the District Magistrate has overruled the verdict of a jury, which verdict has ultimately been approved by the High Court. It is to be feared that the case in which trial by jury is most often a failure is where a European is tried by a jury the majority of which belongs to the "ruling race."

At a meeting held on July 1 at the Calcutta University Institute, under the presidency of Mr. Justice Gurusdas Banerji, to congratulate the Indian Senior Wrangler, Babu L. M. Ghosal, Municipal Commissioner of Cossipur,

pointed some of the lessons of Mr. Paranjy's success. He said:—

Mr. Paranjy's success is opportune. There can be no disguising the fact that just now the Mahratta Brahmins are not in the good graces of the local Government. . . . But when they have Paranjy's in their midst, then certainly the Mahratta Brahmins have some claim upon the kind and favourable consideration of Government. . . . In the latter part of the present century, India is giving birth to heroes who fight India's battles upon English soil. The other day Prince Ranji—(cheers)—saved England from the hands of Australia. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Paranjy has carried off the blue-ribbon of English scholarship. Already reference has been made to the unique success of Dr. J. C. Bose, Mr. Atul Chauder, and Mr. Roy. We are doing what Greece of old did, after she had been subjugated by Rome. "Captive Greece took captive her mighty conqueror"—the Romans. The English have conquered us by physical force, but, sir, by a different process—by dint of merit and genius—we would conquer our conquerors. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Certainly the time is come when officials out here should begin to entertain kindly feelings towards us and see that the children of the soil are once again on their own legs, for that is the mission of England in India. (Continued cheers.)

Native Opinion (Bombay) says "it is by the example of the ruling race that we (Indians) are to progress and reform," and thereupon enquires whether "the members of our ruling race, collectively or individually, are showing us the way how to rise high above caste-prejudice and family nepotism." The enquiry does not result in any satisfactory conclusion as to the practice of the British exemplars in the distribution of patronage. The "average European officer" is found to be not above caste-prejudice—say, against the Mahratta Brahmin and the Bengali Babu, and in favour of Mahometans. The mightiest of all caste-prejudices flourishes in the opposition of European and Indian.

The most glaring instance of this prejudice is probably the shameless treatment which the Government have allowed to be accorded to Indians in the British Colonies and Dependencies of Africa and the contrast their apathy in this respect presents to the attitude of war which has been assumed against the Transvaal in the interests of the twenty times better treated British settlers of Johannesburg and the surrounding gold mines. It is the old story of the mote and the beam.

The *Champion* reviews Lord Curzon's principal performances during his Viceroyalty and gives him credit for no more than good intentions. He has not yet "accomplished any beneficial purpose on which the country could conscientiously congratulate him." The imposition of countervailing duties on imported bounty-fed sugar does not redound to his statesmanship. Indeed, "the subsequent events in connexion with it and the revelations disclosed by the Blue-book clearly demonstrated that Lord Curzon was still a novice" in the art. The new departure in trans-frontier policy, even if he be the author of it, touches but the accidents of the forward policy; "the policy which still is in the ascendant in the Council of the Imperial Government has undergone no modification." The new move in railway extension has yet to be carried out; but "here, too, ripe statesmanship would first endeavour to weigh the influence and effects of railways on Indian prosperity before blindly rushing forward to construct thousands of miles more." The Home Charges, already "intolerable," will be swollen by the inevitable loans. "Thus," concludes the *Champion*, "on all the three important measures which Lord Curzon's personality has been able to put in motion, we fail to discover any practical statesmanship."

The lesson we have steadily enforced, the lesson urged in our extract from the *Investors' Review* last week, is emphasised by the *Champion* for the *n*th time:—

We want the people to recover from the disasters of the last few years. We want them to husband their crippled resources so as to enable them to produce more wealth to bear the burden of future taxation, and to accumulate some capital. . . . We repeat what we have said over and over again, that had even half the amount expended on construction of new railways been laid out on cheap irrigation works India might have been in an infinitely better position to-day. The distress which arose from the last famine might then have been a great deal less severe, and the privations of the people might have been more endurable. . . . No railway, either owned by the State or managed by private enterprise, is yet a paying concern. . . . and it is simply fatuous to go on heedlessly piling debt for construction of more railways and in reality mortgaging the future labour of the producers.

"A policy for the amelioration of the agriculturists by means of the opening of agricultural banks all over the country and by cheap irrigation works," says our contemporary, most justly, "would be infinitely preferable to

this wild and expensive programme of railway construction, so prolific of future economic disadvantages to the country."

There is a very funny article on "The Nizam" in the *Simla News*. The Nizam is contemplating a visit to Lord Curzon, and as the visit seems to suit the fancy of the denizens of Olympus, he is spoken of in terms of high compliment. Thus:—

His Highness the Nizam may justly be regarded as the "First Prince in India," not only by reason of the extent and importance of his territory and resources, but more especially—as has been admitted—because he has consistently been the one faithful and unswerving ally from whom England, during the three successive steps of her power. . . . has always received assistance, from the very dawn of British Indian history in 1600 A.D. to the inception and origin of the Imperial Service troops, which now form one of the bulwarks of the Indian Empire.

Yes, and what has been the Nizam's reward? The recognition of his services, we are told, "was, for all practical purposes, given effect to by the restitution of a small extent of territory, when the British Government in that manner acknowledged the adherence to the British Raj during the turmoils of 1857, of the Hyderabad State—through the influence of the illustrious Sir Salar Jung."

"The illustrious Sir Salar Jung!" And, again, "Sir Salar Jung the Great"! Why, it is enough to make the eminent statesman turn in his grave. Is the writer not aware of the treatment meted out to Sir Salar Jung by Lord Lytton, or of the infamous intrigues by which the beneficent and honourable policy of Sir Salar Jung was paralysed? He does seem to be aware of the consistent fidelity and unswerving alliance of the State of Hyderabad and of some petty recognition of the Nizam's invaluable service in the time of the Mutiny. But what of the story of the Hyderabad contingent? What of the sequestration of the Berars for the payment of moneys never due? We have held on to the Berars, most iniquitously, for about half a century. Is Lord Curzon at last prepared to clear the British conscience of this shocking act of piratical seizure? We hope he is. The Nizam is not going to Calcutta, we apprehend, for a mere visit of courtesy or pleasure.

The Indian spirit of generosity has received a fresh illustration in the provision of an Ophthalmic Hospital for Gujerat and an out-door dispensary at the Civil Hospital, Ahmedabad, at the charges of Khan Bahadur Nowroji Pestonji Vakil, C.I.E., of Ahmedabad. The negotiations with the Government have been running on since 1894, when Mr. Vakil offered to contribute Rs. 25,000. On enquiry it was found that the project could not be carried out under Rs. 32,000, and "the Government," according to the Acting-Secretary, "could not, in the then condition of the finances, assume responsibility for the expenditure"—apparently the initial difference and certain recurring charges. Mr. Vakil, however, has raised his offer to Rs. 34,000, and this has been accepted, and the Governor in Council has made "public acknowledgment of Mr. Vakil's generous benefaction." It is a noble example.

We record with deep regret the death of Dr. Peter Peterson, of the Elphinstone College, Bombay, one of the most eminent teachers and students of Sanskrit literature. After a distinguished record at Edinburgh and Oxford, he entered the Education Department of the Government of India in 1873, twenty-six years ago. Besides discharging the duties of his professorship with more than praiseworthy zeal, he for many years acted as Registrar of the University of Bombay. In its obituary notice, the *Times* says:—

But no office however onerous tempted him from the path which he had marked out for himself at Oxford—the somewhat solitary path of the Sanskrit scholar. In collaboration with a distinguished Indian *savant*, Professor Bhandarkar, he conducted the search for Sanskrit manuscripts in Western India, which has proved so fruitful of results, and his volumes in the Bombay Sanskrit Series form lasting memorials of patient editing and wide-reaching study. His death, following so soon after that of another great Sanskritist, Professor Bühler, whose name will also always be associated with the search for Sanskrit manuscripts in India, leaves a blank not easy to fill.

The *Times* adds that only the other day he contemplated standing as candidate for the Boden Professorship at Oxford. A younger brother, Dr. William Peterson, is the energetic and distinguished Principal of McGill University, Montreal.

THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL BILL.

THE prolonged tinkering of the constitution of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation serves only to bring out more and more clearly the egregious folly of the whole business. The report of the first Select Committee that sat upon the Bill called forth a joint Note of Dissent from the Hon. Surendranath Banerjea and the Hon. Norendro Nath Sen, the knowledge and ability of which were even officially recognised. The question was then taken up by the Government of India, notwithstanding Lord George Hamilton's protestation that the Bengal Legislative Council is a self-governing body, and that it would be an infraction of the privileges of self-government to interfere with the Bill while under its consideration. Now that the proposals of the Government of India have been "accepted by the majority who had only recently pledged themselves to an opposite principle and an opposite course of policy," we discover some clue to a just estimate of Lord George Hamilton's self-denying ordinance. It was a ridiculous farce, applied for the immediate purpose of turning the attack upon him in the House, and throwing the usual dust into the eyes of the people at home. The Government of India "cannot fail to realise that they have a special responsibility in this case." Precisely. They have; and so has Lord George Hamilton; and so have the self-governing corporations and the people of this country. The Government of India declared their natural anxiety that the municipal administration of Calcutta should be "businesslike, efficient, and free from scandal and reproach," and yet that there should be "no contravention of the broad principles of local self-government already conceded." There is no dispute about that: not a man among the opponents of this Bill but is just as anxious for this result as the Government of India. But the existing system is quite as good for these ends as any other system likely to be devised, only it has no protection, any more than any other system would have, against the bitter tooth of malicious scandal and ignorant reproach. A second Select Committee has reconsidered the Bill in the light of the views of the Government of India, and has reported. On this Report Mr. Surendranath Banerjea has penned another most able Note of Dissent, and Mr. J. G. Apcar has also written a strong Note of Dissent. Since then, twenty-eight of the elected commissioners have resigned in disgust. The progress of the Bill thus marks the gradual paralysis that the Governmental authorities are busily inducing on the municipal administration of the capital city of India.

These two fresh Notes of Dissent practically constitute a destructive criticism of the Act, for the Bill is only too likely to be passed into an Act substantially if not literally as it now stands. "The present Bill," Mr. Banerjea concludes, "is distinctly worse and more retrograde than the first Bill submitted by the Select Committee, and is even more reactionary than the Bill introduced by Sir Alexander Mackenzie's Government." "The fresh proposals, as interpreted in the Select Committee," says Mr. Apcar, "leave those who have been most aggrieved by the measure before the Council with their representation in the Corporation considerably weakened, and generally in every particular in a far worse position than under the Bill as amended by the Select Committee in April last." How could it be otherwise? There has been no enquiry, as on previous occasions of reform, to find out the precise faults of the system and the appropriate remedies for such faults; and the Bill was drafted by an official of no experience either of the particular municipality or of the working of self-government in any other municipality. Mr. Apcar says plainly:—

The present Bill was framed and presented to this Council by one of the Secretaries to the Executive Government who has had no practical knowledge of the Corporation, and who has had no practical experience of any other Municipality other than, perhaps, that of the summer Capital of the Local Government. The Bill shows his inexperience of the working of the administration, and the statements on which it has been attempted to justify the changes that have been proposed teem with inaccuracies, and are generally such as could not have been relied upon by any person acquainted with the facts. If there are faults to be remedied, most certainly they should be remedied; and, where there is a genuine desire for reform, only an enquiry, such as we have established precedent for, could elicit how it could best be effected. But the present situation is emphasised by the fact that although we have an inexperienced stranger to the administration set to devise a scheme of government, a completely novel constitution, which makes a sweeping change in every particular, is decided upon without any enquiry as to where

the faults in the present system lie, and how they can best be remedied.

A more damning criticism could scarcely be formulated, especially when it is remembered that the Government of India expressly desired to see their objects attained "not by any contravention of the broad principles of local self-government already conceded, but by a curtailment of the abuses to which in practice they may have become exposed, and by a restriction, within limits suggested by experience, of the range of their future operation."

But, though there has been no enquiry, certain abuses have been specified. In the forefront has been placed the allegation that there is no getting work done for talk, within reasonable limits of time; and on this allegation the Government of India based their proposal to reduce the number of elected commissioners from 50 to 25—a reduction of one-half, while the nominated commissioners remain at their former strength. Now the remedy is obviously preposterous in any case, for 25 can talk more than enough to suspend action disastrously. This remedy was pooh-poohed in 1888 by Sir Henry Harrison, with all the authority of his experience as Chairman of the Corporation, from his place in the Bengal Legislative Council. Of course, the point will not bear any serious argument. But what we now want to do is to look at the facts. Is there any such excessive talking? And is it irrelevant? The Corporation is a deliberative body, and must talk. The Government of India, in their letter, say they "have been struck, in their examination of the grounds advanced both by Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Sir John Woodburn for the measure, by the allegation that the existing Corporation has devoted itself to speech and to criticism rather than to action." Here comes in the unfortunate lack of enquiry, and even of reflection. If the allegation be true, then, as Mr. Banerjea points out, "it would be difficult to account for those sanitary works which have made Calcutta what it is." And Mr. Apcar also adduces definite particulars:—

Those who so easily speak of waste of time forget that not so many as 5 per cent of the [items of] business transacted in general meetings are even discussed. Those who complain that there are unnecessary delays by reason of the frequent references back of business from the general meetings to the committees do not seem to be aware that 98 to 99 per cent of the business of the Corporation is got through without any reference back being made, and do not pause to think that, if such a very large percentage of business is treated finally, there may be good cause for referring back the small proportion of one or two per cent, which are sent back for reconsideration.

And hear the testimony of Mr. H. Lee, late Chairman of the Corporation:—

Less frequently now than of old, because the outside public is better acquainted with the facts, but still occasionally, we hear insinuations that much time is wasted in this hall by long speeches from the Municipal Commissioners. No charge could be further from the mark. In all my experience—and that has covered full three years—I have seldom listened to a speech that has not been useful and to the point. I can hardly recall a single instance in which I have made the reflection that the speaker was throwing no new light on his subject and was simply speaking to make a speech. The facts, indeed, are conclusive. In the course of the year you hold some 30 general meetings. All the proceedings of every committee meeting, of which some 250 are held in the course of the year, come before you in this hall for review. A single committee will frequently deal with 20 or more separate matters, and you have on the average to review proceedings of such committees at each single meeting in this hall so that you dispose of sometimes 120, seldom less than 40, items of business at a sitting. How long do you take over it? As a rule, between one and two hours! Who could say with fairness that that is excessive? How many similar deliberative bodies in the world are there that would dispose of the work in less time? The general rule that we endeavour to observe is not to speak without special knowledge and clear opinion, and then to express our thoughts in language as brief as we can make it.

Yes, "the outside public is better acquainted with the facts," but the facts have not yet penetrated to the knowledge of the Government authorities. Sir Henry Fowler, in the debate on the Bill in February last, said he "was not sure that the Mother of Parliaments was free from that objection," and that "with the Englishman who understood the working of parliamentary and municipal life and local self-government in all its ramifications those objections would not weigh in the least against the general principle of enlisting the people in their own self-government." What, we ask, has the Englishman to say to the action of the Imperial and local governments in Calcutta?

But the Government of India thought the people would be sufficiently represented by a reduced number of commissioners. They wrote:—

Their numerical strength, when viewed in regard either to the

number of electors by whom the majority are returned or to the experience of municipal institutions elsewhere, seems to be disproportionately and unnecessarily large. There can be no reason why a number of voters returned as only 13,890 out of a total ward population estimated at about 6,50,000, or a proportion of little more than two per cent., should return as many as 50 members; or why the interests of a city even of over 6,81,000 inhabitants should require the services of 75 commissioners for their proper protection.

If the Government of India had made enquiry, they would have been furnished with most cogent reasons. Both Mr. Banerjea and Mr. Aparc enlighten the darkness of the official understanding. In the first place, the lists of voters are notoriously "incomplete and inaccurate." Then, the voters are restricted by law to male persons of the age of twenty-one paying certain considerable rates and taxes (Rs. 24); and the whole population of the *bustis*, even though they may pay more than Rs. 24 a year as rates, are disfranchised by the fact that their rates are paid through their landlords. Further, the minimum assessed value of qualifying property is the large sum of Rs. 150. But all these non-voters must be somehow represented. "We represent," says Mr. Banerjea, "a much larger constituency than the immediate circle of our own supporters; for it is within the experience of all Ward Commissioners that they are looked up to for redress of all municipal grievances, whether they effect their immediate constituents or not." And as regards "the experience of municipal institutions elsewhere," he cites the population of seven of the largest British towns—all (except one) with a smaller population than Calcutta—and sets out the numbers of their municipal commissioners. Thus:—

| | Population in 1898. | Number of Municipal Commissioners. |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Glasgow | 7,24,342 | 78 |
| Edinburgh.. .. | 2,95,628 | 41 |
| Manchester .. . | 5,39,078 | 104 |
| Birmingham .. | 5,10,343 | 72 |
| Liverpool | 6,83,045 | 64 |
| Sheffield | 3,59,478 | 64 |
| Leeds | 4,18,018 | 64 |

The population of Calcutta is over 6,80,000, and its Commissioners are to be reduced from 75 to 50. The bare figures convict the Government of inaccuracy. Besides, "the wants of the wards are numerous; the populations are far from being homogeneous; there are diverse, at times conflicting, interests." Further, with only one Commissioner for each ward, the religious and racial acerbities of Hindu and Mahometan, "which were rapidly disappearing under our happy educational influences, not the least important of which is a better understanding owing to association in public affairs, will thus come into full play, and the seeds of dissension between class and class will be sown broadcast in a city in which the elements of public discord are sufficiently rife."

To-day we have dealt with only one fundamental point, but even that, we venture to think, is more than enough to demonstrate the wilful blindness of the authorities and to raise serious apprehensions as to the results of their infatuated devotion to the extinction of self-government in the capital of the Indian Empire.

THE PEOPLE OF INDIA:

THEIR MANY MERITS BY MANY WHO HAVE KNOWN THEM.

Collected and Edited with an Introduction by ALFRED WEBB (President Tenth Indian National Congress).

THE editor of INDIA purposes to give space in successive numbers for a collection of testimony by competent authorities on the character of the Indian people, made by the above, primarily in response to a request inserted in INDIA, and then with the encouragement or assistance of the following—mainly by the first named, the others are placed in alphabetical order: William Digby, C.I.E., London; Manoharlal Lutshi, Lucknow; Harischandra A. Talcherkar, B.A., Bombay; M. Venkanah, Vizianagaram; Juan Chandra Bannerjea, M.A., Faridpur; Sir George Birdwood, K.C.I.E., London; Romesh Chandra Dutt, London; Professor G. K. Gokhale, Poona; Edmund Harvey, Waterford; Gordon Hewart, London; A. O. Hume, C.B., London; Sir William Markby, K.C.I.E., Oxford; Sorabji Bamanji Munshi, Bombay; Dadabhai Naoroji, London; Dinsha Edulji Wacha, Bombay; Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., M.P., London; W. Martin Wood, London.

I had best preface the collection with the reasons that impelled me to set about making it.

It is my growing conviction that disastrous consequences must sooner or later result from persistent vilification of Indian character. I belong to a subject people that have been a mark for vilification because impotent effectually to resent it. I know how such vilification has worked in us, at times turning our better natures into gall, and being responsible for many a hideous passage in our history.

India is more powerless than ever Ireland was to resent insult, and is therefore more exposed to it. The attitude of too many of those in authority over her is: "Let our strength be the law of justice; for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth." The consequences, sad enough upon the contracted stage of Ireland, may be terrible upon the vast continent and amid the immense population of India. Even were material power left unchecked on earth, it were well to bear in mind, that science, which now subjects the multitude to wealth and training, may yet centre material power again in numbers. Upon grounds of expediency alone, a different attitude were advisable towards our Indian fellow subjects.

My attention has but within late years been closely drawn towards Indian affairs. Yet even within that period, the attitude of mind I have observed of too many of the dominant race, and the cruel expressions of opinion regarding India, that have incidentally come to my notice, justify my concern, and have impelled me to make the collection of opinions to be found in the following columns of competent observers, favourable to Indian character.

An official holding an important office, voyaging with me to India, declared: "I hate the country and I hate the people." A reverend missionary, in a late number of the *Church Quarterly Review*, is responsible for the following: "That the Hindus as a race are probably the most immoral, treacherous, and cunning people on the face of this wicked earth will generally be admitted. To expatiate on it would be waste of time." A missionary lady, whose name is respected in all British philanthropic circles, writes in the *Sentinel* for last April: "Hinduism is impurity crystallized into a system." In a book lately published and entitled, "On the Edge of the Empire," one of whose authors is an officer, drawing his pay from the sweat of Indian labour, I find the following: "The native of India, like the ape, is at his best in childhood and deteriorates as he grows older. It is a sure sign of a decayed race." A general, said to be in command in India, delivered himself a few months ago in these words: "Lord Kitchener knew his business well and proved it at Omdurman. The only way to do is to exercise no mistaken clemency, but to slay and slay and slay, recognising no surrender. . . . That is the only logic that an eastern people can really understand." A special correspondent to India of a leading London daily paper declares: "Not a single Native is to be trusted."

Those who indulge in such language are responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a state of feeling, resulting amongst degraded soldiers in savage assaults on unoffending Indians, and amongst degraded officials in the outrage of Indian womanhood for the gratification of the lusts of such soldiers. The cowardliness of such utterances is patent. Indian Native officials making similar statements concerning the English people would be cashiered, and would under recent enactments become liable to criminal prosecution. No missionary dare utter such views regarding a self-governing people such as the Japanese. Calumny little matters to independent, self-governing peoples. They can bear it. Belittling characters is one of the most potent excuses for refusing the victims justice, for contracting freedom, and ignoring their complaints.

Few there are whose minds do not often revert to the horrors of the French Revolution and the excesses on both sides in the Irish Insurrection of 1798. All who have read widely, must, in the works of Arthur Young and other observers, written before those events, recognise in their portrayal of the attitude of the governing classes towards the people, premonition of subsequent events. No one desires that like catastrophes should overtake India. All the experiences of history will, however, be belied if, as I have before said, grave evils will not show themselves if the present attitude of too many towards the mass of the people be maintained. One of the most

striking pictures of one of the great Italian masters in Florence is a portrayal of "Calumny." When I think of India and what is too often said and done regarding her people, my thoughts revert to that picture, and I do not know whether most to sympathise with the defenceless figure in the foreground, or to shrink in disgust from the varied forms of calumny encompassing her.

Only principles inherently Christian, whether nominally so or not, could enable the Indian people to bear as patiently as they do the many influences now at work to traduce their good name.

Those who vilify Indians are not only cowardly, they are open to the charge of being moved by interested motives (and the British public before giving credence to them should bear this in mind). It is the interest of British white officials to disparage Indians, so that their own class, relatives, and descendants may still as far as possible monopolise place, pay, and pension in and out of India.

Nor are missionaries altogether free from interested motives when they unfairly depict Native character and thought. Foreign mission work has become a career to thousands. High and honourable calling as it is, it has its temptations and ethical dangers. Young men and women are enabled through it to marry, to settle down, and rear families. In the interest of missionary enterprise there is sometimes apparent a tendency to stimulate support by expatiating upon the darkest side of "heathen" character. The darker it is painted, the freer will be the flow of subscriptions, the more occupation there will be for the missionary. There is a tendency to consider the missionary rather than the missionary object. Sympathy is the best means of winning others to our opinions. Where there is contempt there cannot be sympathy. The display of contempt for Indians before British audiences is inconsistent with sympathy in India. Opinions such as I have quoted will out. Subject peoples are abnormally sensitive to the feeling towards them of their rulers.

I have no wish to deprecate sincere, well-directed missionary work. I know what good it has effected, and how often missionaries have been almost the only white witnesses for righteousness in lands other than their own. I count missionaries amongst my friends and relatives.

In decrying the beliefs of other nations we should consider how much there is that we may not understand, and how unwilling we should be for Christianity to be judged as generally manifested in the actions of its followers. Professing Christians of all other peoples should cultivate humility. They enjoy greater advantages than the holders of other faiths. The majority believe that within historic times a Divine Master came down from heaven and enunciated principles for the guidance of mankind—principles concentering all that is best in all religions. To what degree are these principles put in practice in the daily life of nominally Christian men and nations? The characteristics and the glories upon which we most pride ourselves set them at naught. In wars for the establishment of the opium traffic, in the degradation and destruction of weaker races with whom we come in contact, in the history of Europe even within the past fifty years, in the torturing and burnings of human beings now perpetrated every few weeks under a Protestant government in America, there is certainly nothing to justify our condemning the general influence of other faiths. It would be impossible to associate the idea of cruelty to animals and the life and teachings of Christ. Yet the chief recreation of the wealthiest and most cultivated Protestant Christian nation is the killing of birds, beasts and fishes; and that of the most devotedly Catholic the torturing of bulls and horses in public arenas.

When we dilate upon the immorality of the "heathen" do we sufficiently consider the scenes enacted in the streets of our great towns, especially our garrison towns, at night? There is more that the ordinary Indian visitor to Europe is likely to see (say at the Paris Salon) difficult to reconcile with a high standard of morality than anything the ordinary European visitor is likely to see in India. Do we remember that in many of the most professedly Christian nations prostitution is an established system? Do we forget that but for the revelations of two American ladies the regular supply of pleasing prostitutes to British soldiers would still be sanctioned and encouraged by British officers? During a short visit to India I found the cantonment system approved by all "Christian" officials and

condemned by all Hindu and other Indians with whom conversed concerning it.

We have no reason to suppose that all that is of a lowering tendency in Indian customs and observances is not deprecated by enlightened Hindus and other religionists, as all that is bad in our customs and observances is deprecated by enlightened Christians. Let us judge Hinduism and every other ism by its best side, as we desire Christianity should be judged.

Christianity has implanted mutual confidence, homogeneity, devotion to duty, and a high order of intelligence in professedly Christian nations. But perhaps these very characteristics have too often enabled them to set at naught every Christian principle in their dealings with other peoples. It has been reserved for Protestantism and these later times to carry to their extreme theories concerning differences of race and the abiding superiority of some people to others. Practices extenuated formerly are now justified.

Human nature is weak. History proves that in proportion as we are independent of the wants and opinions of others, we incline to neglect if not condemn them. We must counteract the growing tendency to want of sympathy with our Indian fellow subjects. The generation has almost passed away that found them gallant opponents in arms. Passenger, postal, and telegraphic facilities tend to conserve the main interest of British officials in home rather than in the country they ought to serve. Indian public opinion with too many becomes of less and less account. Government in India is not now compelled as in the days of the Company periodically to submit itself to the judgment of a superior independent authority.

There are other and even more essentially effective means, apart from respect and courtesy, by which it is in our power to impress every home in India with the reality of Christian principle. However much I might desire to here obtrude my views upon the subject, it is more in keeping with the scope of this collection, and more respectful to the authors of the various opinions I venture to quote, that their publication in this form should not be used as a vehicle for the dissemination of opinions in which they might not agree. In justice also to these several authorities readers must be careful not to stretch their views upon Indian politics generally beyond the words set down.

Due regard to space has induced me to confine my selections to views as to general character. The government of 66,000,000 persons by Indians in the Native States, and the record of Indians occupying high office in the Government of British India is sufficient evidence of high administrative ability.

Having made these introductory remarks I shall leave the extracts, which will be continued in alphabetical order in successive numbers of INDIA, to speak for themselves.

JERVOISE A. BAINES, C.S.I. *Indian Service 1868 to 1895;*
for several years Census Commissioner for India.

'Each caste provides for its indigent members in its own way. Widows, where, as in the most of the upper classes, they do not re-marry, were maintained in the household of their relatives or connexions; in a humble capacity, it is true, but still they are supported through life. Brahmins are met with offerings wherever they present themselves. Able-bodied men are provided with employment, and the decrepit and blind are either kept by subscriptions in kind or sit by the nearest roadside and asked for alms never in vain. The devotion of the younger members of a family to their elders is proverbial.'—*Supplied in MS. by Mr. Talcherkar, from an essay by Mr. Baines on "The Conditions and Prospects of Popular Education in India" appended to a late Census Report.*

WILLIAM C. BENNETT. *Served in India from 1865; Settlement-Commissioner of Oudh; Member Bengal Legislative Council.*

'Writing two centuries before Christ of the Hindus most like those of Oudh in the neighbouring kingdom of Patna, an educated Greek selected as the leading feature in their character, their honesty and integrity in the ordinary relations of life; and paradoxical as it may seem to most English ears, it is probable that this is true of the Hindu village of to-day as it was of the Buddhist court of two thousand years ago. Even among our own servants no one can fail to have been astonished at the absolute safety with which large sums of money may be entrusted to their keeping, when theft would be almost impossible of detection and would secure them comfort for the rest of their lives. In the higher ranks the well-paid and educated office clerks are faithful and trustworthy beyond any other class of men who can be procured for their responsible duties. What

has been said applies to their relations with foreign masters, for whom they can rarely feel any affection, and who not unfrequently regard them with a suspicion which would be itself enough to make most men dishonest. In their relations with their own people the quality is far more conspicuous. Trade transactions involving enormous sums are carried through with a want of precaution which we should consider idiotic, but which is justified by the rarity of breaches of faith. In a country where writing is an art as common as it is with us, large debts are contracted every day on nothing but the verbal security of the borrower; and if there be occasional repudiation in our courts, the fact that the security is still considered sufficient is ample proof that the debts are honourably acknowledged among the parties themselves. In such cases limitation is never thought of, and families who have emerged from poverty will discharge debts contracted by their ancestors a century back, of which no other record exists but an entry in the money-lender's private ledger. Their whole social system postulates an exceptional integrity, and would collapse at once if any suspicion of dishonesty attached itself to the decisions of the caste panchayats. The point is worth insisting on, as on it depends the whole of their future as a self-governing nation, and though much has occurred to impair their character in this respect, it would be unsafe to deny them at any rate the capacity for the first of political virtues. This quality may be said to extend to all ranks. The remaining merits will be more readily acknowledged but are more partial in their distribution. The courage and high sense of honour of the Brahman and the Rajput, the thrift and industry of the Kurmi, are patent to the shallowest observer, and all perhaps may lay claim to a natural aversion to cruelty, a gay, buoyant disposition of mind, and an imagination easily impressed by beauty or humour. And it is this class (Chattari) which furnishes all the best examples of the national character. It is impossible to think badly of a race who, from among a dozen chiefs of a single district, [Gond] could produce in one season of national convulsion two such eminent instances of loyalty and devotion to opposite sides as the present Maharaja of Babrampur and the late Raja Debi Baksh Singh of Gonds—the one who risked his property and his life to save a handful of English friends, and remained their firm protector when it seemed certain that their cause was lost; the other who did not join the standard of national revolt till he had escorted the treasure and the officials of a government he hated to a place of safety, who was the last in the field when fighting was possible, and who though offered an honourable reception and the whole of his immense estates by his conquerors, elected to sacrifice position and wealth and die a starving exile in Naipal rather than desert his defeated Mistress. Their fortunes were different, but their chivalrous honour the same.—*Supplied in MS. by Mr. Lutshi, from "The Oudh Gazetteer, published by Authority, 1871."*

(To be continued.)

DR. MURISON'S BRUCE.

SOME months ago when Professor Murison's "Life of Sir William Wallace" was published, we were among those who suggested that there was more work of the same kind and relating to the same period awaiting the historian, and that Professor Murison's keenly critical faculties, his calm judicial mind, and most of all the brilliant success to which he had attained in his life of Wallace, all combined to single him out from the literary men of the time as the man upon whose shoulders should be laid the burden of writing the history of Scottish independence. The lucid style and the firm pen of Professor Murison are well known to the readers of INDIA, and to them it is unnecessary that anything should be said concerning the author of "King Robert the Bruce." The same grace, the same strict impartiality, and the same stern attention to facts, that characterized his "Life of Wallace" are apparent in this new volume which is simply a continuation of the former. That there have been gigantic difficulties in the writer's way will be granted by the most casual reader of either book, for they bristle with verified facts as thickly as the schiltrons of the Scots did with steel at the battle of Bannockburn. One can fancy that in dealing with the subject, Wallace, Dr. Murison felt that he was on safe ground, that his hero was without fear and without reproach, and that search as he might among the dusty volumes of the olden chroniclers or among the still drier parchment of official record he would bring to light no deed to darken the fair fame of Wallace—to sully the shield of the bravest knight of the period. If when the writer approached his present subject he discovered, as he must have done, a greater wealth of record direct and

collateral in which to form the skeleton of his work, it cannot be said that his labour was rendered sweeter by that fact, because it must be confessed that the early life of Robert the Bruce as compared with that of his great predecessor in the struggle for national freedom is as the glimmer of a guttering rushlight to the sun in the heavens. Professor Murison extenuates nothing—nothing exaggerates. In dealing with that horrible period in the life of Bruce which came to an end in 1306 at Scone, he is still the same faithful historian. His hero is guilty of what it would be flattery to call vacillating conduct for several years, and the temptation to a writer—particularly one who is himself of Scots descent—to pass lightly over this period and to press on to the glorious beyond, must have been considerable. But, no! there it is in all its detail, and if there is one chapter in the book in which the writer has taken special pains not to mince matters, it is that chapter entitled "Opportunist Vacillation." That chapter done with, the writer has to tell of terrible hardships, of much fighting and bloodshed, of the stern determination of "dour" people to expel a usurper carried to a successful issue. But from that point the feet of the idol are no longer of clay, but are, like the rest of the structure, of refined gold. The reputation of Professor Murison must be greatly enhanced by such a work as this. There is no halting, everything is graceful and apparently easy, and it is only when one thinks what a mass of material has been compressed into this little book that the magnitude of the author's task is brought home to the reader. Many will be of opinion that Dr. Murison might have had less trouble in writing a volume of six times the size on the subject.

THE LASH IN INDIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "INDIA."

Sir.—Authority has very properly been desired for the statement that as many as 15,000 of our fellow-subjects in India have annually within late years been subjected to the lash. The figures for 1887 (15,259) will be found in Mr. Mullah's "Dictionary of Statistics," last edition, 1899, published by Routledge.

It appeared well to confirm these. Accordingly, "Judicial and Administrative Statistics of British India" for 1896-97. Calcutta (the Government printers, 1898), has been consulted—the last issue of such statistics available to the writer. The figures, given under the euphemistic head "whipping," are as follows:

| | | |
|------|---------|---------------|
| 1892 | | 18,921 cases. |
| 1893 | | 20,616 " |
| 1894 | | 22,283 " |
| 1895 | | 24,892 " |
| 1896 | | 36,879 " |

The greatest proportionate increase is in the North-West Provinces and Oudh (from 6,180 in 1892 to 15,430 in 1896) and in the Central Provinces (from 2,375 in 1892 to 8,130 in 1896).

There is nothing apparent in the general increase of crime, due, it is to be presumed, to increase of population, to explain this doubling the application of the lash. In the North-West Provinces and Oudh the "number of persons tried" has fallen from 240,694 in 1892 to 238,102 in 1896; in the Central Provinces it has but risen from 45,025 to 51,762. The number of sentences to "death," "transportation" and "rigorous imprisonment" have altered little from what they were in 1892. "Simple imprisonments" have within the five years fallen by 3,381.

Again it must be asked, what is thought on this subject by thoughtful men in India and sympathetic friends of India here?

The number of lashes given at one time appears limited to thirty. But it is the fact of lashes being applied at all, and thus applied to Indians as they are not applied to whites, that is the consideration. Respect to the manhood of Indians is more necessary of assertion in India than respect to the manhood of whites. The latter have the power, and are well able to look after themselves.

It is admitted that the constitution of Indians is weaker than that of Europeans. There has been more than one case of late years in which an Indian having been kicked by a European, and having died, the European was acquitted apparently on the ground that the violence used should not have killed.

¹ "King Robert the Bruce." By A. F. Murison. (Famous Scots Series.) Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier.

It does not here appear necessary to expatiate. We have the facts before us for consideration.

Other figures impressed me in the course of this enquiry. Mr. Mulhall states that the ratio of persons in imprisonment in India is less than half that of those in imprisonment in the United Kingdom. From the "Judicial and Administrative Statistics" it would appear that in the prison population of British India the number of Christians is, in proportion to their number in British India, considerably larger than the proportion of either Hindus or Mahometans. We should bear these figures in mind before giving credence to those who habitually seek to vilify fellow-subjects living under different skies and professing different beliefs from their own.

Then, again, the larger proportion of punishments awarded in India, according to the "Judicial and Administrative Statistics," appear to be "forfeiture of property." Under this head 600,917 persons in 1892, rising to 624,765 persons in 1896, appear to have been punished. This courts explanation. In this country the families of the worst criminals are left the property of the criminal. One could understand certain crimes being made to entail loss of property. But to make "forfeiture of property" a method of lessening crime appears strange.

These Indian Returns and Statistics should be placed at the disposal of all members of Parliament, as are the home Blue-books, and they should be supplied to all important libraries throughout the United Kingdom, which they are not.

Yours, etc.,

ALFRED WEBB.

Shelmaliere, Orwell Park,
Rathgar, Dublin, Sept. 12.

Mr. Alfred Webb makes a communication to INDIA, which we venture to anticipate, will come upon our readers with something of the effect of a sudden slap in the face. "Consulting some Indian statistics lately," he writes, "I came upon the fact that of late years as many as 15,000 per annum of our Indian fellow-subjects are subjected to the lash—inevitably but a small degree regulated by the fellow-feeling and publicity with which such punishments were ever meted out in these countries, and such punishments here are now generally condemned." This is surely a startling assertion. We hope that Mr. Webb will at once make public the details, with full reference to his authorities. He cites Tasmania as an example of a country where a marked diminution of crime has been concurrent with the humanisation of punishment, and particularly with the abolition of corporal punishment. The Recorder of Liverpool, who has conducted a long and vigorous crusade against the system of savage punishment, has the same story to tell. And there can be no doubt whatever that corporal punishment is but a reversion to, or a relic of, the barbarous practice of giving rein to the primal instinct of immediate physical retaliation, and that the result is mere brutalisation of the culprit. It operates in a vicious circle. For the man that has suffered under it will constitute it a moral ground for subsequent reprisals. "Must it not tend," asks Mr. Webb "to lessen Indian self-respect, and European respect for Indians, to have applied to Indians punishments which, for like offences, would not be employed towards Europeans? What is thought on the subject by thoughtful men in India and sympathetic friends of India here?" Of course it will tend to lessen Indian self-respect, and that still more acutely than it tends to lessen European self-respect, when applied to Europeans backs, for Indian feelings are much more delicate than those of the ordinary European criminal. We cannot say so much about "European respect for Indians," for that virtue is at a very low ebb indeed; but there can be no question that the infliction of corporal punishment tends to brutalise the operator. Why Indians should be placed under more severe and degrading forms of punishment than Europeans is one of those things that no stay-at-home Englishman can ever hope to understand. The assertion of race superiority and the pride of dominion have multifarious ramifications, and this seems to be a large and favourite one. What do thoughtful and sympathetic men think? Well, they must know the particulars first; but, on the general view, they can only regard the practice with intense revulsion and detestation.—*The New Age*.

THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL BILL.

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

At a meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council held at Calcutta on August 21 last, the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir John Woodburn) presiding, the Hon. Mr. Baker laid on the table the further report of the Select Committee on the Calcutta Municipal Bill, together with two notes of

dissent by the Hon. Babu Surendranath Banerjea and the Hon. Mr. Apar respectively. The report of the Select Committee was as follows:—

We, the undersigned, members of the Select Committee to which the Calcutta Municipal Bill was referred back for further consideration with reference to the recent correspondence between the Government of India and the Government of Bengal, have considered the said correspondence and have the honour to submit this our report, with the Bill, as amended by us, annexed thereto.

2. The first change recommended by the Government of India is that the number of Commissioners elected at ward elections should be reduced from fifty to twenty-five, only one Commissioner being elected for each ward, instead of two. The formal amendments required to give effect to this change have now been made in sections 6, 7, 34 (3), 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, and 52a (1) and in rules 5 and 6 of Schedule IVb. As a consequence of the reduction in the number of elected Commissioners, it has been necessary to modify the arrangements proposed for constituting the first body of Commissioners under the Bill. It was originally proposed that the 50 elected Commissioners should retain their seats till April 1, 1901, the date till which they would have been entitled to sit under the present Act. Now, however, that the number of elected Commissioners is to be reduced, this is no longer possible, and we consider that they should all vacate their seats on April 1, 1900, the date when, as we anticipate, the Bill will come into operation. On the other hand it is not possible to hold a general election under the Bill before it comes into operation. The plan which commends itself to us is to direct that a fresh general election be held in March, 1900, under the present Act, and to declare that in such election only one Commissioner shall be elected for each ward. We have inserted a new section in the Bill, numbered 33a, to give effect to these recommendations.

3. In consequence of our recommendations that a fresh general election should be held in March, 1900, we have made the following amendments: (1) we have recast section 54, so as to bring to an end on April 1, 1900, the term of office of the present Commissioners; (2) in section 45 (2), we have altered from 1901 to 1903 the year in which the next general election should take place; (3) in rules 1 and 3 of Schedule IVa, relating to the preparation of the municipal election roll, we have altered from 1900 to 1902 the first year in which steps are to be taken for the preparation of the roll.

4. In consequence of the reduction in the number of Commissioners, we have (1) in section 70 reduced from ten to seven the number of Commissioners required to sign a requisition for calling a special meeting, and (2) in section 75, reduced from eighteen to twelve the number of Commissioners required to form a quorum. We have also added an explanation to section 75 declaring that the President at a meeting of the Corporation shall (when he is not the Chairman) be deemed to be a Commissioner for the purpose of forming a quorum.

5. The second change recommended by the Government of India is in the constitution of the General Committee. It is suggested in paragraph 18 of the Government of India's letter that one-third of the total number of twelve members should be nominated by the Government (as under the Bill as amended by the Select Committee, and that the remaining two-thirds should be elected by the Corporation; and in paragraph 19 of that letter it is suggested that some plan should be devised to secure that the proportion of the Committee to be elected by the Corporation shall be a strictly fair and proportionate representation of the constituent elements of the electoral body.

To give effect to these suggestions—(1) we have amended sub-section (2) of section 8 so as to provide that four of the members of the General Committee shall be elected by the Ward Commissioners and that four shall be elected by the Commissioners appointed by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Calcutta Trades' Association, the Port Commissioners and the Government, and (2) we have altered sub-section (3) of section 8 so as to authorise the Local Government to make rules to regulate the said elections.

We have further, in sub-section (3) of section 8, altered "shall" to "may" so as to make the exercise of the Local Government's rule-making power permissive instead of obligatory.

6. The third and last suggestion made by the Government of India, is that it might be desirable to lay down rules for the appointment of the Special Committees and Sub-Committees which would secure their being truly representative, in respect of their constituent elements, of the Corporation or General Committee appointing them.

It is difficult to frame clauses for insertion in the Bill to regulate the constitution of Special Committees and Sub-Committees on these lines, and it is hardly less difficult to devise an effective clause to authorise the making of rules for this purpose. We have, however, in deference to the wishes of the Government of India, inserted a sub-section numbered (3b), in section 88 of the Bill, empowering the Local Government to make rules declaring what proportion of—(1) Ward Commissioners; (2) Commissioners appointed by the bodies representing commercial interests; and (3) Commissioners appointed

by the Local Government, respectively, shall be nominated to be members of every or any Sub-Committee.

We have also inserted in section 88A (3) a reference to the new sub-section (3b) of section 88, the effect of which will be to give the Local Government a similar power to make rules in regard to the constitution of Special Committees. At the same time, we feel bound to say that we entertain considerable doubt as to whether it will be possible to make workable rules of this character, or to give practical effect to any rules that might be made on the subject, however well they may be devised. It is even possible that such rules might impair the working efficiency of Committees appointed under them.

7. As it is now proposed to insert provisions in the Bill for regulating the constitution of Special Committees, a reference to such Committees has been inserted in clause (a) of section 95c, so as to prevent proceedings under the Bill being questioned on the ground of there being a vacancy in, or any defect in the constitution of, any Special Committee.

8. We have altered sections 148r, 296p 639 and 640 so as to admit of proceedings under those sections being taken in the Suburban Small Cause Courts, where the matters in dispute arise within the jurisdiction of those courts, instead of requiring the parties to resort to the Calcutta Small Cause Court.

9. We have made some minor alterations in the details of the Bill which it is unnecessary to describe in detail.

10. We recommend that the Bill, as now amended, be passed.

(Signed) E. N. Baker,
W. B. Oldham,
R. B. Buckley,
Durga Gati Banerjee,
T. W. Spink,
Mahomed Bakhtyar Shah,
D. F. Mackenzie.

"I sign the Report subject to my Note of Dissent (which is to follow), it being understood that the Report and the Note of Dissent will be published at one and the same time. It is only fair that the public should have the Report of the Majority and the Note of Dissent at one and the same time before them."—(Signed) Surendra Nath Banerjee.

"I sign the Report subject to my Note of Dissent."—(Signed) J. G. Aparar.

Notes of Dissent were read by the Hon. Surendra Nath Banerjee and the Hon. Mr. Aparar.

THE DETENTION OF THE NATUS.

INTERPELLATIONS IN THE BOMBAY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

At a meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council held at Poona on August 24, Lord Sandhurst presiding,

The Hon. Mr. Shripad Anant Chhatre asked: Is it true that Government attached the estate of the Natus brothers, situate in the Sangli State, in consequence of their arrest under Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827; that on a representation made by the brothers to Government that the attachment was illegal under the Regulation and should be released, Government was pleased to refer them to the Sangli State authorities, and that the Sangli authorities having, on being applied to, declined to raise the attachment, the result was communicated to Government and Government has since done nothing? Will Government be pleased to suggest any way to be adopted by the Natus for the release of the estate from attachment?

His Excellency the President said: Government issued no orders for attachment of the estate of the Natus in Sangli. The Chief on being advised of the action taken in British territory, it is believed, took similar action. On hearing what had been done Government instructed their officers to avoid all responsibility in the matter. The Chief has full powers of internal administration and Government can offer no suggestion.

The Hon. Mr. Shripad Anant Chhatre asked: Is Government aware of the statement made by the Secretary of State in the House of Commons that the Natus are allowed to remain in the district of Belgaum? Considering the unhealthy condition of the town and cantonment of Belgaum and their surroundings, with no immediate chance of improvement, will Government be pleased to state if the Natus have the liberty of residing in some healthy place in the Belgaum District? Will Government be pleased to specify any other unobjectionable districts in the Presidency where the brothers may go to reside, in case of necessity, for their safety?

His Excellency the President said: Government has seen the Secretary of State's reply referred to. The Natus are in the custody of the District Magistrate of Belgaum, and are at present located in Belgaum fort, where the District Magistrate considers that they are safe from infection. They are not at liberty to leave the limits of Belgaum city as defined by the District Magistrate *ad hoc*. They

were offered the option of a transfer to Dharwar, but declined to express any wish. Government are not prepared to specify the districts of the Presidency asked for.

The Hon. Mr. Shripad Anant Chhatre asked: Will Government be pleased to state if the moveable estate of the Natus brothers contained in their house at Pachwad in the District of Satara continues under attachment simply owing to the difficulty, for their brother Mr. Sadeshev Ramchandra, of taking delivery of the same, unless the use of the house at Pachwad is also given for the purpose of the safe custody of the property and its management and also for the residence of the said brother? Will Government state if they will be pleased to direct the Satara Collector to deliver possession of the house at Pachwad along with the moveable estate?

His Excellency the President said: Government have ordered the rendition of a moveable property at Pachwad. If it has not been taken over, that is due to the State prisoners or their brother. Government cannot at present remove the attachment on immovable property.

The Hon. Mr. Shripad Anant Chhatre asked: Will Government be pleased to state if they have furnished the Natus brothers with the annual accounts of the management of their estates as required by section 8 of Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827? If the accounts have not been furnished, will Government be pleased to state when they will be furnished?

His Excellency the President said: Accounts up to July 31st, 1898, have been furnished. Those for the year ending July 31st, 1899, are due and will be furnished as soon as they are certified to Government.

The Hon. Mr. P. M. Mehta asked: Will Government be pleased to say if they consider that there is still any fear of internal commotion from private persons in the Central Division of this Presidency, which the police and the army, assisted by the regular procedure of Judicial tribunals, are not able to deal with or prevent?

The Hon. Mr. James said: Government consider there is no fear of such commotion as cannot be dealt with in the manner indicated in the question, but the honourable member will realize from the history of his own city in 1893 and 1898 that prevention is a very different matter, and Government must be prepared to use all the powers entrusted to them for the prevention of disorder on occasion arising.

The Hon. Mr. P. M. Mehta enquired: Will Government be pleased to say if the Sardars Natus are men who are in a position to stir up internal commotion in the Presidency which cannot be dealt with by the police and the army and the constituted judicial tribunals?

His Excellency the President said: No persons in India are in a such a position so far as Government are aware.

The Hon. Mr. P. M. Mehta asked: Will Government be pleased to say if the further detention of the Sardars Natus, without any immediate view to ulterior proceedings of a judicial nature, is necessary for the preservation of tranquillity in Native States, or the protection of the British Dominion from foreign hostility or internal commotion? Will Government be pleased to make some statement, which may set the public mind at rest in regard to the affair of the Natus, under the circumstances which have taken place since the commencement of their detention? Will Government be pleased to state if they intend at any time to institute judicial proceedings of any sort against the Natus?

His Excellency the President said: I would refer the hon. member to answers already given in this Council on December 20, 1897, and January 25, 1899.

The Hon. Mr. P. M. Mehta enquired: Will Government be pleased to say if the Presidency police are not capable of so watching the Sardars Natus as to serve the same purpose as is at present achieved by the present modified state of their detention?

His Excellency the President said: No.

The Hon. Mr. P. M. Mehta asked: Are Government aware that the public mind in this country is greatly exercised by the detention of the Sardars Natus for so long a time without judicial enquiry, and without any authoritative statement of the causes of their detention?

His Excellency the President said: Government are aware that much has been written on the subject in the Native Press.

BRITISH INDIANS IN NATAL.

THE DEALERS' LICENCES ACT.

We have received the following communication:—

DURBAN, July 31, 1899.

SIR,—We sent you last January a copy of the Memorial respecting the Dealers' Licences Act of Natal addressed to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies. From the following it would appear that Mr. Chamberlain is in correspondence with the Natal Government regarding the measure:—

Pietermaritzburg, June 13, 1899.

With further reference to your letter of January 11 last, addressed to his Excellency the Governor, containing a Memorial signed by

certain Indians on the subject of the Dealers' Licence Act No. 18, 1897, I have the honour to inform you that the Secretary of State for the Colonies is in communication with this Government with reference to the petitioners' complaint."

The following appears in the *Natal Witness*, dated July 4, 1899, with reference to the letter addressed by the Government to the Ladysmith Local Board:—

A letter was read from the Principal Under-Secretary advising the Board to exercise caution in refusing Indian licences so as not to interfere with vested interests, as unless this was done the Government would be obliged to introduce legislation giving Indians right of appeal from the decisions of Local Boards to the Supreme Court. But if care was exercised in refusing Indian licences, such legislation need not be introduced.

It was decided to inform the Government that the matter should have full consideration, and the Town Clerk was instructed to lay the matter before the Board.

It is presumed that a similar communication has been addressed to each of the Local Boards or Town Councils in the Colony.

It is gratifying to note that Mr. Chamberlain is alive to the danger that besets the Indians in the Colony if the strong arm of protection from the Imperial Government is not stretched forth in their behalf, and that the Natal Government is evidently anxious in some way or other to meet Mr. Chamberlain. But at the same time it is extremely desirable that the real bearing of the above letter should be understood, and that the Colonial Office, or the sympathisers, should not be lulled into the belief that the letter in any way solves the difficulty or removes the anxiety that is preying upon the Indian mind in Natal. The Town Councils and the Local Boards have got certain powers under the Act, and they are entitled to use those powers in the way it pleases them without let or hindrance. Strictly speaking the letter is unconstitutional and at best a gratuitous piece of advice which the Local Boards or the Town Councils are in no way bound to follow. Indeed there is no knowing that it will not be resented by some at least of the more forward municipalities as an unwarranted interference by the Natal Government. Be that, however, as it may. We are prepared to assume, for the sake of argument, that the municipalities concerned may, for a time, use their powers in such a manner as not to appear to be affecting "vested interests." They may take the hint given by the *Times of Natal* referred to in the Memorial, and perform the process of "gradual weeding out" so as not to cause a commotion. Certain it is that the relief, if any is afforded by the letter, will be merely temporary, and may in the end aggravate the disease instead of removing it. What is needed, and what is also the least that ought to be given is, in our humble opinion, the alteration in the Act suggested by the Government, viz., the giving of the right of appeal to the Supreme Court against the decisions of the municipalities. For, it is the Act that is really bad and un-British. The powers given thereby are arbitrary, and a gross encroachment upon the elementary rights of citizens in the British territories. The municipalities, so far as we know, never asked for such powers; they certainly asked for discretionary powers, but the Act goes much further, it constitutes them their own Supreme Court.

With a view, then, to inform you as to what is going on here with reference to the Dealers' Licences Act, and to show how far the fears expressed in the Memorial referred to above have been realised, we have ventured to approach you in the matter. The following letters have been addressed to the Natal Government on our behalf which speak for themselves:—

With further reference to your letter dated June 13 in view of the correspondence that is going on between the Imperial and Local Governments it may not be amiss to show how far the fears expressed in "the Dealers' Licences Memorial" have been realised. I have not been able to collect accurate information from all the places, but so far as the information has been received it is of an extremely discouraging nature. In Dundee the licences were first refused and on an appeal they were granted under certain qualifications endorsed on the back of the licences, viz.—"This licence is granted upon distinct understanding that it will not be renewed in the present buildings." By order of the Board, (Signed) Fras. J. Birkett, Licensing Officer and Town Clerk." In answer to an enquiry several of the licence holders said that they thought the licences were so granted because their stores were wood and iron buildings. It appears Messrs. Handley and Sons and Harvey Greensacre and Co., in Dundee, have brick fronts but the rest of their stores is wood and iron. Messrs. Taylor and Fowler, Merchants of Dundee, have their stores entirely of wood and iron. In Newcastle the licences refused last year have been refused this year also. The Town Council were good enough to give some time to two of the applicants in order to enable them to sell off their stock, but this could hardly act as a remedy against the loss occasioned to the parties concerned. One of them, Abdool Rassool, had a large business and owned a wood and iron store. It was pointed out to the Council that the building which represented to him a value of £150 would fetch practically nothing if it had to be sold.

In Verulam, I understand, two applicants who held a licence last year have been refused their licences this year, and the men as well as their servants are now comparatively reduced to poverty.

In Ladysmith, one M. C. Amla, who has been trading there for several years, has been deprived of his licence on the ground that the place where he was trading was situated in the chief street of the township and that it was suitable only for a European trader. The

owner applied for a licence with reference to another building immediately near an Indian store and owned by the owner of that store. That application too has been refused on the same ground. I might be permitted to mention that there are other Indian stores in the same street.

In Port Shepstone two large Indian merchants have lately sold their businesses to two other Indians. These applied for licences and the licensing officer refused them. An appeal was taken to the Licensing Board with no better result, and the parties are now considering what to do.

It is humbly submitted that it is a serious matter when one man, because he is an Indian, cannot sell his business to another also because that other is an Indian, for the refusal to grant the licence in such cases is tantamount to forbidding a purchase and sale unless it were done in an underhand manner.

An Indian who had sold out his premises to Dundee Coal Co., and had therefore entirely wound up his business, came down to Durban and purchased a previously licensed store on the Umgeni Road and applied for a licence for himself. The licensing officer, after the man had made several applications, and after he went to the expense of engaging an eminent counsel in Durban at a heavy cost, granted the licence and then only for a limited period in order to enable the applicant to sell out the goods he had already bought in the anticipation of receiving a licence.

These are some of the cases where vested interests have been prejudicially affected. But cases where thoroughly good men with capital have been refused licences because they were Indians who did not hold a licence to trade the previous year are too numerous to mention.

The Indians have noticed with satisfaction and gratitude the fact that the Government are anxious to see that the vested Indian interests are not injured, in that they have addressed letters to the several town councils and town boards (2) the effect of which, unless they took care not to touch vested interests legislation giving Indians right of appeal to the Supreme Court might become necessary. I am, however, to point out that such an appeal to the Boards may not have a permanent effect, if at all, and would still leave the Indian traders in a state of dreadful suspense. The alteration suggested by the letter above referred to would indeed in my humble opinion be only a small measure of justice but extremely desirable in the interests of the Indian community already settled in the colony.

I am to request that the contents of this letter may be communicated to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Second letter:—

With reference to my letter dated 6th instant regarding Dealer's Licensing Act, I wish to correct an error that has crept therein.

I find that only one case of the hardship of description mentioned in my letter has happened in Port Shepstone. The other case never went to the licensing officer, as the attorney who had charge of both the cases owing to the unfortunate result of the first case advised the other client not to go on with his application. Steps are now being taken to make the other application also.

With reference to Port Shepstone, it may be mentioned that the refusal to grant the licence has followed close upon a question asked by a member of the Natal Assembly from that district, as to whether in such districts licences to Indians were granted indiscriminately. The Government replied saying that they had informed the magistrates in such districts, who are also the licensing officers, to the effect that they have discretionary powers. The magistrate at Port Shepstone evidently took the hint, and refused the licence. This happened some days before the letter addressing to the Ladysmith Local Board are above referred to appeared in the *Natal Witness*.

It is hardly necessary to state that the cases that come before the authorities in some way or other, are not the only cases of hardship. The Act has a terrible deterrent effect and many poor traders, simply from hopelessness, refrain from applying for a renewal of their licences, and many more from taking their cases before the appellate body, viz., a municipality or a licensing board, in the event of being rejected by the licensing officer. The second case in Port Shepstone is an instance in point.

There is no grievance more keenly felt than the one under the Act: for it affects the bread and butter of hundreds of industrious and peaceful Indian traders from the lowest to the highest. There is no certainty that because the best of us have received a licence this year we would receive it the next also. In a state of such insecurity business naturally becomes paralysed and uneasiness takes hold of our minds. The sole hope lies in something being done by and through the Imperial Government.

We venture to draw your attention to the following, from leading articles on this matter, in the *Times of India*:

We have dealt with the question of the rights of Indians in British Africa so often that there is no need to repeat upon this occasion the arguments we have frequently adduced. . . . But while the colonists gladly availed themselves of the services of Indians as hewers of wood and drawers of water, they have constantly attempted to deprive them of those rights of free competition in trade which should be their inalienable privilege as British subjects. They decline to compete with the Indian traders in the open market, and endeavour to foster protection in its most contemptible form by hedging their route with vexatious restrictions. . . . It is in the highest degree humiliating to know that the traditions of British impartiality to men of all races and creeds have been so far departed from in South Africa that British subjects are being compelled to seek sanctuary upon Portuguese soil from the tyrannous oppression of men with whom they are supposed to enjoy common right under the British Crown. The injustice suffered by Indian traders in Africa will never

be removed until the Home Government decides to accord to them the protection they have a right to expect. (April 15, 1899, Weekly Edition.)

To the Englishman in India the spectacle of Indian traders being denied entrance and domicile anywhere under the British flag is irritating and repugnant, inasmuch as it gives his fellow-subject unquestionable reason for asking what are the advantages of the citizenship that he enjoys. To the Native the spectacle must be a temptation to think that the British flag is a meaningless symbol, for under it one British subject may vex and constrain another without leaving the latter any redress. We, who speak for Englishmen in India, would give much if home opinion could be aroused to that aspect of the case of the Indians in South Africa. The equities of the case leave no room for dispute even on a Durban platform. But there is a political and sentimental side to it, too, which could be made to seize the popular imagination in England if people could once be got to think of so many thousand honest and well-behaved subjects of the Queen on their removal from one part of the Empire to another being denied the most ordinary rights of citizenship. . . . Is there no one in the House of Commons who can tell this tale of shame and injustice with some hope of getting redress for the victims. . . . (April 22, 1899, Wkly. ed.)

We hardly think we need add more. We trust that as in the past you will be pleased to exert yourself in our behalf, and bring the present painful position to a speedy termination.

We remain, Sir, your obedient servants,

Abdul Cader (M. C. Camroodeen and Co.), Parsee Rustomjee, Abdool Carim Joosab (Moosa Haje Cassim), Moosa Haje Adam, Peerrun Mahomed (M. P. Mahomed and Co.), P. Dawjee Mahomed and Co., I. H. Soombar, Saleh Mahomed (Dada Abdoolah and Co.), P. P. E. Aboobaker Amod and Bro, Moosa Dada, Suleman Dawjee, Amod Jewwa, Suleman Hoosen, Abdoolhach Sahib and Co., Goolam Sahle, Essop Suleman, Shaik Fareed and Co., Haje Abdoolah, T. H. Dhupelia, Manlal C. Patel, Hassim Joorna, Chhanha Bhikha, Ebrahim Noor Mahomed, R. P. Bhatti, Vijaya Ragavalo, A. M. Paruk, V. Lawrance, Joseph Royepchen, G. A. Bassa, Osman Ahmed, G. H. Singh, G. H. Miankhan and Co., A. D. Moonshie, I. O. Assmal, M. F. Mahomed, Hoosen Cassim and Co.

"A FLAGRANT SCANDAL."

The strong words are not ours; they are used by the *Friend of India*, but we have no difficulty in adopting them. Our Calcutta contemporary applies them to characterise the new land settlement that has just been carried at Lucknow. The settlement that has just expired brought in a revenue of two rupees seven annas per cultivated acre to the treasury of the North-West Provinces and Oudh; the new settlement raises the figures to two rupees thirteen annas, which adds a lakh and a-half of rupees to the annual income. The Board of Revenue thinks that, "though undoubtedly full and evenly distributed, the assessment of the district as a whole is not, after the modifications made on appeal, excessive." That may be; but how does it work out in detail? The Settlement Report admits that the proprietors as a body are "involved in debt," and that the small landholders "have lost much of their property since the last settlement," and adds that "the general tendency of transfers has been for the small estates to pass to talukdars or other wealthy landholders, or else to money-lenders and lawyers. These are the usual results of severe assessment, and indicate clearly the need for very particular care in making a new settlement, especially when that settlement is fixed for thirty years. Now how was the work carried out? Mr. Percy Gray performed at one and the same time the "heavy dual functions" of Deputy-Commissioner and Settlement Officer. On this fundamental fact we are content to accept the admission of the Government resolution: "It is impossible nowadays for a single officer to administer the multifarious business of a district charge and at the same time to control efficiently the revision of a settlement." Here is the official condemnation of the official handiwork. Why was this "impossible" thing done at all if there was no adequate official staff available? And why was there no adequate official staff? There is no excuse admissible. Now what are the results? Again we accept the official criticisms. The provincial Board of Revenue say they "are unable to regard with any satisfaction methods of assessment in which fair standard rentals play no part." The Settlement Commissioner of Oudh complains that no explanation is given of what he describes as "the numerous mistakes and discrepancies which impair the value of the statistical tables of which the Report chiefly consists." The Chief Secretary of the North-West Provinces Government, writing on behalf of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Antony MacDonnell, remarks that the Report, as the Board observe, is lacking in fullness and the statistics are inaccurate." There needs no more be said. The Report is fit only for the waste-basket. But will it go there? By no means. It will regulate the land revenue in these parts during the next generation. Then, when we hear of dissatisfaction among the people and of the land passing rapidly into the hands of sowkars and lawyers, as it has already admittedly been doing, we shall be told of the grand qualities of the finest

service that ever administered any country, of the benevolence and justice of English rule, and of the incredible ignorance and ingratitude of the rayats. How would our English farmers relish the application of this sort of administrative excellence to themselves? We agree entirely with the opinion of the *Friend of India*. "It is nothing less than a scandal of the most flagrant kind," says our contemporary, "that for the sake of adding a lakh and a-half of rupees, or even ten times that sum, to its revenue the Government should be a party to the perfunctory performance of work of this kind, which unless done well is certain to entail misery on thousands." "The truth is," concludes the *Friend of India*, "that the settlement under notice is yet another example of the penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policy which has gone on too long of undermining the Civil Service and of starving the internal administration of the country to pay for extravagance on the North-West Frontier." True, and yet there are Babu B.A.'s standing thick in the market-places and ready to exchange idleness for efficient work at a few rupees a month!—*The New Age*.

INSULTS TO INDIANS.

Not long ago the Madras city police, at the instance of some estimable gentlemen, undertook to enforce a set of absurd rules intended to reserve the Marina on the south beach practically for the exclusive use of the European community. There was a great deal too much of undue interference with the personal dress and deportment of such of the Native population as wished to enjoy the sea-breeze, and it was not until the complaints against the new rules became loud and frequent that their rigour was modified to some extent. From the issue of the *Bengalee* to hand this day, we see that the natives of Calcutta are being subjected to annoyance on account of the enforcement of police regulations of a similar description. It would appear that recently a highly respectable Indian gentleman, while taking a walk in the *maidan* along with a judicial officer of high rank, was grossly insulted by a European police constable. What happened on the occasion will sufficiently appear from the following letter which that gentleman addressed to the Deputy Commissioner of Police on the 5th instant:—

"Sir,—I beg respectfully to bring to your notice that this evening, on my way back from office, while I was coming down the walk along the Red Road towards the north, at about 6 p.m., I was rudely accosted by a European constable, No. 29 C.P., in coarse Hindustani, and told to proceed not by the road proper but over the grass plot in the boundary. On my enquiring the reason for this he said insultingly that it was his *hookum*, and pushed me to the border of the road. I then wanted to know his number, that I might prefer a complaint to you for his rude behaviour; thereupon he insisted on my accompanying him to the Park Street thana. On my refusing to go with him to the thana he dragged me by force a long way up the walk and eventually into the Red Road, and said he would take me to the thana whether I willed or no. After a good deal of expostulation he let me go after taking down my name and address.

"As I have been grossly insulted by the constable in a public street, I would respectfully ask you to enquire into the matter and pass such order as you think fit. I am not aware of any rule prohibiting gentlemen desirous of taking a walk in the walk along the Red Road from using the main portion of the road, and I saw lots of European gentlemen going up and down over the main road."

Europeans in this country are too prone to believe that their Native fellow-subjects are devoid of good manners, but the incident narrated above will show that the conduct of the European constable was highly discourteous and provoking. Everyone knows what would have happened had a native constable dared to behave with one-tenth of the impudence towards a European: the latter would have taken the law into his own hand and committed a breach of the peace, and not content with doing so, would have also hauled up the constable before the police court for all imaginable offences, and if there were a small fine inflicted, even moved the High Court for enhancement of sentence, encouraged by the recent questionable precedent set by the Calcutta judges. The injured party in this instance being the proverbially mild and law-abiding Hindu, he adopted the proper course of bringing the conduct of the constable to the notice of the superior officer. Strange to say, the Deputy-Commissioner of Police of Calcutta, who must be a very important dignitary, has not condescended even to acknowledge receipt of the "respectful" representation! Is such an attitude on the part of responsible officials, we ask, calculated to bring about a better feeling between the rulers and the ruled and to impress upon European constables, and soldiers for that matter, the necessity of treating Indians with the same courtesy that is claimed by and shown to other citizens of the empire.—*Madras Standard*.

The P. and O. s.s. "Sumatra" arrived in London, from Calcutta, on August 28, with the following among other passengers: Mr. C. H. Ayer, Capt. and Mrs. Bellamy, Lieut. W. E. Oliver, Lieut. Viscount Kilburn, R.N., Major and Mrs. Carden, and Colonel Lewis.

The s.s. "Arabia" (P. and O.) from Bombay arrived in London on August 31. Her passenger list included the following names: Lieut.-Col. and Mrs. Martelli, Capt. E. M. Parsons, Dr. W. Saunders, Mr. D. Banerji, Mr. A. C. Dwyer, Mr. Hiralal, Colonel H. W. Vincent, Brig.-Gen. Stewart, Mr. Motilal Newin, Major D. E. Dewar, Major A. E. Leslie, Mr. S. T. Vicajie, Mr. J. M. Mepatjje, Mr. H. E. Jardine, Hon. Sir H. Prinsep, and Major G. D. Baker.

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