India

FOR THE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

THE Viceroy's weekly telegram upon the course of the famine states that rain is still wanted urgently in part of Bombay, the Deccan and Haidarabad for standing crops and spring cultivation, and that more rain would also be beneficial in Gujerat and Baroda. Elsewhere, it is satisfactory to learn, the prospects are reported to be generally good. The total number of persons in receipt of relief has fallen to 1,831,000, and in Madras relief has been wholly discontinued. Lord Northcote's telegram for the week ending October 23 also reports a marked diminution in the number of deaths from cholera. In the famine-stricken districts of the Bombay Presidency there were during the week 183 cases, of which 108 were fatal. "Only a few scattered cases" are reported from Native States. On the other hand, the total number of deaths for the week among persons on relief works and gratuitous relief in British districts reaches the formidable total of 1,599. Lord Northcote, corroborating Lord Curzon, says that no rain has fallen except light showers in parts of the Karnatik, and that rain is much needed in all districts. The difficulty is by no means over yet, and it is a little surprising to hear that the Mansion House Fund is to be closed at the end of this month. Why should it be closed while subscriptions are still coming in? And has the hope that subscriptions would increase as the war drew to an end been abandoned?

Allegations having been made in the columns of the *Times of India* that oppressive measures of revenue collection had been taken in Broach, a district within the famine area, the Government in a resolution of August 22 declared that "most of the statements made in the letters are devoid of foundation and others grossly misrepresent the facts." Mr. Gokuldas Parekh, though he was not responsible for the statements thus challenged, undertook to substantiate them. He went down into the villages and examined the supposed victims and other eye-witnesses, and he is now able to present to the Government "forty-seven fully attested statements, forty-four of which were made in his presence and all but two were taken down in his own hand." On the other hand, much of the evidence collected in the resolution consisted of reports from Mamlatdars, with covering reports from the Collectors of the Broach and Surat Districts. This is not evidence at first hand, and it came in great part from those whose credit was involved. Some of Mr. Parekh's witnesses, indeed, were examined in each other's presence, but, on the other hand, four of them were patels still in Government employment. The *Times of India* insists that by this exposure of how the benevolent intentions of the authorities have been frustrated, Mr. Parekh has deserved the thanks of the Government as well as of the public; but it is doubtful, to judge by the temper of their resolution, if he will receive any gratitude from that quarter.

There seems, in fact, to be ample evidence that the allegations were true. Under British rule we hear of the revival of an old and barbarous punishment of the Peshwas; for one Lala Mawa, of Obha village, was taken from his fields, and after being beaten had a millstone placed on his back and was kept in a stooping position for half-an-hour. Elsewhere, corn, cattle, ploughs, doors and even staircases were carried off by the agents of the Government. Again, there is strong evidence that farmers have been compelled to pay their taxes out of *taccavi* loans and even out of charitable doles. The *Times of India* hopes that the authorities will not attempt to meet the case against them by a resolution similar to the last.

The Hon. Mr. Gokuldas Kahandas Parekh submitted (September 28) to the Government of India some forty-eight documents—mostly statements of persons concerned, and nearly all taken down by his own hand—as evidence of improper practices in the collection of land revenue in certain parts of the Broach Collectorate and in the Taluka of Olpad in the Surat Collectorate. The cases are shortly summarised in an accompanying letter, and they cover all the material allegations in the letters of "Gujerati" as well as in Mr. Parekh's recent speech in the Legislative Council on the measures for the making of revenue collections. The Government did not consider it necessary to make any independent enquiry into "Gujerati's" assertions, but on the strength of reports from the officials inculpated, they pronounced that "most of the statements in the letters were devoid of foundation and others grossly misrepresented facts." Mr. Parekh went to the spot, and took the evidence himself from the lips of the parties. The Government will now have to revise their judgment in the light of Mr. Parekh's investigation, which furnishes "ample evidence in support of all important statements in the letters of 'Gujerati.'"

It may be well to set out the chief allegations of "Gujerati" in succinct form. He stated:—

(1) That several parts of the Broach Collectorate had been suffering from bad seasons for more than five years; that the condition of the agriculturists in these parts had been deteriorating from year to year; that in 1899 many agriculturists found much difficulty in meeting the Government demands for the year, and that large areas of lands in Anklesar Taluka and the Peta Mahal of Hansot were relinquished.

Mr. Parekh naturally bids the Government turn to their official records for verification of a large part of these serious statements. Daza Rama, the Revenue and Police Patel of Obha (Anklesar) for the last seven years, deposed before Mr. Parekh: "Attachments have become necessary in my village for the last five years to collect the Government revenue;" and he added painful details. Like evidence is adduced from Balotra, Saool, Dungra, Sunev, and Kathodra. For example, take the case of Rasul Sedoo, of Saool (Hansot), whose statement is confirmed by seven other cultivators of Saool:—

> In my village there are about fifty cultivators. For the last six years my village has been yielding very bad crops, and hence every year the condition of the inhabitants of my village has been growing worse and worse. For the last five years Government assessment has been realised by means of the levy of attachments. . . . Ten years ago my family was in very good circumstances. We were possessed of ornaments worth from 1,000 to 1,200 rupees, but all these had to be disposed of to pay Government assessment and the expenses of cultivation. Five years ago I had to borrow money to pay the assessment and the cultivation expenses of my lands; but before that I had had no debts. After that, every year, I have had to contract fresh debts to pay the assessment and the expenses of cultivation.

Further, Mr. Parekh, while referring the Government to their own records, specifies a number of lands in Hansot, Anklesar, and Olpad, which "were even before the famine found to be too poor to pay the cost of cultivation and the Government assessment," and were therefore relinquished.

So much for the poverty of the people. Let us now look

at the evidence of illegal and improper measures in the collection of the land revenue. "Gujerati" alleged

(2) that some agriculturists who had failed to pay their revenue demands had been beaten and otherwise physically maltreated.

There are scores of witnesses to this injury. Prominent is Karkun Chhaganlal of the Olpad Katchery with his horse-whip, and "the Kadrama witnesses, Kalia and 14 others (No. 35) speak of people being struck with sticks, clubs, and kicks, in addition to the horse-whip." Mr. Parekh singles out for special comment the case of Ranchhod Khushal (No. 42):—

When the Mamlatdar went to Bhatgaum, he ordered one man, Ranchhod Khushal, from whom some money was due, to have his hands tied by a rope, and he was conveyed through his whole village in that condition. Then the rope was given into the hands of the village Dhed, and he was conveyed in that state to Olpad.

"Conveying a man with his hands tied with a rope," Mr. Parekh explains, "is regarded very degrading by the people. A Dhed is a low caste man, whom people are not permitted to touch, and to have a man march from one village to another with one of the ends of the rope in the hands of a Dhed is considered exceedingly degrading."

"Gujerati" further alleged

(3) that in some cases persons whose Government demands remained unpaid were with their families removed from their houses, which were closed and were secured against opening by the fastening of iron bars, etc.

There are numerous witnesses on this point. Besides, Mr. Parekh draws attention to the deposition of Chhotalal Ramchandra, Talati of Saool, in the case of Imperatrix v. Harilal and others, on which we recently remarked (September 7, India, vol. xiv., p. 122). The Talati, who has had sixteen years' experience, deposed:—

I have been serving as Talati in Hansot Peta for six years. In case any rayat fails to pay assessment when due, the Karkun gets the rayat's doors barred by an iron ring being fastened on it, on a lock placed with a seal upon it. If the Karkun have come for attachment, and the defaulting owner has left his house locked, the Karkun gets the lock removed, even in the owner's absence, for the attachment.

Certain of the evidence also materially modifies the report submitted to Government from the Mamlatdar of Olpad. "Gujerati" again alleged

(4) that the village officers attached, without any authority from, and even the knowledge of, the Mamlatdars and higher officers, moveable properties of persons against whom the demands remained outstanding, and that in some cases they attached ploughs and other implements of agriculture, plough cattle, wearing apparel of the person and his family, their beddings and like articles which were not legally attachable.

There can be no doubt about the first part of this charge, for even before Harilal's case orders for stopping these practices had been issued by the District Deputy Collector. For the rest, "in a majority of cases," says Mr. Parekh, "all the belongings of indigent cultivators are taken away." At Obha, "implements of husbandry, beddings, grain not exceeding 3 maunds," and "a bullock while actually tilling lands," were attached and removed, and "doors were unhinged and staircases were unfixed and removed." A long series of statements also "show that agricultural implements, grain required for the agriculturists' subsistence, necessary wearing apparel and beddings, and plough cattle were attached at the villages of Balota, Saool, Dungara, Takarma, Koba, Kadrama, and Piraman."

As we have just seen, the witness Chhotalal, in Harilal's case, gave evidence supporting "Gujerati's" allegation

(5) that locked houses were opened in the absence of the inmates for the purpose of making distraint of property contained in them.

The blacksmith examined in the same case deposed:—

I have thus to open locks on several occasions every year for attachment for recovery of Government assessment. The locks of about twenty to twenty-five houses were thus got open by me last year for attachment for Government assessment.

Mr. Parekh also finds ample confirmation of "Gujerati's" allegations

(6) that the floors of houses were in some instances dug up, under orders of persons making the attachment; and

(7) that villagers were prevented from taking water from the village wells, as a measure to force them to raise the assessment money.

How beneficent must the Sirkar appear in the eyes of the poor wretches that have been harassed in such fashion!

"Gujerati" again alleged:—

(8) that, in consequence of the severity of measures adopted by the Government officials, the agriculturists were obliged to borrow, to sell their agricultural cattle, or the grain required for the maintenance of their families, or the fodder needed to keep their cattle alive; and even to sell or pledge, or suffer attachment of, the ornaments of wives, daughters, and other female members of their families.

On all these heads Mr. Parekh brings forward painful evidence. Especially painful is the last-mentioned case of *palla* ornaments:—

All classes of people in Gujerat are obliged to make suitable presents to ladies married into their families. In cases of poor people these ornaments are of small value; rich people may give ornaments of large value. These presents are the special property of the ladies to whom they are given. Their husbands, fathers, and other males of their families have no right over them. It is considered improper and blameworthy for a husband to make use of his wife's *palla*, even in times of difficulty; but the use of the *palla* of a daughter, niece, daughter-in-law, or other junior female members of a family is considered very dishonourable, sacrilegious, and highly improper. Numbers of people would suffer any amount of loss or distress rather than touch such ornaments; and yet there are instances where people have found themselves forced to sell or pledge ornaments of their junior female relations. There is also evidence of the ornaments of the wives and daughters of the cultivators having been attached for their debts to Government.

"These harsh measures," adds Mr. Parekh, "have often been directed against the poorest of the rayats," little as was obtainable from them; and in consequence some "were obliged to go to the relief works or had to be given gratuitous doles for their maintenance." Such is intelligent—and beneficent—government!

It may now suffice simply to re-enumerate the rest of "Gujerati's" charges, which are all supported by the evidence so laboriously and courageously collected by Mr. Parekh:—

(9) that Government revenue was recovered out of moneys advanced to agriculturists as *taccavi*;

(10) that it was recovered out of moneys given in charity out of the charitable funds;

(11) that one Bai Mani was subjected to an insulting search of her person;

(12) that one Bhima Prag was marched without proper dress from his village to Olpad and detained there without food; and

(13) that a Vania of Saool and a Rajput of Bhadol who were no way responsible for the Government revenue were forced to make payments in consequence of oppressive treatment.

Here is a painfully cruel picture of administration in Gujerat, and the Government will have to probe all these matters to the bottom. From Mr. Parekh's enquiry it is obvious that local officers have furnished the Government with very unsatisfactory reports. And altogether it will be necessary to have a full and independent enquiry, for the state of things exposed by "Gujerati's" allegations and confirmed by Mr. Parekh's personal investigations is quite beyond endurance.

An interesting experiment has been made in the Central Provinces. Remissions of rent having sometimes been found to be of more benefit to the creditors of the peasantry than to the peasants themselves, boards of conciliation have been established in certain districts to deal with the indebtedness of tenants to the superior holders of the land. In Khurai Rs. 81,000 were advanced to tenants on condition that five and a half lakhs of debt should be remitted by the landlords. In Damoh 600 villages were dealt with, and 15,000 tenants were relieved—28 out of a total indebtedness of 40 lakhs being given up. The *Times of India*, however, while inclined to favour the extension of the experiment, suggests that some of the abandoned claims may have been quite worthless or even fictitious. That may be so; indeed, as much might reasonably be expected. All the same, it is probably a small matter beside the advantage of the general result.

Mr. Dupernex, in his work on "People's Banks for Northern India," attributes the disappearance of the custom of hoarding grain to the facilities now offered to the peasants—by improved communications and settled order—of disposing of surplus stocks. They do not hoard because they can sell. But the *Friend of India* goes a step further in the analysis. In its view railroads and police do not sufficiently account for the change. The export of foodstuffs, small in itself, has encouraged the banias to lend on the crops, and, as a consequence, the distribution of the food-stocks of the country has passed from the peasant to the money-lender and the grain-dealer. But is the analysis yet complete? The peasant no longer has his store of grain, and he has no money in its place. He is no richer than his fathers. For what purpose then has he borrowed, or in what way does he spend more than he did in the days when he still had his store of grain? The land-tax

rises at each assessment. Here then is another link in the chain. What has the peasant gained by transferring his store of grain to the money-lender? He has gained only the power of paying a higher rent with greater regularity; and he has lost his great stay in the time of famine.

A letter to the *Pioneer*, signed "Punjabi," reiterates at the eleventh hour the main argument against the Punjab Land Alienation Bill. It professes to give the views, not of the money-lenders, but of the great majority of Indians of all classes, including many judicial officers who have shown themselves glad to decide against the bania whenever the law allowed them. The writer insists that the unanimous opinion is

that the indebtedness of the agricultural community and the consequent result of the alienation of their land is entirely due to the excessive demand of the Government for its revenue.

This is evident to all who are acquainted with the details of a bania's account, one of the essential features of which is the recurrence of the sum necessary to pay the Government's demand. Moreover, the Government takes care to exclude its dues from the operation of the Bill, so that while professing a great horror of land alienation, it still retains the power to alienate the land of those who are in arrears to the revenue. To satisfy the tax-gatherer and prevent alienation, the peasant has to borrow. To say that the lender shall not in any case be able to take possession of the property will only make borrowing more difficult and expensive.

The *Madras Mail*, the chief Anglo-Indian newspaper in the Southern Province, contains a thoughtful paper by "An Indian" on the growth of an Indian proletariat, a class of day labourers, dependent on the wages they can earn from day to day. Though obviously a strong admirer of British rule, the writer yet speaks of

a change which, due to the very measures of Government in its benevolent solicitude for the welfare of the people, is yet tending to make their condition less tolerable than it was before the establishment of British supremacy. . . . . Under the old, purely native, system, every labouring man who was not an artisan or mechanic was more or less a farmer; he had his banker and his banker's books, and also his credit, which enabled him to live from year to year rather than from day to day.

It is the rise of this new class that makes the economic situation in India so difficult. It is these day labourers that are the first victims of famine, and the first recruits of the relief works. They are the product of the disturbance which the West has introduced into Indian society.

The great loss of cattle in Guzerat is not only disastrous to agriculture but has even given rise to fears that the famous breed of Guzerati cattle will become extinct, or at all events will be unable to afford a sufficient supply of beasts. Under these circumstances Lord Northcote has put forward a scheme for remedying the mischief. On two thousand acres of well-watered land—a quantity great enough to support in the future 1,000 beasts—four hundred cows are to be immediately placed. This is to be the nucleus of a breeding farm and will require an initial outlay of half a lakh of rupees at least, with an annual outlay for the first three or four years of Rs. 4,000. After that time it is hoped that the farm will become self-supporting. The money is to be raised by subscription and Rs. 20,000 had been promised before the plan was made public.

The British Committee of the Indian National Congress, at a meeting held on October 18, adopted the following resolution:—

That this Committee desires to record its deep concern on account of the illness of Professor Max Müller, the revered friend of India; and while expressing its admiration and gratitude, earnestly trusts that he will soon be restored to health.

In acknowledging the resolution, Mrs. Max Müller writes to Sir W. Wedderburn, chairman of the British Committee, that her husband is deeply touched by it. "You know," she writes, "how he loves and has worked for India, and the recognition of this love and work has gratified him very much."

The list of successful candidates for the Civil Service of India, selected in 1899, who are declared by the Civil Service Commissioner to have shown a competent knowledge of the subjects of the final literary examination and to have qualified in riding, includes the names of three Indian candidates, viz.:—Mr. Jogindra Nath Pal, Upper Bengal, 1,317 marks; Mr. Rajappayya Narayan Aiyar, Madras, 1,305 marks; and Mr. Balak Ram, Bombay, 1,030 marks.

It is not only in cricket that Indians have come to the front. The Punjabis are pleased enough at the praises bestowed on their carpets, lacquer ware, etc., at the Paris Exhibition, but still more by the victory of their champion wrestler, Gulam, over the European champion, Count Dereli. Gulam, who has been chief wrestler to the Mahárájás of Kashmir and Jodhpur, displaced his shoulder-bone during the contest, according to the account in the *Tribune*; and this makes his victory remarkable indeed. The champions met in the Paris Hippodrome.

In view of the increasing unprofitableness of the indigo industry, and of the suggestion to substitute sugar-cane for indigo in alternate years or altogether, the Government of India, according to the Simla correspondent of the *Times*, has sanctioned a Committee of Enquiry into the possibilities of establishing the sugar industry.

Directions are given that the Committee are to investigate the history of sugar-growing and manufacture in Behar; to show why former ventures have failed, and what there is to support the opinion that a revival of the industry would now result in success; to enquire whether, in order to ensure success, dependence should be placed solely on cane procurable from the ordinary cultivator, or on that grown by planters, or on both; to enquire whether it would be desirable to have central manufactories, and what localities are best suited for the erection of a large factory with special reference to a profitable and extensive cane cultivation in the vicinity of railway facilities for conveying the sugar to market; to estimate the capital required for the opening and working of a suitable sugar factory; and to consider what markets are open for the sale of manufactured sugar and their relative importance, and any practical suggestions for developing the use of refined sugar.

This project raises not a few interesting questions of political and economic importance, and recalls some recent legislation that created not a little stir. Meantime we shall await the report of the Committee.

A case is now pending which, if the allegations of the prosecution are true, throws an interesting light on the methods employed in obtaining coolies to work in the Assam tea-gardens. The story is that seven men were induced to carry a woman in a palki from Ranchi to Purulia, where they were coerced into signing contracts as coolies and were sent on to Assam. The wife of one of the men, finding her husband did not return, complained to the police, who traced the men to a tea-garden in Assam and brought them back to Ranchi. A prosecution followed, and a coolie contractor, Tahir Khan, has been convicted and sentenced to a year's hard labour and a fine of Rs.300. But he has given notice of appeal, and in the meantime has been admitted to bail.

Even the *Pioneer* falls foul of the report on native publications, entrusted this year for the first time to the Director of Public Instruction. It finds a lack of information on the tendency of Indian thought, the really important subject for the Government. Instead there is only trivial literary criticisms, made in the "spirit of the examination room." Mr. Giles has thus earned the displeasure and the ridicule of all parties, and has only succeeded in being taken seriously where he has shown himself grossly unfair.

An official telegram, published on Wednesday, reported that Lieutenant Hennessey, of the 45th Bengal Infantry, had been mortally wounded in an encounter with Mahsud raiders on the previous day and had since died. The original telegram was much more serious—that an officer and 45 Sikhs had been killed—whereupon an evening journal advertised on its contents bill "British force cut up in India." The *Standard* yesterday added the following (no doubt quasi-official) commentary to the official report:—

It was reported, a fortnight ago, that two Native infantry regiments had been sent to the Punjab frontier to assist in maintaining the blockade of Mahsud Waziri territory, instituted in consequence of a series of frontier raids committed by the tribesmen. The attitude of the Mahsud Waziris has of late given rise to serious anxiety, and in July the Commissioner of the Derajat, Mr. Mark, C.S.I., recommended that, if they refused to pay up outstanding fines, amounting to something like ninety-thousand rupees, the Government should either organise a punitive expedition or order a blockade. Jandola, where the outrage now reported took place, is a frontier outpost near the mouth of the Shahur Pass, through which a road runs to Wano. It was held, on July 1, by a detachment of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, which has, no doubt, been reinforced since the blockade by infantry.

Taken together with some other recent indications, this news of renewed disturbance beyond the North-West frontier has a slightly ominous appearance.

THE PRESS COMMITTEES AGAIN.

NOT much has been heard of late about the New Sedition Law. The telegrams from India have been gruesome enough with their tale of plague, pestilence, and famine; but as nothing has been said about any interference with the liberty of the Press, it may well have seemed to simple-minded readers of the newspapers in England that in the face of these great calamities, and of the necessity of all working together to restore the country's prosperity, the policy of repression had been abandoned. Two items which appeared in a Bombay telegram published by the *Morning Leader* on October 19 give the lie to this cherished hope. One was the news that an Indian journalist had been sent to prison for one year. He had been the editor of a paper written in the Marathi language and published at Benares. Its circulation had been very small, barely 350 copies, and the crime for which he is to suffer this heavy punishment consisted, it seems, in his stating that Europeans in India are better treated than Indians, and that Christians in India are apt to forget their Christianity. These statements may be true or false, but they have certainly been made before in much more influential quarters. Why such commonplaces of Indian journalism should have been thought worthy of prosecution, why so unimportant a newspaper should have been singled out for attack, and why so severe a sentence should have been inflicted merely for the expression of a common opinion, are questions which surely need some answer. Such a prosecution and such a sentence will do more to shake the confidence of the people in British justice than all the articles—seditious or otherwise—that have ever appeared in the Indian Press.

But the second item in the telegram was of even more alarming import. It was that "the Press Committees are again active in Bombay." This may appear exaggerated language, for at the worst it is much less painful to be haled before a Press Committee than to be thrown into prison; while if we are to believe the authorities, these Committees are of the most harmless, not to say beneficent, character. But inasmuch as they have been the instrument by which the New Sedition Act has operated, they have been a most potent means of paralysing the Press of India. As has been already said, this Act has been seldom put in operation. Indeed, many have thought that it was practically a dead letter, and that the Government had given up all attempts to shackle the free expression of opinion in the Indian Press. And had the only means at their disposal for enforcing the new Act been the open trial of those whom they wished to punish this policy might very well have been forced on the authorities; for the open trial of Press offenders is always a difficult business. If the prosecution breaks down, and such an event may come to pass even in India, it is looked on as a signal triumph for the defendant. If a conviction is obtained, sympathy is sure to be evoked for the prisoner. In either case his views receive a far more extensive circulation than they would ever have obtained in the columns of his newspaper, and he becomes an object of interest to thousands who had previously never heard his name. It thus comes about that Press prosecutions are seldom resorted to by prudent rulers and are generally the offspring of panic or folly, or that stubborn obstinacy which takes no account of ultimate consequences. Now from all these disadvantages, which are a natural check on the interference of the Government by means of prosecutions, Press Committees are free. They work in secret. When they attain their ends there is no compensating disadvantage of public ridicule for themselves or public commiseration for their victims. Those who have bent before the frown of power may lose their self-respect. The bold word may remain unsaid, and the alien ruler may have closed one avenue of enlightenment, happy in his ignorance. But his purpose is effected a thousand time more completely than if he had sent all his critics to prison. And if this secret terrorism should fail, prosecution in the Courts is still open to him. Truly, the Press Committee is a powerful engine and one most skilfully devised.

It is true that the Criminal Procedure Code itself furnished a means by which a long trial, or even proof of disaffection, was rendered unnecessary; and with a sound instinct this was viewed by Indian publicists with even more distrust than the new Sedition Act itself. But this was a method of repression so obviously unfair to its victims that it could not be continually enforced. On the other hand it formed a potent weapon in the hands of the Press Committees; for, as under it a magistrate had the power summarily to require an editor to find security for good behaviour, or in default to send him to gaol, without any specific offence being alleged, it could be used as a threat in all circumstances. No consciousness of innocence could be relied on where no definite charge need be made. And thus the pressure of these inquisitorial Committees could be used with the utmost effect.

It is true that, according to the apologies put forward by officials, these Press Committees are innocent enough. Mr. Lamb, who will be remembered by our readers as a District Magistrate at Poona, gave the following reason for their establishment when they first began to attract attention:—

> Government considered that the weekly abstract compiled by the Reporter on the Native Press was lacking both in the rapidity and the closeness of scrutiny which is deemed desirable. It therefore instructed District Magistrates to themselves arrange for the careful observation of the newspapers published in their districts.

But of course the District Magistrate could not do this himself, so he appointed a Committee with a majority of officials to do it for him. At Poona the Committee consisted of five members, three of whom were officials, one being the City Magistrate and another the City Police Inspector, and this was Mr. Lamb's conception of its duties:—

> The duty of the Committee is to bring to the notice of the District Magistrate anything appearing in any newspaper published in the district which in the opinion of the Committee is deserving of the attention of the District Magistrate. The Committee is available for use, if the District Magistrate thinks fit, as an intermediary between himself and the Press in his district.

All this may seem very innocent to those who know nothing of the relations existing between rulers and ruled in India. A magistrate or a police inspector would have few terrors for an English editor. But an Indian journalist, living under the shadow of the new Sedition Act and the Criminal Procedure Code, is in a very different position. Mr. Kelkar, a Poona editor, had an interview with this same Mr. Lamb, and this is the account which he afterwards gave of it:—

> Our idea at the time was that explanations were apparently wanted from us for a number of alleged indiscreet things, and Mr. Lamb's way of addressing us during the interview led us to believe rightly or wrongly that we were then standing in the dock and that we had committed some very, very big crimes.

Nor is the feeling of an editor likely to be different when he appears before the Committee and finds himself face to face with the City Magistrate of Poona and the City Police Inspector. Such a Committee is indeed a formidable intermediary between the District Magistrate and the Press of his district.

But if the Government thinks that this is the way to train up honest, fearless and moderate journalists, it is very much mistaken. If the Government should succeed in its objects, it would drive all such men out of journalism and leave only the craven and the reckless—cowards who would bend before the frowns of magistrates and police inspectors, or adventurers who having neither reputation nor assured position to lose would act without regard to consequences. Nor is this the way to obtain from the Press any real information as to the wants and wishes of the people. No Government can afford to dispense with such knowledge—certainly not a despotic Government, and least of all a Government of aliens. Moreover, it is certainly not the way to gain the confidence and respect of the people. The *Times of India*, one of the chief Anglo-Indian papers, cannot certainly be considered an unreasonable critic of the Government. It was the chief supporter of the Forward Policy, and has always advocated a short way with seditious editors. Nay, it was a prime instigator in the prosecution of Mr. Tilak. Yet the *Times of India* says:—

> The inquisitorial character which of necessity must attach to such a Committee will make it unpopular, and, in our opinion, deservedly so.

Thus, condemned even by the supporters of Government, it seemed as if the Press Committees would silently disappear before the indignation and ridicule of friend and foe; and for some time little has been heard of them. The intelligence of their renewed activity is bad news,

and seems to show that the rulers of India, or at least of Bombay, are incorrigible. They talk of the justice and benevolence of their rule, but they fear the light. They seek to stifle criticism, and thereby they give force to all that is said against them, even though it may be the product of ignorance and malice. And the efforts they make to prevent full freedom of discussion may well do more to render our rule unpopular than the most unmeasured abuse or the most embittered opposition.

SANDEMAN'S CHIEF LIEUTENANT AND THE "TRUE" FORWARD POLICY.[1]

MR. BRUCE was a North-West Border officer for fully a generation, from 1862 to 1896, beginning as an extra Assistant-Commissioner in the Uncovenanted Civil Service, rising steadily by his ability and energy, and crowning a very useful and distinguished career with the Commissionership of Derajat. He claims, indeed, to have "had more to do with the practical executive carrying out of the Forward Policy among the tribes than any man in India, not even excepting," he boldly says, "my dear and lamented chief, the late Sir Robert Sandeman."

> He (Sandeman) it was, no doubt, who gave its death-blow to the Close Border System and initiated the Forward Policy on its true lines when he boldly crossed the Dera Ghazi Khan border in 1866; but from that time, except for short intervals, until the Afghan war of 1878, as well as in his subsequent most important measures connected with the occupation of the Khetran country, the Harnai line, Thal-Chotiali, Bori, and Zhob, and in his last great work, the opening of the Gomal Pass, I was his right-hand man and chief executive officer.

Thus Mr. Bruce's volume, while written from his own standpoint, effectively supplements and largely corroborates Dr. Thornton's account of Sandeman's career.

Mr. Bruce calls Sir Robert Sandeman "the originator and apostle of the true Forward Policy." At the same time he quotes liberally from Lord Roberts's famous speech in the House of Lords on March 7, 1898, and emphasises the noble and gallant lord's definition of the Forward Policy as "the policy of endeavouring to extend our influence over, and establish law and order on, that part of the Border where anarchy, murder, and robbery up to the present time have reigned supreme." He quotes also from Lord Roberts's "Forty-one Years in India" to show how Lord Roberts "had felt for years what an important factor the trans-Indus tribes are in the defence of India, and how desirable it was that we should be on better terms with them than was possible so long as our policy consisted in keeping them at arm's length, and our only intercourse with them was confined to punitive expeditions or the visits of their headmen to our hard-worked officials, whose whole time was occupied in writing long reports or in settling troublesome disputes to the satisfaction of no one." We have already criticised Lord Roberts's speech (INDIA, March 11, 1898, vol. ix., p. 148), and Mr. Bruce says nothing to induce us to withdraw or to modify a single comment thereon. But we must observe that, while Lord Roberts holds that the Forward Policy he describes "is necessitated by the incontrovertible fact that a great Military Power is now within striking distance of our Indian possessions, and in immediate contact with a State for the integrity of which we have made ourselves responsible"—substantially the argument used by Lord Salisbury more than twenty years before—Mr. Bruce does not appear to look beyond our immediate relations with the tribesmen. He does not seem to have Russia in his mind at all. It is that policy of larger outlook, which is traced back to General John Jacob and Sir Henry Rawlinson, that has usually been regarded as the Forward Policy. Anyhow, Mr. Bruce's "true" Forward Policy is of the same kidney; and we leave him to settle the question of origins with the admirers of the other claimants. He himself sees no other contrast than the Close Border System.

Again, Mr. Bruce will not hear of any distinction, except a distinction of degree, in the application of the Sandeman system all along the North-West Frontier. He contends "that too much has been made in some quarters of the argument that Biluchis are, on account of their allegiance to their Tumandars and their being less democratic, easier to manage than Pathans, and that on this account the Sandeman system cannot be successfully applied to all Pathan tribes." But his examples do not go far. Nobody expects that any tribal chief, Biluchi or Pathan, can under all circumstances prevent some of his clansmen from occasional raiding. "No," he says, "it is, I believe, all a question of intelligent management and support judiciously granted; and Pathan Sirdars and Jirgas, as well as Biluch Tumandars and Jirgas, have great influence, which can be utilised with enormous benefit to the Government and to the good administration of the frontier, if worked on a proper system." No doubt; but Mr. Bruce does not get to the real point—the question whether it is necessary for officers of ours to go into tribal territory and work the influence of Sirdars, Tumandars, and Jirgas "on a proper system," or at all. We find no sufficient answer to the question why we cannot leave them all alone to their own devices within their own borders, and maintain a good understanding with them, just as we contrive to do with neighbouring peoples elsewhere in touch with the Empire. These frontier tribesmen, says Lord Roberts himself, "with all their faults, are men, and grand men too." If this is so—and it is undoubtedly so—where is the sense of suggesting that they are so unintelligent as not to understand their duties as neighbours of ours unless they be continuously in the leading-strings of our political officers? Lord Northbrook, it may be remembered, "could not help thinking" that the Mohmund and Tirah troubles resulted from a suspicion that an encroachment on the independence of the tribesmen was intended, and advocated "no interference with them and no permanent control." On this Mr. Bruce says:—

> If the cause of the recent troubles was either the apprehension of the tribes as to their independence being tampered with, or of our intervention and control, why did the troubles not extend to Biluchistan proper—to Zhob and Bori, to Wana, the Mahsud country, and to Kurram, where intervention and control was and is an essential factor in the policy pursued? No, believe me, if such apprehensions existed and were due to a Forward Policy, it was not to that policy carried out on the conciliatory lines which proved successful under the Sandeman system.

Well, it is too late to argue for or against the indubitable fact that apprehensions of the loss or curtailment of tribal independence were at the root of these troubles. But Mr. Bruce may be answered that the troubles did not extend to Biluchistan, etc., just because intervention and control already existed and there was not an atom of chance of throwing it off. True, also, the more high-spirited tribes were not handled "on the conciliatory lines" of Sandeman's treatment of the less high-spirited tribes. Mr Bruce cannot abide the suggestion that enough Sandemans are not available, but it looks very much as if they were not. Nor does he condescend to consider, as Sir Lepel Griffin and Sir Auckland Colvin do, the cost of the civilising mission he advocates. "In an important Imperial question like this," he says, "so intimately affecting the well-being of the Frontier, if the thing is the right thing to be done and our duty is plain, it is contrary to the usage and tradition of the British nation that it should remain long undone, either for want of a capable man to carry it out or on account of the cost it might entail." Yes, but is it "the right thing to be done?" And is "our duty plain?" Mr. Bruce, immersed in the business all his days, assumes that it is the right thing, and that our duty is plain. But, as we have pointed out already, that is just the fundamental point that still awaits proof.

Mr. Bruce claims that the result of his Forward Policy is "to do away with punitive expeditions." Yet does he not describe for us the Zhob Valley Expedition, and march us with Sir William Lockhart up the Tochi? And does he not insistently postulate military assistance to enable the chiefs, who appear to be always unable to assert their authority, to overcome the wrongheadedness of their subordinate officers and tribesmen? At the same time he deprecates "hasty subjugation, annexation, or even the occupation of tribal territory before gaining the consent of the loyal and well-disposed majority to such occupation." Nay, "let the pacification of the country, the civilisation of the tribes, and the identification of their interests with those of the British Government, and the carrying of them with us in our measures, be our ultimate objective in all

[1] "The Forward Policy and its Results; or, Thirty-five Years' Work Amongst the Tribes on our North-Western Frontier of India." By Richard Isaac Bruce, C.I.E., formerly Political Agent, Biluchistan, late Commissioner and Superintendent, Derajat Division, Punjab. With Illustrations and a Map. London, New York, and Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co. Price 15s.

cases." Yes, but see how far he would carry us beyond the necessities of our position, and yet would risk everything upon the chance of having the right official to conduct the business. Our "ultimate objective" may be ever so wise and beneficent; but is it necessary, and is it really our business? Mr. Bruce has been a meddler with Frontier tribesmen all his official life, and one is not surprised to find in his book not the slightest sympathy for—or even the least sense of the existence of—tribal independence. The imaginary beneficence of the Sirkar fills all his eye, and incapacitates him from seeing enough to make his judgments valuable. When he gets away from policy to facts, however, he becomes very useful. For instance, in view of possible trouble in Waziristan again, it will be well to note this:—

> The popular idea, but a very erroneous one, is that all Mahsuds are incorrigible robbers, and live on their ill-gotten gains. There never was a greater mistake than this. The majority of the tribe are well skilled and industrious cultivators of the soil and keen traders, and it is only a small minority that live by plunder.

If another expedition be needed, then, our diplomacy will need some better justification than the usual abuse of the enemy.

Mr. Bruce naturally offers certain recommendations of reform in frontier administration:—

> To start with, it is a *sine qua non* that the entire North-West Frontier should be directly under one authority, and that that authority should be the Government of India. . . . .
>
> The next essential is that in place of the present Punjab Commissioners there should be either, as proposed in Lord Lytton's scheme, a Frontier Province under one Chief Commissioner, in rank "only beneath that of a Lieutenant Governor," or, what may be more convenient now that the Biluchistan administration is developed and consolidated, that Peshawar and the Northern Frontiers should be formed into a second Frontier Chief Commissionership, on precisely the same footing as Biluchistan. The present two Commissionerships of Peshawar and Derajat would then be abolished.

We need not follow the subordinate details. But it does seem startling to read that "important as is the readjustment of the appointments, it is equally essential to the maintenance of the Frontier Civil Service on an efficient footing that Government should recognise that tribal management, like settlement work, requires special training, special aptitude, tried experience, and knowledge of the tribes." Is Government such a hopeless idiot as to require such a remonstrance? And then there must be "honours and decorations"—of course. Well, Sandeman was not spoiled with these things—nor his chief pupil and lieutenant either.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

WESTMINSTER, Thursday.

AN uneventful week has been enlivened by the publication of an agreement between England and Germany to refrain from territorial aggrandisement in China. All the Powers had previously pledged themselves to ordinances of self-denial, but the formality of the Anglo-German document invested it with exceptional importance. Moreover, it was accompanied by a string of platitudes, and in diplomacy there is nothing so sinister as a platitude. The busiest brains in Europe have been at work on the interpretation of Lord Salisbury's pious commonplaces. If language was invented to conceal thought the statesmen responsible for this agreement have not yet learned the lesson. Their deep designs have been detected. England is caught in the act of preparing a brutal affront to Russia, while Germany stands convicted of the duplicity of signing an English agreement with one hand and a Russian one with the other. So, at least, say the professional interpreters. The simple-minded public will search the document in vain for confirmation of those dark sayings. To trace their genesis one must be able to read between the lines.

One of the causes of these exercises in thought-reading is the one-sided nature of the bargain. Germany solemnly renounces all thought of attempting the impracticable, while England with equal solemnity relinquishes a position of potential advantage. Accordingly, people who have not yet accustomed their minds to the guiding principle of Lord Salisbury's diplomacy think there must be more in the transaction than meets the eye. They forget Heligoland, Samoa, and other instructive incidents. To give Germany this undertaking may have meant little to us, considering that the national policy has long been that of the open door, but, as the Prime Minister's critics are reminding him, it must have meant a good deal to Germany and should have produced a *quid pro quo*. If those sanguine gentlemen imagine that Lord Salisbury has really driven a more businesslike bargain than appears on the surface they are doomed to disappointment. Ever since this Government came into office it has been trying to buy Germany's friendship, and at length it has secured a grudging recognition of its efforts. We are at present so friendless in Europe that the smallest of mercies is acclaimed in some quarters as a diplomatic triumph.

Now that the elections are over—as Mr. Powell Williams would say—the war is permitted to reappear. The Boers have either not heard of the result, or they are waiting for the decision of Orkney and Shetland. At all events they are prolonging a hopeless struggle with as much obstinacy as could have been shown had they still been "waiting for the Opposition." Counsels of despair are beginning to be raised at home; but there is something rather childish in threatening an enemy with reprisals when we have already condemned him to political extinction. The war, in the opinion of those who know the Boers best, might have been ended long ago—ended, too, on our own terms—had we condescended to call their leaders to an armistice. For the arrogance of Ministers the country is paying at the rate, probably, of about two hundred lives a week and about a million and a half in money.

Liberal Imperialism spoke to some purpose a few days ago in the form of a series of resolutions declaring war and proscription against the "extreme but diminishing section" of the Liberal party which adheres to the Gladstonian tradition in foreign politics. In most of the daily papers the resolutions were published as the declarations of a body calling itself the Imperial Liberal Council. This organisation in itself is of no great importance, but as a matter of fact it was not responsible for the document issued in its name. The resolutions were passed at a small committee meeting held in a private room in the Temple and attended by less than a dozen people. Other members of the Council are justly indignant at the course pursued by this coterie of unknown busybodies, and the whole matter is about to be reviewed at a general meeting of the organisation. Liberals generally are in complete sympathy with Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman's remonstrance on the subject. The incident, indeed, promises to have a salutary effect in closing the ranks of the party against further attempts at division.

A new Parliament having been formed since Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman was first selected by the Liberal members to lead the Opposition in the House of Commons it is expected that a meeting of the party will again be held on the eve of the coming Session with the object of confirming Sir Henry's leadership. No doubt is entertained as to the choice of the party, nor as to the support which Sir Henry's claims will receive from his colleagues of the front bench. The position in the House of Commons is a thing apart from the movement in favour of Lord Rosebery's return. Even in the unlikely event of the ex-Premier's resumption of his former responsibilities, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman would probably remain at his present post in the House of Commons. Despite the efforts of their political opponents to depict them as rivals, Lord Rosebery and Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman are very good friends.

Some expert in the niceties of constitutional practice should be invited to define Lord Salisbury's position in the list of England's Premiers. The Conservative leader is now entering on a fourth Parliament as Prime Minister, but it is doubtful whether he can rightly claim to have been Prime Minister four times. In Mr. Gladstone's case there was no room for doubt, for there was a distinct interval between each of the Liberal statesman's terms of office. On each of the four occasions when he was returned to power there was a change of Government involving a re-appointment of Ministers from the Premier downwards. There is scarcely a precedent for Lord Salisbury's case. First called to form a Government at the end of the Liberal Parliament of 1880-85, his second term of office began in 1886, and his third in 1895. Can it properly be said that his fourth term began in 1900? There has been a general election and a change of Parliament, but the continuity of the Government, as a whole, has not been disturbed and Lord Salisbury retains the seals that were handed to him for the third time in the summer of 1895. Technically, therefore, it would seem that Lord Salisbury is still in the midst of only his third Premiership.

NOTES FROM BOMBAY.

THE VICEROY'S TOUR.

[From an Indian Correspondent.]

BOMBAY, October 6.

The time for the Viceroy to make his proposed tour round the Indian peninsula is fast approaching. In another week or ten days he will start on his journey, which is certain to become historical in the annals of this country. Whether it will be an epoch-making one remains to be seen. But India looks forward to his Excellency's tour with pleasure. The people are sure to follow his visit in the various localities with the keenest zest and interest. His utterances on grave problems of the State, small and great, are sure to be well read, marked, and inwardly digested. In all probability his lordship will take the public into his confidence and give them an inkling of the twelve important problems to which he was to devote his time and energy. The famine intervened, and the solution of the problems remained in abeyance. No doubt he will again take it up, and meanwhile attempt to feel the pulse of the governed. The tour will be the most eventful one, I repeat, in our history and will weigh him in the balance. The popular expectation is undoubtedly one of high aims and noble achievements. Should those expectations be realised, Lord Curzon will leave India with the warmest gratitude and affection of millions of her Majesty's subjects, as did Lord Ripon, whose name is perennially cherished in this land.

Meanwhile, Simla has just flashed a telegram which clearly shows how carefully Lord Curzon is watching the course of Indian public opinion. No sooner was it definitely announced that his lordship had resolved on his Viceregal pilgrimage to various shrines in the country, so to say, than the divers Chiefs and Princes showed a desire to receive him with all the grandeur and *éclat* which money could procure. One Mahârâjâ, it was alleged, was going to spend 15 lakhs, and another, not to bate a jot in his welcome to this brilliant representative of the Great White Queen, had expressed his desire to spend double that amount. Similarly, minor chiefs and potentates. This alarmed the vigilant Indian Press. It was asked, and rightly, whether, in view of the bankrupt condition of many of the Feudatory States and Principalities, and the fact of their having had to borrow money for famine expenditure from the Government of India, it was a part of wisdom and State economy further to impoverish their subjects, already distressed and depressed, in order to spend large sums in ovations to the Viceroy. The question was taken up in the columns of almost every leading Indian paper, and rationally argued out, with the result that there was absolute unanimity that it would be well for the Viceroy himself to give a broad hint to the Princes and Chiefs to desist from wasting their revenues on him on ephemeral pomp and pageantry—pomp and pageantry which would vanish as the baseless fabric of a vision so soon as the Viceregal visit came to an end, and leave in its train memories of new taxes or other imposts levied for the special purpose to defray the expenditure. It seems that the voice of India in the matter has been heard, and as a result there is this semi-official telegram from Simla as to what the Viceroy wishes of the different Feudatories whose capitals he is to visit. It is satisfactory to notice this attitude of the Viceroy, which is proof of his being a vigilant student of educated Native opinion.

The hollow agitation about the introduction of the Nagri character in all public departments in the United Provinces seems now to have received its quietus after having needlessly vexed sensible people, who saw nothing in the change save a desire on the part of the Lieutenant-Governor to render justice to a large class of people whose vernacular had been banished from the law courts and other public offices. As the agitators —a narrow and interested class of legal practitioners in Urdu or Hindi—were influential enough to carry their grievance to the foot of the Viceregal throne, there was an enquiry into the affair by the Olympians, with this net result that the agitators have been told to mind their own business. This is as it should be. The Viceroy in India is nothing if he is not to be the very emblem of Justice. He is the one exalted authority to whom all look up for justice—justice stern, unbending, and impartial—and it is superfluous to say that in this instance he has given great satisfaction by his fair verdict.

And now I come to a local matter. The battle of the assessment collections has now reached a second stage. The first act in this drama was over when "Gujerati" had exposed the objectionable practices of the revenue underlings in the columns of the *Times of India*, and the Hon. Gokuldas K. Parekh had referred to them in the Provincial Legislative Council. That courageous councillor was boldly challenged as to the accuracy of his facts both by the masterful Mr. Monteath, our new Revenue Member, and by the Governor himself. Mr. Parekh bravely took up the gauntlet. He was asked to produce his evidence, and he has gratified the request of his official interrogators. In a bulky volume of over sixty pages Mr. Parekh brings evidence after evidence taken down by him personally in the different villages where revenue collections were exacted in an oppressive fashion, to demonstrate the correctness of his views. He leaves the public to test the value of that evidence. The *Times of India* has appreciated the public spirit of the writer and approved of Mr. Gokuldas's patriotic efforts in the interests of the oppressed rayats. But the *Bombay Gazette* writes something which is very silly. For want of anything better by way of argument it falls foul of the witnesses, whom it fancies are all tutored or speaking what is not true. The journal goes so far as to drag into the controversy "Asiatic mendacity." For a respectable paper like the *Gazette* to indulge in such sweeping allegations is grievous. Moreover, it seems to be blind to the rejoinder which may be given, namely, that there is such a thing as "official mendacity" in India. And if the impartial English public is really anxious to learn all about this latter species of mendacity, I could not do better than to refer them to the pages of the *Statesman*, which was for a while published in 1880 in London. There is a withering article by the late Robert Knight on the growing evil of official mendacity in this country. I think it needs reproduction at this hour, for, I am sure, it would cure not only the *Bombay Gazette* and the writer of the article therein, but many of the same kind. Be that as it may, the controversy has now reached a stage at which it cannot stop. The Government is bound to enquire *coram populo*. Will it have the courage to do so fairly and impartially and without the coloured glasses of the masterful Revenue Member?

[It will be remembered that in our issue of October 12 (p. 190) we reproduced a telegram from the Bombay Correspondent of the *Morning Leader* stating that the Bombay Government had appointed an officer with judicial powers to enquire into Mr. Parekh's allegations and had called for reports from certain high officials.—Ed. India.]

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

RAIN "STILL WANTED URGENTLY" IN SOME DISTRICTS.

1,831,000 ON RELIEF.

The Secretary of State for India has received the following telegram from the Viceroy:—

"Rain is still wanted urgently in part of Bombay, Deccan, and Haidarabad for standing crops and spring cultivation. More rain would be beneficial also in Gujerat and Baroda. Elsewhere prospects generally good. Number of persons in receipt of relief:—Bombay, 625,000; Punjab, 3,000; Central Provinces, 800,000; Berar, 159,000; Ajmere-Merwara, 2,000; Rajputana States, 24,000; Central India States, 23,000; Bombay Native States, 65,000; Baroda, 38,000; Punjab Native States, 4,000; Central Provinces Feudatory States, 15,000; Haidarabad, 73,000; Madras, relief discontinued.—Total, 1,831,000."

The Secretary of State for India has received the following telegram from the Governor of Bombay:—

"Following are figures for week ended October 23:—Famine-stricken districts—183 cases of cholera, of which 108 were fatal. Only a few scattered cases of cholera in Native States. Total number of deaths among numbers on relief works and gratuitous relief, British districts, 1,599, or 2½ per mille. No rain except light showers in

parts of Karnatik. Rain is much needed in all districts. Numbers on relief diminishing."

THE MANSION HOUSE FUND.

The Mansion House Fund for the relief of the distress in India will be closed at the end of the month. Down to Tuesday night it amounted to £379,800.

THE "INVESTORS' REVIEW" FUND.

We take the following from the current issue (October 20) of the *Investors' Review*:—

A misleading figure got into Sir William Wedderburn's letter published by us last week, mainly through our own fault. The sums stated therein as having been given to the Pandapur Orphanage was Rs. 1,000. It should have been Rs. 1,500. Sir William accidently omitted the figure from his letter, and in the haste of making up the paper it was filled in at Rs. 1,000 without the totals being checked, when the error would have at once been discovered, so the mistake was really our own, and we can only apologise for it. Subscribers to the fund may rest satisfied that the whole of the Rs. 10,000 were certainly allocated in the manner stated. This week's news from the famine districts is much less pleasant, and there has been a slight increase in the numbers on the relief works. Telegraphing on the 16th inst., the Viceroy states that disquieting reports have been received from Bombay, the situation being described as serious in the Eastern Deccan, Bijapur, and parts of Belgaum and Dharwar. If rain does not come with the North-East monsoon the area of winter crops there will be small, and there will be considerable distress in parts. Elsewhere in India harvest prospects are described as excellent and famine conditions as disappearing. We should like to hear from the Viceroy what is being done about arrears of rental. An enquiry is to be made, we are glad to see, into the allegations that famine relief money has been seized for taxes, but something much wider than that is required to satisfy people in this country who have a conscience and the true interests of the Empire at heart. If the Indian people are to be subjected to the same tyranny that prevailed after the famine of 1897, it is obvious that, no matter how great the glory of our Simla Imperialism may be, our dominion in India cannot be expected to last long. Had Parliament met soon there might have been some opportunity to ventilate the grievances of the Indian people. As it is, there is only the Press, and most of that is filled with vanity and incapable of attending in a sensible way to any Imperial interest whatever. But the absence of discussion does not justify the suspension of charitable efforts, and we are longing to see these resumed.

Subscriptions to our little fund, from which not a penny is deducted for advertisements in newspapers or any other kind of charges, may be sent to A. J. Wilson, at this office; cheques to be crossed "Union Bank of London, Indian Famine Fund."

List of Subscriptions.

Amount acknowledged last week £858 12 7

THE NEED OF ENQUIRY.

The *Manchester Guardian* writes (October 20):—Lord Curzon, addressing the Legislative Council at Simla yesterday, claimed that the Indian Government had reason to be proud of its campaign against the famine, which has lasted for a whole year, and is not ended even yet. He laid especial stress on the unprecedented liberality and promptitude with which relief has been granted to the sufferers, and on the comparative smallness of the mortality in British India which could fairly be attributed to the famine. In many respects Lord Curzon's praise of the Indian administration has been fairly earned. The system of famine relief has not been faultless, and the Provincial Governments have not all shown equal generosity or foresight in dealing with their starving subjects; but on the whole, no doubt the Indian authorities have done well under most trying conditions, and have materially lessened the suffering caused by the long drought of last winter. Still it is encouraging to notice that Lord Curzon was not content to praise the Government for what it had done, but went on to promise that the lessons of this terrible year would be taken to heart for the future. It is not so much the merit of the system of relief in time of famine that has been questioned as the justice of the system of land taxation that has been adopted everywhere save in Bengal. If Lord Curzon will institute a real and searching enquiry into the question whether the land tax as at present assessed does not tend to impoverish the peasant so seriously that he cannot face the loss caused by an occasional drought, he will confer a greater benefit on India than any improvement of the Famine Code could possibly be.

The *Daily Chronicle* (October 20) said:—For all English people this question of India and her famines is of absorbing importance. The Famine Fund had reached £378,250 yesterday, and Lord Curzon says the almsgiving has been unprecedented, amounting to nearly one million in all, though he reproaches the wealthy native States for th small amounts of their contributions. But we cannot get rid of our national responsibility by putting our hands in our pockets. The labours of our Indian officials have been devoted and unselfish above praise. Lord Curzon justly boasts that in no famine has the mortality been less or the distress more quickly relieved. But we cannot go on trusting to the devotion of our officials just to keep alive as many of our starving fellow-subjects as they possibly can, whenever the rains are late or do not fall. We sometimes think that the Government of India is the one conspicuous and unquestionable success of the Empire's administration. We have a staff of servants above suspicion, laborious and experienced. Yet the recurrence of these calamities must make us hesitate about the result of our rule, although there is no doubt that in the days before British conquest the death toll was infinitely higher. We await Lord Curzon's recommendations with the utmost interest. He is not the man to be tied by precedents or regulations, and he knows the country well. We cannot hope for any single remedy. Even irrigation is not always a panacea, as our Correspondent points out. But if we are to continue to justify our dominion we must spare no pains in methods of improvement.

"STRICKEN INDIA."

Under this title a most admirable pamphlet, written by Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, has been issued by the *Reform Press* (1 and 2, Took's Court, London, E.C.) It contains four striking and well re-produced pictures relating to the famine and a famine map. After an able statement of facts concerning the famine, and the normal condition of the people, the pamphlet concludes as follows:—

The foregoing brief sketch of the general condition of the rayat in average times will enable the reader to understand on what a small amount the Indian Agriculturist can subsist in seasons of scarcity. This expenditure of three-pence per day in days of plenty may be reduced to one-half or even less in days of dearth. The wage generally given to adults at famine relief camps for one day's work at stone-breaking, earth carrying, coal carrying, well sinking, and canal digging, or similar labour, is from 1½ lb. to 2½ lbs. of grain per diem. The minimum wage recommended by the code for an adult at work was 1½ lbs. of grain. After careful examination and consideration it was decided that 1½ lbs., or in some specified cases 1¾ lbs., was the lowest quantity which would suffice to maintain an adult at work. In parts of Bombay, however, the code minimum was this year reduced to a 1 lb. ration, but it was found to lead to the most disastrous results, since it requires nearer 2 lbs. than 1 lb. of grain to keep a full-grown man in a normal condition of health. The Indian Government tried, but subsequently abandoned and condemned, the 1 lb. ration in 1877; and it has again been abandoned after trial this year in Bombay.

But whatever ration may be sufficient to maintain life it is obvious that much more than that is needed—much that would be difficult, if not quite impossible, to supply at relief camps, or according to the rules and red tape common to Government officialism. There are countless men, women, and children, especially women and children, who could not or would not go into relief camps: delicate women, utterly unfit to work at excavating or stone breaking; *purda nashin* women who would die rather than expose themselves to the gaze of men; and others whose pride rather than their religion would not permit them to seek charity from the Government. To succour these people is the task for individuals stationed in the different localities, with the funds entrusted to them by the public. Such men happily are to be found everywhere; and while we at home inertly listen to the grim sad stories of distress, out there "civil servants are spending their salaries as well as their lives in fighting the famine." Native officials also have stuck to their posts and died in harness, with no one to record their heroic deeds or to pass on their names to grateful memory.

Shall we let these men give all—their salaries, their labour, their sympathy, their lives—and *we* do nothing? The India Office has announced that three shillings will support a man for a month and ten shillings for nearly four months. Those who have not given to any of the charitable relief funds should hasten to give. No time should be lost. While one is here considering, a man there may die for want of that one particular helping hand. Those who have already given—and there are some poor people who have deprived themselves of what were really necessaries, not luxuries, to give—should try to give again. The need is urgent. If you saw a child drowning before your eyes you would try to pull him out; thousands of children are suffering the tortures of starving to death. Shall we not try to rescue at least a few?

Much money is needed for charitable relief, as apart from the official Government relief; £5,000,000 would not be too much, but carefully expended in conveying food and fodder from the fertile districts, such as Burma and Bengal, to the places where there is no food for man or beast, it would instantly and appreciably alleviate the mass of suffering throughout the 700,000 square miles of famine-stricken India. Now that the rains have come in most parts money will also

be more than ever wanted to battle with the fevers that are intensified with the bursting of the monsoon. Plough oxen are wanted—are absolutely necessary—to replace the dead beasts, and seed grain must be forthcoming for the sowing. The people need clothes to cover them and household utensils to enable them to take up the daily round of life once more. And beyond all this, alas! there are the hapless orphans who have survived this fiery ordeal, who need to be comforted, clothed, fed and educated until they, poor fatherless and motherless little ones, are able to help themselves.

When the present distress is brought under control we can talk about the preventibility of famines, of the duty of governments and of governors: then we can discuss the causes of the poverty of India, and suggest remedies. Now the day is not for talk, but for deeds. It is the day for heroic men in India—both Native and European—to spend themselves in alleviating suffering: for us here—less heroic, but it is to be hoped not less true-hearted and sympathetic—to give them the means of procuring all that is necessary to succour and relieve. The reader is entreated not to lay down these pages thinking that the matter is no business of his or hers. It is truly everybody's business, although not on that account nobody's business. If we knowingly accept these evils silently and passively we make ourselves parties to them and on each and every one of us lies some responsibility for their continuance. If each one did all he could to help, gave all he could afford to give, and pursuaded all whom he had influence to pursuade to do likewise, the sufferings due to the present famine in India would soon be at an end.

As the people who survive are now gradually returning to those places which they once called home, funds are most urgently needed to re-start in life those who are left without resources and who would otherwise die, or, at best, lapse into pauperism.

We entreat all to help in this object. By so doing they will not only assist in alleviating present suffering, but they will put the rayat in a better position to meet future periods of scarcity.

Money for this purpose should be sent to the Mansion House, distinctly marked "TO RESTART THE RAYAT IN LIFE." Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to "The Indian Famine Fund or bearer," crossed "Glyn, Mills and Co.," and sent to the Secretary's Office, Mansion House, London, E.C.

[Copies of the pamphlet may be obtained *gratis* from the publishers.]

"INDIA IS WORTH HELPING."

In the course of a further article in *Britannia*, Mr. J. W. Root says:—The ruling principle of Indian finance has hitherto been that it must be self-supporting, and in no way dependent on the Imperial Treasury. Sound enough in itself, though sometimes carried a little too far, because whenever doubt has arisen as to the exact division between expenditure for the benefit of Imperial as distinct from local interests, the verdict has invariably been given against India. Whatever generosity that country has ever experienced as a result of its close association with the British Empire has been due to private intervention, and not to Government action. The Imperial Exchequer draws no direct subvention from India any more than from the other Colonial possessions, but indirectly its gain is very considerable. The profits made in Indian trade, and the industrial activity it creates at home, do very materially help to swell the national revenue, and the loss of it would soon result in additional demands on the British taxpayer. From a merely selfish point of view, therefore, India is worth helping in a time of crisis, not by loans which she will have to repay, or, at any rate, find the interest for, but by a substantial grant that will in no way increase her liabilities. While we are adding to the National Debt so largely for the consolidation of South African territories under the British Crown, ten or twenty millions more will make no appreciable difference, and will constitute but a repayment of part of the immense amount that has been expended within recent years upon military operations, undertaken quite as much in the interests of the Empire as of India, to say nothing of the extra taxation imposed for currency purposes. Such a sum will at least constitute a firm foundation for the remission of taxation that would have been possible but for the famine, and that without it will have to be indefinitely delayed.

THE PUNJAB LAND ALIENATION BILL.

In the course of a leading article on the Punjab land question, the *Times* wrote on Wednesday (October 24):—

Two reflections on the measure are natural, and one of them may be recommended to those who ignorantly and persistently represent British rule as engaged in undermining native institutions, and are always girding at "official optimism." Of the administration of law in our Courts the exact opposite is nearer the truth; there is force in the criticism that the Courts are more Hindu than the Hindus themselves; they strive to carry out old rules without always taking notice of the extent to which people have of late been Anglicised. And in the legislation which is now proposed we see the same tendency; in the desire to buttress native institutions and to preserve the state of society in the Punjab the Legislative Council throws over some principles which have, in the Western world, been regarded until lately as admitting of no exception. Not, indeed, that there is any hope of exactly stereotyping the old order. What Lord Curzon and the supporters of the measure expect is not that the agricultural tribesman will not sell his land, but that "the transfer will be more frequently to men of his own tribe or tribal groups, and less frequently to outsiders who are not connected either with the traditions or traditional occupations of the province." Another point to be noted is the widespread revival of legislative measures controlling usury. In a certain class of literature much is said about "moralising capital"—a dubious phrase which too often veils dishonest designs on some one's pockets. But it does clumsily express a truth if it means that the lenders of capital are subject to peculiar responsibilities in certain states of society, and particularly on the first application of civilised law to a somewhat primitive community. "The tooth of usury," said one of the wisest of men, "should be grinded, that it bite not too much"—a process which in the Western world, in dealings between grown-up men, has generally been a failure. The experiment is made under different conditions and with some chance of mending matters a little where its effect is to save a poor cultivator who must take what terms are offered to him by the borrower. And why, too, should anything that tends to break up rapidly the primitive organizations, working well in their place, be welcomed or tolerated? The new order may be, to quote one who knew the Punjab intimately, "an improvement on mere barbaric turbulence, but so long as we can keep alive the sense of kinship through large groups of men we shall benefit them and contribute to our own strength in the country." The Punjab land question and the distress of the indigo planter of Behar are examples of a class of questions which must continue to press on the Government of India. It is some satisfaction that they are being treated with a sense of their gravity and with the full desire to preserve the best elements in native institutions.

THE NEW LAW OF SEDITION.

ANOTHER EDITOR IMPRISONED.

THE PRESS COMMITTEES AGAIN ACTIVE.

The *Morning Leader* of October 19 printed the following telegram (dated October 18) from its Bombay correspondent:—

The editor of the *Kalidas*, a Benares vernacular journal, has been sent to prison for one year.

His crime consists in writing articles stating that whites are treated better than blacks, and that Christians in India forget Christianity.

The circulation of his journal was 350 copies.

The Press Committees are again active in Bombay.

Commenting on this message, the *Morning Leader* wrote:—"Our Bombay correspondent reports that the editor of the *Kalidas*, an insignificant Benares newspaper, has been sent to prison for one year for having stated that in India the whites are treated better than the blacks, and that Christians in India sometimes forget their Christianity. The liberty of the Press in India is thus reduced to the merest farce, and no one need be surprised at the further report that "the Press Committees are again active in Bombay." These Committees are worse than French courts-martial, and the editors who have been summoned before them know to what extent bullying and brow-beating can go. No journal in this country, on whatever side of politics it might write, would have its criticisms called in question in this fashion—while the Indian pressman, who is called upon by Sir Henry Fowler and others to recognise the blessings of British rule, is sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for indulging in the most superficial and obvious comment.

On October 20 the *Morning Leader* said:—

Our Bombay correspondent in the telegram which we printed yesterday, made the important statement that "Press Committees" are again active in the Bombay Presidency. These Committees, it may be remembered, were brought into existence in certain parts of India, especially in Bombay, in the winter of 1897, as part of the machinery for the administration of the new and rigorous law of sedition. The function of the Poona Committee, for example, was thus officially described by Mr. Lamb:—

> The duty of the Committee is to bring to the notice of the District Magistrate anything appearing in any newspaper published in the district which in the opinion of the Committee is deserving of the attention of the District Magistrate. The Committee is available for use, if the District Magistrate thinks fit, as an intermediary between himself and the press of his district.

How these Committees (of which magistrates and police inspectors were the most conspicuous members) actually worked, there are many instances to show. The editor of the *Mahratta*, who was summoned before the Poona Committee, afterwards said that at the interview he felt he "was standing in the dock." The editor of the *Kela* was required to express regret for writing that "it was bad that

the Natives should not possess strength or endurance enough to bear a few strokes or kicks given by Europeans." In a third case an Indian editor had called attention to the repeated shooting of Indians by British soldiers. He was sent for and asked whether he was aware that the Government was about to issue a Resolution upon the subject. In a fourth case an Ahmadnagar journalist had remarked upon the difficulty with which an Indian obtains justice against a European. The District Magistrate sent him a peremptory letter stating that he was "warned that his article was conceived in bad taste, and that its tone is objectionable." The effect of such interference is, of course, to paralyse the liberty of the Press, which is nowhere more necessary than where the rulers are aliens. It is to be hoped that when Parliament meets, Lord George Hamilton will be closely questioned upon the origin, the purpose, and the number of these intimidating Committees. How can their work be reconciled with his repeated statement that "under the existing law of India no Committee which may have been appointed in Poona or elsewhere could have any power of censorship over the Press?" Let our Imperialists see to it, if they have any care for the mode in which the Empire is administered.

On October 22 the *Morning Leader* wrote:—A telegram from Simla mentions the large number of instances in which troops, horses and money have been offered by Indian princes and chiefs for the South African War. "These facts," the message adds, "prove conclusively the wonderful loyalty and devotion to the Empire displayed throughout Hindustan." There is, of course, a vast number of far more important facts which prove this conclusion. But, even if we go no further for evidence of good-will than the sender of this telegram is prepared to go, what becomes of the case for repressive measures in India—for the New Law of Sedition, the imprisonment of British subjects without trial, and the menacing and insulting work of the "Press Committees?" Is it not time to recognise India's "wonderful loyalty and devotion" by taking off some of the humiliating fetters that were put upon her in the hasty and unfounded belief that she was neither loyal nor devoted? It is not only Reuter's Simla correspondent who now appreciates the loyalty of India. The Government of India also must be well aware of it or they would not, at an exceptionally critical time, have consented to the withdrawal of so many soldiers to South Africa and to China.

EMPIRE IN INDIA.

(*Concluded from page* 178.)

There is no necessity to launch accusations of deliberate mismanagement or neglect against the *personnel* of the administration. Everyone must feel that on the whole their intentions have been sincere, but their standard of course is that of the country in which they have been born and bred.

When we consider how little of our vast revenue at *home* is spent for the welfare and prosperity of the mass of the people; when we consider that of the £103,000,000 sterling expenditure of the United Kingdom for 1899, close on seventy millions went in naval and military service and interest on public debts; when we consider that our home policy (like that of the other Western nations) is a merely *commercial* policy—that is, to stimulate trade, especially foreign trade, to protect our trade by our fleet, and to embark in small wars for the purpose of opening up markets and compelling payment of interest on British loans—that it is a policy directed to benefit the trader, the merchant, the British capitalist, and the landlord, and that in favouring these it neglects agriculture and the cultivator of the soil, and does not really consider the artisan—then I say it seems unlikely that our policy will be any better in India. As a matter of fact it is quite the same. Our statesmen (pardon the term!) have no grander idea of policy in this our vast dependency than to open up the country with railways (working at a loss) in order to encourage trade with England, and the investment of British industrial capital; to embark in frontier wars and to incur a vast civil and military expenditure for the supposed purpose of safe-guarding our interests, but really very largely for the purpose of finding "places" for the sons of the well-to-do middle classes at home; and to squeeze the people to the last drop in order to pay these dues and maintain this system.

It is the policy of infidelity. Our "statesmen" seem to forget that the agricultural population of India numbers some 150 millions; and that no policy which does not first consider the interests of this vast multitude is itself worth considering. They do not seem to see that to make this ocean of people prosperous and contented would—as a mere matter of policy—be worth all the forts we have built to dominate and guard them; that it would be the one way to really retain our hold over them; and to ensure the elasticity of that revenue for which (if it must be so) we so greatly hanker. And they do not see (for alas! how should they?) that to adopt this policy would be not only to gladden the hearts of these millions and knit them to us in bonds of affection and gratitude, but that it would be to gladden the heart of the whole world, witnessing for once the spectacle of a strong nation helping a weak one; and even cast a little ray of light back on England herself, where beneath her fogs and amid her sad and squalid cities she sits and clutches at her gold-bags.

It is not railways that are wanted for the prosperity of India, but irrigation. Irrigation is the prime need, the absolute necessity of such a land; and with a thorough system of irrigation India might be one of the richest and most productive of countries—as indeed it once was. Railways may be useful, but they do not increase the *productiveness* of a country. We, in the West, are liable to forget that. They are part of our system of division of labour. The hides, grown in Texas, are sent 1,000 miles to Chicago to be cured and tanned, then 500 miles farther to Massachusetts to be made into boots, and then perhaps return to Texas to be worn; but in the East, where the peasant in his village fulfils all trades himself, this ponderous circum-locomotion (which after all is mainly for the benefit of the trader and the shareholder) is not needed.[1] Railways are useful for the trader and the commercial man; they are convenient for the despatch of troops; they afford an excellent investment (if properly guaranteed by the State) for single ladies; and, in India, they might even open up a market for British goods (that great purpose of civilisation) *if* the peasant of India had a surplus of products to send in return. But as under our rule, and of late years, the surplus is rapidly diminishing, that object does not appear to be fulfilled. As a matter of fact (*Stat. Abstr.*, p. 209), the export of rice from India to the United Kingdom has fallen from value Rx.1,462,000 in 1890-91 to Rx.1,100,000 in 1897-98; of wheat in the same period from Rx.3,437,000 to Rx 930,000; and of raw cotton[2] from Rx.4,324,000 to Rx.424,000—or to about one-tenth! And even the total exports of these articles to all parts of the world have fallen in much the same ratios. Practically, by crushing taxation and neglect of his interests we have destroyed the small cultivator's trading power.

Irrigation, I say, is a prime need of Indian prosperity. But it does not follow from that, that in order to carry out great irrigation works we should borrow large sums from Western capitalists and then tax the cultivator up to the hilt in order to pay the interest on these loans—for this would only be to undo with one hand what we were doing with the other. No, we should have encouraged the village communities themselves, with wise help and direction from the State, to carry out these works.

But here we come to the root-evil of our policy in India—our treatment of the land question. We have practically destroyed the village community. It no longer exists, and we cannot make use of it. To go into the whole question of land-settlement in India would take us far beyond our limits. Sufficient to say that from centuries back the land has been held by the village communities under the State. The village commune, represented by the head-man, has paid its yearly rent or tax to the State; the individual rayat or peasant has been responsible to the commune. From our first appearance in India, and largely from the sheer ignorance necessarily arising out of one country meddling in the affairs of another, we have disintegrated this system. We have alienated the State's right over the land, we have displaced the head-man, we have destroyed the corporate life of the village. We have introduced (in accordance with our Western notions) private property, with the sequent rights of sale and mortgage, we have thrown the people into the hands of the professional taxgatherers, the landlord and the money-lender, and we have brought on them that financial ruin which now is not only completing itself in India, but threatens also all the Western Governments with their insane policy of commercial and military expansion, accompanied by utter neglect of the actual peasant and cultivator of the land.

What might we not have done in India is indeed a touching question. Among a people so gratefully affectionate—as a thousand stories of personal devotion testify—so dependent as the Indians are by nature, and inclined to lean upon others for guidance, a frank and friendly amalgamation of interests would, I believe, have been amply repaid. But the British public, while friendly in their general attitude towards the Indians, and perfectly ready to treat them in a generous manner when they visit our shores, are in darkest ignorance as to the real state of affairs in the country itself.

A personal incident will perhaps explain best what I mean. On one occasion, when in Bombay, I happened to make the acquaintance of two or three railway or post-office clerks, Natives. Strange as it may seem, they were quite surprised to find an Englishman talking to them naturally and with no assumption of superiority. So much so indeed that they entreated me to come and visit them next evening at one of their homes in the Native quarter. I went, and in my turn was surprised to find a congregation of perhaps fifty young men of about the same standing, collected there to meet me. They, none of them, knew either my name or my business. They only knew that I was an Englishman *who would talk to them!* They showed the greatest interest in England; they pelted me with questions about Gladstone and Salisbury and Bradlaugh, about Huxley and Tyndall and Spencer; they wanted to know what books to read, and through what channels to obtain them. They talked intelligently enough in all conscience. But—and this is the point—I found out at last, and in answer to my enquiries, what was the cause of all this commotion. It was that "no resident Englishman would talk to them like that, or tell them things they wanted to know!" And indeed I quite think, from what I generally saw, that this would be about the truth.

There you have a picture of the situation; an intelligent alert town's population asking for ideas and information, the staring Britisher with his eyebrows raised, not condescending to reply; journalists, like the brothers Natu of Poona, condemned, without trial, to imprisonment for life for making rude remarks about our policy; and the agricultural folk dying by millions and millions of famine.

It is hardly, I am afraid, possible to hope that our Government will take the truly generous and truly politic line in this matter—that

[1] See Mr. Hiram Maxim in *Fielden's Magazine* for June, 1900.

[2] While the import of manufactured cotton (from Manchester, &c.) has similarly fallen from Rx.27,242,000 to Rx.22,902,000.

they will treat the Indians in a friendly spirit, give them every opportunity of political education and advancement, pay some decent respect to serious Native opinion (as, for instance, to the resolutions of the National Congress, which to-day are rudely flouted by our officials) and frankly open the way for the people to join us in the administration of their country.[1] There would be difficulties, naturally, in this course; but the difficulties would not be half so great as in the course we are now adopting; and I feel sure the people would respond with an immense gratitude and a frankness fully equivalent to that with which the offer was made. It would be a truly grand and glorious national work. But then—ah! then—is it possible that officials would consent to such a course, or practically invite Native gentlemen to come and sit in their seats? Is it thinkable even?

There is one thing, however, not impracticable, which I should like to see done at once; and that is, the sending out by some such body as the Humanitarian League, or the Fabian Society, or the S.D.F., of a *mission* to India—a really sensible mission—with the single object of opening up a channel of friendly communication and interchange of ideas between the two peoples, of getting to know what is really going on among the people of India, of affording them an opportunity of learning the currents of thought amongst us, and of establishing some degree of personal amity between the two sides. Governments have become so hopelessly futile in these days; politicians and statesmen have become affected with such a creeping paralysis, and mere automatic functioning as the puppets of big financiers, that it is useless to look to them any farther, and the peoples of the various countries must join hands and work out their own destinies, as it would seem, entirely independent of these others.

The cry of "Empire" is the crazy cry of imbecile and tottering Authority, not only in England but in all the Government-bestridden nations of the West. The case of India—the ruin of India, where if ever nation had splendid opportunities England had—proves the falseness, the craziness, of the cry. But even if all the views stated above could be controverted, there remains this one incontrovertible and utterly damning fact—namely, that official England has no real care for, takes no real interest in, her Empire when she has acquired it—that year after year, and year after year, the destinies of 250 millions of people in India are dealt with and despatched before empty benches in the House of Commons. Nothing can obliterate the meaning of that fact, or palliate its sinister effect upon the Indians themselves. And yet we go forth on to the housetops and into the highways, and with strident hollow-sounding voices shout the blessings of our rule, and *more* Empire and more Annexation in South Africa, West Africa, Egypt, China, and whatever other parts of the world may yet remain!

The craze surely will pass before long; the hollow pretence will expose itself. These fatuous Empires, with their parade of power and their absolute lack of any real policy—this British Lion, these German, American, French, and Russian Eagles—these birds and beasts of prey—with their barbaric notions of Greed and War, their impossible armaments, and their swift financial ruin impending over them—will fall and be rent asunder. The hollow masks of them will perish. *And the sooner the better.* But underneath surely there will be rejoicing, for it will be found that so after all the real peoples of the earth have come one degree nearer together—yes, one degree nearer together.

MR. COURTNEY ON "THE PASSION FOR ASCENDANCY."

Mr. Leonard Courtney presided on Tuesday night at the first of a course of eight lectures on "Empire or Democracy," to be delivered by Mr. G. H. Perris at the South Place Institute, Finsbury, London. There was a large attendance.

Mr. Courtney said the subject of the lecture was practically the constitution of political society. That was not the name which Mr. Perris gave to his lecture, but when they got to the base of his disquisition they would find he was engaged with this great problem—Was political society to be conducted for all, with the mastery of the few and the subjection of the many, or was it to be developed as a community in which through equal conditions, and if possible, equal opportunities, there should be given to each a position as that of brother in the great task which was to be fulfilled by humanity as a whole? Were we, in fact, to regard the future of the world as a struggle for ascendancy or as a development of fraternal international well-being? He was afraid they could not conceal from themselves the truth that in the past the great principle of action had been the passion for ascendancy—that Empires had been founded upon that principle, had grown into greatness according to the ordinary standards of the world, and, it must be added, had passed away, because he believed it was not a mere rhetorical expression—it was not a mere quotation from the book, resting on its own authority—it was the expression of the everlasting truth that "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Within the actual performance of the process through which they had gained their ascendancy might also be found this certainty of their destruction. They must admit sorrowfully that that had been to a large extent the explanation of the growth and development of many of the Empires of the past, and they might have to go further and say it had been the same in no small degree of the growth of this which they called the British Empire, of which they were so accustomed to be proud. Up to the end of the last century it might be said that mastery and predominance were the things aimed at by the rulers of Great Britain as much as they were aimed at by the rulers of the Empires that had passed away. A poet of the last century, describing our race, said:—

> I see the lords of human kind pass by,
> Pride in their eye.

Pride and defiance soon become pride and mastery. These had been very much interwoven with the past history of our time, and certainly were predominant in the motives of political personages in our history, as in other history. But they had hoped that they had lived through that period of desire for mastery, and had come rather to desire the development of brotherhood among nations. They thought that they had discovered the principle which showed that communities prospered through the prosperity of one another, and not through the destruction of rivals; that the best way to secure our own well-being was to allow others to progress in well-being. (Applause.) What was sometimes sneered at as the mere pounds-shillings-and-pence basis of the Manchester school was in fact a belief extending far beyond the persons who were the eminent leaders and members of that school. It was, they might almost say, the belief of a generation which was in vigour some fifty years ago. That there had been a reaction they could not deny, but if they had faith, which he thought he saw spreading among the people, and not least luminously among the lower classes of society, they might be confident that there would recur the same belief which was held by their fathers and grandfathers, and that the principles which ran through Europe and America in 1840 and 1850 would recover their power. There were persons who were desirous continually to form combinations of power over the world which should rule vast spaces of the globe. Surely the future in this as in so many other respects would take care of itself. People, if they were freed from the passion for mastery, if they possessed rather a respect for others than a desire for the assertion of themselves, might combine, separate, and re-combine freely, and in every process they would see some step forward. It was a comfort, he thought, to be able to see in the progress of our own colonies something of this process, this flux and reflux, because it inspired them with the belief that even the combination which at present made for power, and power alone, would probably come to serve some better purpose in the future. If the union of British communities throughout the several continents was to become merely the joining together of the forces of British people for the overcoming of those who were not British then he confessed that the federation of the future which must come about would threaten to be an Empire to be regarded with the same distrust, and to be attended with the same fate as had befallen other Empires. The supposed patriotic feeling which was so good when it was the feeling of union with strength against any attempt to master our own life became a thing not to be admired but a thing to be fought against and overcome if it was converted into machinery for overpowering the life of others. (Applause.)

Mr. Perris then delivered his lecture, which dealt particularly with Imperialism in history.

[1] See recommendations of Sir James Caird, in his Report.

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON INDIAN QUESTIONS.

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE.

On October 15 Miss Alison Garland addressed the members of the East Toxteth Women's Liberal Association at Liverpool, on the Famine and the present condition of the people in India. Miss Bowring, President of the Association, presided.

On October 16 Miss Garland addressed the annual meeting of the Nottingham Women's Liberal Union at Castle Gate Lecture Hall, Nottingham. Mrs. Yoxall, wife of the Liberal M.P. for Nottingham, presided over a large attendance, the large hall being quite full. Miss Garland dealt with the economic condition of the Indian people, urging an immediate Parliamentary grant, and that more attention should be given by our rulers to the needs of India.

On October 18 Miss Garland addressed a meeting at Ashton under-Lyne.

On October 21 Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji addressed a meeting at Croydon.

Meetings on behalf of the British Committee have been arranged as follows:—

Oct. 25, Cranlington, Northumberland.
,, 29, Woodburn.
,, 30, Cambo.
Nov. 2, Hayward's Heath.
,, 3, Tunbridge Wells.
,, 7, St. Alban's.
,, 9, Petersfield Literary and Debating Society.
,, 13, Burnley.
,, 15, Stalybridge.
,, 27, Manchester.
,, 28, Egremont.
Dec. 6, St. Nathaniel's Y.M.S., Liverpool.
1901.
Jan. 15, Hipperholme and Lightcliffe W.L.A.

Open Letters to Lord Curzon
ON FAMINES IN INDIA.

By ROMESH C. DUTT, C.I.E.

London: KEGAN PAUL & Co., price 7/6. Obtainable in India through any bookseller.

"Mr. R. C. Dutt's volume is extremely opportune at the present time, and his position, that an excessive land tax renders the agricultural population unable to face two or three successive years of drought, calls at least for careful examination. . . . Mr. Dutt is on less debatable ground in pleading for a reduction of the annual drain to England and for the more extended employment of the Indians in civil employ."—*The Times.*

"Mr. Dutt succeeds in showing that, on the whole, areas of recurrent famine have been identical with those of excessive assessment."—*The Daily News.*

"Nothing could be better than the book on Indian Famines which Mr. Dutt has just published in the form of some Open Letters to Lord Curzon. It is thoroughly informed, well-reasoned, and temperate; it tells the enquiring man exactly what he ought to know."—*The Daily Chronicle.*

"We would draw special attention to Mr. Dutt's own convincing and eloquent plea, hidden away in the final pages of the appendix, for the creation of such representative institutions as should enable the Government of India to utilise native services and keep abreast of native opinion."—*The Manchester Guardian.*

"His recommendations are that the land tax should be moderated, that irrigation works should be constructed, and that the public debt and the public expenditure of India should be reduced. These proposals he supports with a wealth of detail of all kinds, which proves his mastery of the subject and makes good his claim to the attention of the governing authorities."—*The World.*

"His view that it is inequitable to make India pay for the maintenance of a large army to be used for the general purposes of the Empire has the support of many high authorities who are by no means to be described as Little Englanders."—*Literature.*

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