

India

FOR THE

NO. 96. NEW SERIES.
NO. 190. OLD SERIES.

WEEK ENDING FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1899.

[REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER. PRICE, 2D. BY POST, 4D.]

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NOTES AND NEWS.

MR. ROMESH CHUNDER DUTT, C.I.E., we have the pleasure to announce, has been offered and has accepted the office of President of the fifteenth Indian National Congress, which meets at Lucknow at the end of December next. Mr. Dutt is just turned 50, having been born in Calcutta in 1848. His great-uncle, Rosomoy Dutt, was the first Indian that rose to be a Judge on the Calcutta Bench. His father, Isan Chandra Dutt, was one of the first Indian Deputy Collectors when that post was opened to the Indians by Lord William Bentinck. Educated at Hare School and the Presidency College, Calcutta, Mr. Dutt came to England in 1868, with his friends, Messrs. B. L. Gupta and Surendra Nath Banerjee, and took third place in the Indian Civil Service examination in 1869. Returning to India in 1871, he worked up to the post of District Officer in 1882, a post that he was the only Indian gentleman to hold for a considerable period. During the Ilbert Bill agitation, 1883-85, he strongly supported Mr. (now Sir) Antony MacDonnell in fighting the battle of the cultivators when the Bengal Tenancy Bill was before the Council. In 1893, Mr. Dutt was decorated C.I.E., and next year he was made Commissioner of a Division—a rank that has never yet been reached by any other Native of India. In 1895-96, he was Commissioner of Orissa and Superintendent of Tributary States in Orissa. He retired from the Service in 1897.

With the busy occupation of his official career, Mr. Dutt was always diligent with his pen. He published several historical novels in Bengali, which are now considered to rank as classics in Bengal. He translated the venerable "Rig-Veda" into his native Bengali, compiled a selection of sacred Indian literature, and wrote the first connected history of "Ancient India." Recently he published a condensed metrical translation into English of the "Maha-Bharata," and a like translation of the Ramayana is, we believe, now in the press. Mr. Dutt has naturally been honoured in literary circles. He is a Fellow of the University of Calcutta, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and a Member of the Royal Asiatic Society. He is also a Member of the English Bar. No man could be more competent to deal with the Land Revenue system, or with the fitness of his Indian fellow-countrymen for local self-government, and we should hope that he will have something to say on these important subjects in his Presidential Address.

Lord Curzon started from Simla on October 27 to tour through Central India and Rajputana, with the laudable object of seeing with his own eyes the condition of the people suffering from famine and the measures adopted for their relief. At that date, the numbers on the relief lists were 521,000, as against 392,000 reported three days before. Either the increase is precipitate, or the record is coming to be more exhaustive. All one can do is to take the bare figures as they come. But it is exceedingly unfortunate that the British public is getting no definite or clear information as to the progress of the famine, and only the scantiest possible information of any sort. Reuter is even so distressingly vacant as to waste precious space upon the statement that Lord Curzon told the Delhi

municipality that "the good management of local affairs is the true function of a municipality." Surely even Lord Curzon was not so dreadfully banal as that; and, if he was, the British public did not need to be instructed that he had subjected himself to Molière's proverbial sarcasm. They would have valued ten times as highly a really instructive word about the famine.

One must have recourse to the Indian papers, and these are three weeks after date. On October 6, the Bombay correspondent of the *Pioneer* reported that "the suffering in Khandesh from the failure of the rains is severe," and that "there is great unrest among the population, and serious dacoities have been effected in the district," "robberies on the high road being frequent." At Branch "the position is very serious" (October 5). At Ahmedabad (October 9), the Police-Superintendent and the Collector are said to have hurried off to check about a hundred Bhils in a contemplated raid upon the town of Modassa. At Nagpur, "prospects are worse than in 1896" (October 8); and the troops had to be called out to overawe a tendency to riot, which is said to be fostered by the fact that the Marwaris "are selling grain at quintuple profit." The *Bombay Gazette* supplies a serviceable summary of the local measures of relief. Large numbers of the population of the desert Talukas of the Thar and Parkar District of Sind "have emigrated into the interior of Sind, where canal clearance and other useful works connected with agriculture and irrigation are being provided for them"; and "about 70,000 people from Cutch, Marwar, and other places have also emigrated into Sind." Special orders have been issued for the application of forest areas to the use of the populations. Even such slight glimpses indicate how severely the distress is trying the temper and the endurance of the people, and how disastrously it is dislocating social conditions.

It is commonly said by the Anglo-Indian Press that the Congress and the Congress journals have no influence with and no right to speak for "the dumb millions" of their fellow-countrymen. This had seemed almost an article of the Anglo-Indian creed. Yet in a recent issue the *Pioneer* abandons the position so long held, and acknowledges—nay, insists on—the power of "an unscrupulous and malignant section of the Native Press, whose disaffected spirit is fostered by a sheet published in London." The truth seems to be that our contemporary, stung by the many undeniable cases of outrage by Europeans upon Indians, is ready for any shift in order to draw off public attention to another track. This it tries to do in two ways: (1) by accusing its opponents of refusing to accept the verdicts of juries and of libelling the British soldier; and (2) by calling attention to assaults by Indians on Europeans, and attributing them to race hatred stirred up by a wicked Press. It accuses Lord Stanley of Alderley of treating as guilty those whom the law had declared innocent. He did nothing of the kind. He drew attention to outrages; and the fact that, as in the Rangoon case, A or B was found not guilty, does not in the least prove that no outrage had taken place. In many cases, as at Rangoon, there has been ample evidence that a crime has been committed, however difficult it might be to bring the guilt home to any individual.

As to the idea that the Indian Press, and more especially this journal, goes out of its way to libel the British soldier, it is sufficient for our part to call attention to the article on "The Lessons of the Rangoon Outrage," which appeared in our issue of October 6. This was certainly no stronger than much that appeared in our Anglo-Indian contemporaries, the *Pioneer* included, on the same subject, and it was far from containing any abuse of the British race or the British soldier. On the contrary, we spoke of

"his natural good temper and kindness of heart," when untouched by that contempt for the people of the country so common among Anglo-Indians. It was not on the soldier that we were inclined to lay the chief blame. One curious defence offered by the *Pioneer* deserves remark. The soldier, we are told,

judges of the general effect of a blow or a kick by its effect upon himself, and it sometimes happens that he causes the death of a servant by a blow which would hardly cause an English boy fourteen years old to wince.

But as the boys in the army are protected against these interesting experiments, it is not possible to protect also those Indians who may be brought into contact with our soldiers? The *Pioneer* goes on to say:—

Commanding officers nowadays are, as a rule, very particular about issuing careful instructions as to the danger of striking or kicking Natives. . . .

Observe the "nowadays." It would seem that after all our care in reporting cases of assaults on Indians has not been in vain.

But, according to our contemporary, our efforts have had another result. We have managed so to stir the timid villagers that they assault Europeans from no motive but race hatred. And the *Pioneer* despairs of turning us from our evil ways, even though the loss of India should result. It seems we had no idea of our power. Our contemporary has even discovered a case where the villagers, after trying in vain to tempt an English officer to shoot them, actually sent their women and children on the same mission; and it goes on to suggest that Sir Antony MacDonnell should impose a punitive police force on the village of Ujah Bearah. Without doubting the officer's good faith, one finds it hard to believe that he was not mistaken. As the *Hindu* observes:—

The Indian villager is yet to be born who can think of baiting an enemy with his womankind.

But it seems that the authorities are very far from taking the view that the soldier when out shooting is usually the innocent victim of Indian malice. They have deemed it their duty to lay down stringent rules intended to protect the people, the latest of which is one prohibiting the use of the .303 and similar rifles for sporting purposes; for as the *Pioneer* says:—

In a flat country, most of it densely populated, it is certain that the modern small bore rifle, with its immense range, is a weapon that can only be safely trusted in the hands of an experienced, cool-headed sportsman.

Rifles of immense range in the hands of soldiers who, whatever their other virtues, were not cool-headed would account for a good deal of friction without the necessity of falling back on "race hatred." Encouraged by this excellent intervention of the Government of India, we shall certainly continue on our course, aided by the occasional, but always welcome, assistance of the *Pioneer*.

The *Friend of India* has a strong article on the Indian Uitlanders of Natal. It insists that

the grievances alleged by the British Uitlanders of Johannesburg against the Transvaal Government are altogether insignificant compared with those to which Natives of this country have for years past been subjected by the British colonists of Natal.

And it judges from the readiness of the Government to take up arms to redress the former, that

it measures justice as between the British Uitlander and an alien Government and justice as between the Indian Uitlander and one of its own Colonial Governments by two widely different standards.

The Indians in Natal petitioned for the right of appeal to the Supreme Court against the decisions of local boards and town councils under the Dealers' Licence Act. It appears probable from a letter addressed by the Natal Government to the local board of Ladysmith—name then unknown and now famous—that Mr. Chamberlain has warned the Colonial authorities that if the local boards do not administer the Act with discretion, the right of appeal must be granted. But the *Friend of India* naturally thinks that this is a most unsatisfactory way out of the difficulty, more likely to result in the local boards searching for plausible reasons for refusal than in the consideration of cases on their merits; so that the Indians will be worse off than before, with equal injustice, less scandal, and consequently the right of appeal further off than ever.

The *Englishman*, we are glad to see, still keeps an eye upon the injustices suffered by British Indians in South Africa. Observing that these injustices constitute one of

the principal items in Sir Alfred Milner's catalogue of grievances against the Transvaal, our contemporary quite agrees that this should be so, and goes on to say:—

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that in the British Colony of Natal, their lot is not much better, and that, although Mr. Chamberlain is about to demonstrate his ability to coerce the Transvaal to concede the franchise to the Uitlanders, he has hitherto found it impracticable to either persuade or compel the colonists of Natal to extend to their Indian fellow-subjects the barest measure of British justice. There can be no doubt that, if we go to war with the Transvaal, it will be partly because the High Commissioner has declared that British Indians are being hatefully oppressed. We should be able to fight the Boers a good deal more heartily if we were not conscious that we are forcing them to do what hitherto we have failed to do ourselves.

Whatever importance is attached to the Boer treatment of British Indians as an element in the pretext for the war, the question of their position in South Africa, and especially in Natal, must come up very prominently the moment the din of war ceases. The scandal is too grave for tolerance.

A correspondent of the *Indian Mirror* (September 27) makes just complaint of a passage in Nelson's "New Royal Reader, No. III., Royal School Series." The lesson is entitled "The English Girl and her Ayah." On the appearance of a fierce tiger, the English girl is supported by her faith in God, while her Ayah can only utter a terrified scream of blank despair. The passage runs:—

The little child could feel, as the Hindu could not, that even in that lone jungle a great and loving friend was beside her.

The correspondent cites several well-known English writers as testifying to the religious feeling of Hindus. For example, Sir Herbert Edwardes:—

Religion is to the Native a reality; it is the thread of his life. All his daily acts are beads strung upon that string. His festivals, his feasts, his fasts, his ceremonies, his domestic events, all enter into his religion; it is the backbone of his existence.

It is a pity that this foolish piece of ignorance should have place in an otherwise excellent school-book, and we have no doubt that Messrs. Nelson will at once rectify the blunder. The correspondent further points out that "fully 90 per cent. of the Ayahs who serve English masters are Mahometans and Christians, the remaining 10 per cent. being of the very lowest classes of Hindu out-castes." But English folk are exceedingly slow to learn such things, even when they mean to write about them.

Two servants of the Government have won golden opinions among Indians of late. One is Mr. Fry, the District Judge of Ahmedabad, who has recently reversed the decision of a first-class magistrate, finding the editor of the *Kheda Vartman* guilty of defamation. It will be remembered that that paper complained of the conduct of a revenue official. Mr. Fry held that the article in question was written and published in good faith, and he added:—

It was of course for the public good that credible allegations of high-handedness or illegality on the part of a public servant should be brought to light.

The other is Mr. Ibbetson, Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces, who, according to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, has been calling attention to the wrong done to those who are prosecuted for offences at once technical and trivial. Of 12,000 prosecuted in his jurisdiction, 9,000 were acquitted or discharged, and had thus to stand all the trouble and disgrace undeservedly.

The *Hindu*, while anxious that full punishment should be meted out to the guilty in the Tinnevely Riots Case, at the same time points out the great responsibility incurred by the Government in suspending trial by jury. That guarantee having been taken from the innocent, it is all the more necessary that all other safeguards should be rigidly observed. It believes that the police have been given a very free hand in getting up cases, and it therefore hears with some alarm that complaints are being made that prisoners charged with murder and other serious offences have not been furnished with records—such as the police charge-sheets and the preliminary register of the committing magistrate—without which proper cross-examination of witnesses is impossible. Worse still, it is said that the sub-gaol superintendent at Satur refused to allow the prisoners to see their lawyers till one or two days before their committal.

The cattle in Gujarat and Kathiawar are, as our Bombay-

correspondent states elsewhere, dying by thousands from want of fodder and water. Mr. Lely, the Commissioner, to whose untiring exertions in this matter the *Champion* bears testimony, appeals for subscriptions to convey the beasts to the Thana Forest where the Government have consented to let them graze free of charge. But our contemporary, while warmly endorsing the appeal, doubts if this will be sufficient, and suggests that the Government which is vitally interested in the cattle, as landlord if in no other way, should advance the money necessary for their transport.

The crisis in the Bombay mill industry, which has come on the top of other troubles, is said to exceed in difficulty and perplexity any like experience of the last twenty years. In consequence of the failure of the rains, the price of the raw cotton has gone up 30 to 50 per cent. during the past three months. The price of yarn has advanced some 10 per cent., but the advance has curtailed sales, the market being "restricted through the indigence of the general population caused by the prevailing scarcity." The pinch coincides with a tendency to lower prices produced by the accumulation of stocks in the Indian, Japanese, and Chinese markets. Consequently a large group of mills, probably influential enough to control general action, have decided to work only four days a week. Here is a serious deepening of the gloom in the homes of the Bombay mill operatives; "their earnings," as the *Bombay Gazette* remarks, "will be diminished by 40 per cent. at a time when they have to pay an enhanced price for food grains." It is but the last grim comfort that the reduced wage will at any rate "keep the wolf from the door." This special phase of the famine shows how subtly the effects penetrate throughout the social fabric.

There is a further and deeper aspect of the mischief which the *Bombay Gazette* has not been slow to point out and to utilise. Our contemporary quotes the opinion of Mr. H. M. Mehta, of Messrs. Framji Hormusji and Co., that the difficulties besetting the yarn trade and the spinning industry of India are "not at all transitory," but, on the contrary, "are certain to endure and to increase."

The competition of the China and Japan mills is daily growing in strength and intensity, and no short-time movement adopted exclusively by the Indian mills, while those of China and Japan run full time, will relieve the present congestion. Indeed, such a measure might increase the over-supply, for any curtailment of production in India would instantly be made good by the mills of China and Japan.

What then? "The Bombay mills, within easy access of the cotton-producing districts, have a great advantage over their rivals in the Farther East, which have to obtain the chief portion of the raw material for the coarser counts from India." Therefore, cripple them at this point. Invoke Protection. Clap on an export duty. Thus:—

It is argued that India has a full right to protect an important Native industry against foreign competition, and that an export duty on raw cotton, shipped from Bombay to the Far East, would at once restore to the Indian mills their former prosperity.

Will Lord Curzon "see his way to once again flout the high-priests who mutter at the free-trade shrine"? He has a precedent in the Burma export duty on rice. Yes, it is very plain that the economic education of its rulers will cost India a very severe price. Must we really have to undergo a repetition of the stale argumentation on the sugar question?

To famine, plague, and earthquake is now added the destructive cyclone which on September 24 spread a desolating flood over some seventy-five square miles of the District of Bhagalpur. The violence of the wind seems to have driven back the rivers Cheeka and Kudia, tributaries of the Ganges, so as to form a ten-foot wall of water, which swept down towards the Ganges, carrying with it some 550 (if not many more) people and from five to six thousand cattle, and levelling some eight or nine thousand houses. The Monghyr correspondent of the *Englishman* places the loss of life immensely higher, and describes the whole country between Colgong and Gogah as "a vast charnel-house." A Native correspondent of the same paper says "dead mothers were seen floating down the stream with their little ones clasped round their bosoms." The descent of some of the bodies by Calcutta afforded the first intimation there of the catastrophe. A subscription has been actively got up at Bhagalpur, and

the Commissioner has placed at the disposal of the Collector a sum to be advanced to the cultivators for purchase of cattle and ploughs. It is said that such a calamity has not visited the place during the past twenty-four years.

In regard to the revision of the Assam Labour Act, Mr. Cotton and Sir Charles Lyall have considerable differences of opinion. Mr. Cotton thinks that some days should elapse between the initial registration and the entering into the contract, that the contract should be entered into in the district of recruitment and not at a depot, and that for those recruited at the plantations a period—six months is the minimum suggestion—should elapse after the coolie has joined the plantation before he is irrevocably bound to continue his service. Sir Charles, on the contrary, would keep the depot at Dhubri as a contracting centre, provided that rejected recruits were repatriated at the contractor's expense, and he does not think the third provision practicable. The *Friend of India* regrets that Mr. Cotton seems inclined to give way on this point, and in regard to the first provision wishes that he would go still further and insist that the registration of a labourer should be publicly notified in his village some days before the contract is executed:—

Nothing short of these combined precautions will, in our opinion, be a sufficient safeguard against the virtual kidnapping of coolies which at present goes on.

And yet we are told that slavery cannot exist on British soil.

Our readers will remember the loss to men and suffering to beasts caused by the impressment of transport animals in the late war beyond the North-West Frontier. The Bebeji Mishmi expedition is now causing much misery to the inhabitants of the Khasia and Jaintia hills. According to a correspondent of the *Friend of India*, who writes under the heading, "Coolie Impressment in Assam," the people are "scared," remembering their experience when impressed on former occasions, and such numbers have gone into hiding that though it is the season for planting the second potato crop the fields cannot be attended to.

That is no doubt a very good detective story which a correspondent of the *Pioneer* tells about the recovery of certain Government rifles recently stolen at Abbottabad. The Deputy-Inspector of Police at Abbottabad, a keen Mahometan officer, traced the rifles to a neighbouring village called Sheikaubandi, where he employed a trans-border Pathan, familiar with the Hazara *patois*, to visit the place in the guise of a Mussulman devotee collecting arms and ammunition for the extermination of the infidel English. This emissary soon got into negotiations with a sanctified scoundrel, a double-dyed Haji called Jilal, who sold him eventually one rifle and made preliminary arrangements for disposing of two more to him. The Haji was, of course, pounced upon by the Abbottabad police officer, who relieved him of the price obtained for the rifle sold, and discovered two more of the stolen rifles "in the prisoner's house, hidden in the recess of a wall under a board which had been thickly plastered over." Diamond cut diamond. But, after all, the case does not seem to afford any guidance for the future. Probably the main principle yet is that prevention is better than cure.

Mr. Mackenzie, the acting Resident in Travancore, thus bears testimony to the good government of that State:—

Three months ago when I heard that I was to come here as Resident I had never set foot in a Native State, and I must honestly admit that my ideas regarding Native States was a notion that we managed things better in British India. Thus I set out to come here in a tolerant spirit, not expecting much and quite prepared to make allowances for anything that fell short of the standard to which I was accustomed. But from the moment I crossed the frontier, from the moment when I escaped from that road for which the Tinnevely District Board I held responsible and entered upon that smooth highway by Nagercoil . . . my life in the Travancore and Cochin States has been one series of pleasant surprises in finding points in which these States are level with or are even ahead of the administration of British districts.

And be it remembered that Travancore has a greater density and a more rapid increase of population than British India. We take the above report from an excellent article on Travancore which has appeared in the *Hindu*.

"LIBERAL IMPERIALISM" AND INDIA.

LORD ROSEBERY is always sure of an attentive hearing. The great position which he attained at an age which to us seems young, whatever it might have seemed to the contemporaries of William Pitt, and his great gift of expression have always made him an object of interest to the public, even to that part of the public which usually disregards politics and politicians. It is not surprising therefore that the speeches which he made at Bath on the occasion of the commemoration of the Earl of Chatham and his equally famous son should have been a subject of widespread comment, more especially that sentence in which he ventured on a bold prophecy of the political future and predicted that in ten years' time the destinies of the country would be controlled by "Liberal Imperialism." It is no doubt an advantage to have full confidence. Had some of Lord Rosebery's opponents had an equal assurance in their own faith and its speedy triumph, that triumph might have been much nearer. But even amongst those who cheered Lord Rosebery's words there must have been some who were inclined to ask in what "Liberal" Imperialism differed from the Imperialism of the present Government. Not certainly in being carried out by persons calling themselves Liberals, for we believe the Colonial Secretary has never repudiated that denomination. "Liberal" Imperialism, then, must mean an Imperialism based on Liberal principles, an empire with a Liberal policy and Liberal institutions. It would perhaps be of interest to enquire how far this ideal has been attained, and to what extent the so-called "Liberal" Imperialists have been ready to act up to their name. This it is our purpose to do, if not for the whole Empire at least for India, the most populous of the possessions of the British crown.

It would seem that the policy of Liberal Imperialism, if it is to be worthy of its name, must be in accordance with three principles: (1) that policy must aim at the extension of free institutions; (2) the interests of no portion must be sacrificed to that of another, and all must bear their fair share of the common dangers and the common burdens; and (3) the citizenship of every part of the empire must be open to all subjects of the Queen, and not one of her subjects must be treated as an alien anywhere within her dominions. It is to be feared that in each of these points it will be found so far as India is concerned—and it is only with India that we deal here—not only that the policy pursued is different and in some cases opposite, but that this illiberal policy has not been actively opposed by those who glory in the name of "Liberal Imperialists," and that when some of those who are satisfied to call themselves Liberals alone have raised these questions and endeavoured to fight the tide of reaction they have received no countenance from the Imperialist section of their party, but rather hostility and opprobrium. It is not our intention to consider whether our whole system of government in India is consistent with the principles that have been for so long a time identified with the Liberal party; but there are three points on which those principles have lately been flagrantly violated in India. It has been the professed aim of that party to enlarge and popularise local self-government, to strengthen and extend the freedom of the Press, and to secure to all prisoners a fair and open trial. Now each and all of these have been endangered under the present Government. It has been their aim to diminish the liberties accorded under the rule of Lord Ripon, and everywhere to increase the power of the officials in municipal life. In the province of Bombay a Bill has just been introduced to give the officials more authority in district municipalities, while in Calcutta, in spite of the vigorous protests of the elected representatives of the people, an Act has been passed which must have the effect of placing the representatives of the Indian population in a minority both in the council and in the executive. It is, indeed, a possible line of argument that popular liberties, though suitable for England, are unsuited to India; but if Liberalism is to be for England only and not for the Empire, what place is there for "Liberal Imperialism" and how does it differ from Imperialism of any other shade? The Calcutta municipality, like councils and corporations at home, has, no doubt, made some mistakes, though by the admission even of its enemies it has done valuable work. How, then, on any definition of Liberalism can its

practical abolition as a popular institution be justified, unless it be held that any civic corporation or county council in England which in the opinion of the Government has made mistakes is also to lose its popular character? This, be it remembered, is no question of the setting up of a new institution freshly imported from Europe. A great Liberal statesman, basing himself on the best traditions of his party, conceived that it was his duty to open municipal life to the people of India, and entrust to some small extent the destiny of its cities to the suffrages of the citizens. A reactionary Government has succeeded in altering this in the capital of India. What have the Liberal Imperialists done to uphold the work of the Liberals of the past, and the traditions of freedom which they profess to represent? But this is not the only case in which they have been found wanting. A long line of Anglo-Indian statesmen have respected the liberty of the Press; for they have felt that in a country where so many barriers exist between ruler and ruled it is of the first importance to keep open all channels by which the former may get to know the wishes, the thoughts, and the feelings of the latter. The attempt of Lord Lytton to shackle the vernacular Press, which alone broke this long tradition, was promptly repealed by his successor, and it remained for the present Government, by its prosecutions and its amendment of the law of sedition, to resume the policy of repression. Nor is it a question of prosecution alone. It is difficult to imagine anything more odious to Liberals than imprisonment without trial; yet this has been the fate of the Natus under British rule. Nay, the Natus are even yet deprived of their full liberty. They are even yet confined to a plague-stricken district and denied the opportunity of defending their character or learning the cause of their sufferings. Yet what protest has come from the ranks of the "Liberal Imperialists" against this intolerable wrong?

To turn now to the second point of an Imperialist Liberal policy, the fair apportionment of the burdens of empire, it may be perhaps that here the Liberal Imperialists have not been so entirely silent as they have been in defence of the internal liberties of India. Yet, at the very least, they have left the main battle to others. It was not from Imperialists that the cry of indignation was loudest when, in the midst of her sore distress, stricken at once by pestilence and famine, India was left to bear the whole burden of the war beyond the frontier, which it was admitted on all sides was a matter of Imperial concern; nor has it been from Lord Rosebery and his supporters that we have heard a protest against poverty-stricken India having to keep up an army larger than she needs in order to supply troops to fight for the empire in South Africa or elsewhere. As India has borne the whole charge of the war beyond her North-West frontier, she might at least have hoped that that was sufficient contribution to the empire's needs. Yet in the past she has had to pay troops when actually fighting far from her shores. Nor is she much better off now, since she has to support soldiers in peace to be used elsewhere in war. Australia gives what she likes and when she likes to Imperial armaments, and only a modest contribution at any time; and yet if we compare the resources of the two lands, Australia and India, it is not difficult to see which could spare the more. Contrast the average income of the Indian and the Australian, the comparative wealth and prosperity of the Southern Continent, the poverty and misery of India, and then put side by side what each contributes directly or indirectly to Imperial needs, and who will say that the balance is held fair? Yet if Australia offers a few hundred men to serve out of her boundaries, all the Imperialists, Liberal or otherwise, fling up their hats and call the world to witness the solidarity of the empire and the sacrifices of her patriot sons.

As to the third test of "Liberal Imperialism," that full citizenship should be open to the Queen's subjects throughout the empire, and that no distinction should be made by the laws between those coming from one part and those from another, it is unnecessary to tell readers of INDIA in how many places the principle is set at naught. New South Wales and West Australia, Rhodesia, Zululand, and Natal discriminate against the Indian, subject him to insult and annoyance, nay, even try to keep him outside of their bounds, and to deprive him of his livelihood, if he has succeeded in entering. The name of Ladysmith is now famous, and will take its place whether for good or

ill in the annals of empire, but it had already attracted some attention from the unfair way in which its local authorities administered an Act directed against Indian traders. It is on the very soil thus foul with injustice that English soldiers are now shedding their blood.

And all this has evoked no protest from the "Liberal Imperialists." They join willingly in lauding the men of New South Wales who set at defiance one of the cardinal principles of a Liberal empire, but they shout down those who endeavour to get these principles carried into practice. Empire-makers are their heroes; and provided the empire is vast they care little if it be free. They leave to those who are indifferent to empire the task of vindicating liberty. It would seem as if there were an incompatibility between liberty and empire, but if that be so, then Liberal Imperialism is an empty dream.

LORD SANDHURST'S SUCCESSOR.

THE speculations of the quidnuncs as to the successor of Lord Sandhurst have been peremptorily cut short by the announcement of the appointment of Sir Stafford Northcote. About a couple of months ago both the *Times of India* and the *Pioneer* poured chilling cold water upon the suggestion of Sir Stafford's name, but probably they will not find it difficult to accept him as the gift of the home authorities. The *Pioneer*, very naturally, and, to our mind, with eminently good reason, spoke up strongly for Sir Antony MacDonnell; and we should have willingly accepted, as an alternative to Sir Antony, Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, the Chief Commissioner of Assam. Either of these markedly able and sympathetic men would have put a strong hand on the helm in the troubled waters ahead in the Bombay Presidency. But, as we pointed out, the chances were all against the promotion of a Civilian. We do not think that since the time of Warren Hastings there have been more than two civilians elevated to the Viceroyalty—Sir John Shore and Sir John Lawrence—and in each case the elevation was due to very special circumstances. Sir John Lawrence being actually passed over in the first instance in favour of Lord Elgin! The same principle of sending out a slip of nobility with more or less official training and experience has been followed in the local Governorships, though with more frequent exceptions. Such melancholy examples, therefore, as the Wenlocks and the Harries, are all in the regular routine of Imperial policy. Hence, as Lord Cranborne (now Lord Salisbury) once remarked with caustic frankness, "it is open to other nations to doubt whether it is possible under any circumstances that the English nation can learn the art of government." But, for all that, we must not prejudice any man. Unpromising as Lord Curzon himself seemed to be, we are free to acknowledge that, in spite of some deplorable lapses, he has largely bettered expectations in not a few important particulars, and may yet prove himself a second Mayo. It all depends upon what is in the man. We will, therefore, hope resolutely for the best in the case of Sir Stafford Northcote.

Sir Stafford is of the mature age of fifty-three. On the face of it this qualification rather tells against him, for he has to face a most arduous term of office under physically exhausting conditions to which he has never yet been subjected. He is not without experience of administrative as well as legislative work. From his youth up he has been more or less intimately associated with the practical handling of public affairs in various departments, and we believe he has been a diligent and serious learner. He has seen the interior working of the Foreign Office; he has been Private Secretary to a Chancellor of the Exchequer and to a Foreign Secretary; he has been Financial Secretary to the War Office; and he has sat in Parliament. Withal he has been blessed with a large share of his father's fine disposition, and will bring to his delicate and difficult duties the prime gift of sympathy. If one may venture to infer hereditary qualities not explicitly manifested, one would anticipate that he possesses a soft invincibility. In that case all will yet be well. But we must postulate a will of his own—as much velvet as may be needed, but the steel underneath, invincible. The bottom reason for sending out a Governor from England lies in the fundamental necessity for seeing things with a fresh eye, an eye not clouded with Anglo-Indian prejudices. But the freshness of vision is naught unless there be also

a firm will to give it practical effect. Not even the firmest will, we are painfully aware, can always stand up against the steady and universal persistence of officialdom, urged in multitudinous ways mostly indirect and insidious. No fair critic will be stern to mark every fall so long as he sees a conscientious effort for the right. Sir Stafford, we hope, is not the man tamely to say ditto to Mr. Nugent.

There is a vast deal in heredity, and Sir Stafford has been fortunate in his choice of a father. Sir Stafford the First—the First for present purposes—left a memorable record in the history of Indian government, a record that contrasts severely with our recent experience of his successors in the Secretaryship for India. He was entirely in accord with Sir John Lawrence on the fundamental question of frontier and transfrontier policy; he was never bitten into Russophobia. On questions of internal administration, he was keen for free development within the reasonable powers of the purse, and in accordance with Indian feeling and even Indian prejudice. His policy was "that of localising our administration as much as possible, and adapting it to the wants and the prejudices of each district, introducing our own ideas with great caution and forbearance." He was thus the leading spirit in effecting a large decentralisation, which has worked less satisfactorily than it ought to have worked simply because other parts of his system of government have been perverted. With clear insight and noble magnanimity he was always on the side of the Indians in questions of fair treatment, and showed himself perfectly disposed to carry into full effect the solemn promises of the Proclamation of 1858. "I am myself of opinion," he wrote to Sir John Lawrence in 1867, "that some plan should be adopted for rendering it easier than it is at present for Natives to gain appointments in the Covenanted Service." "It seems a mockery," he wrote to Lord Napier, "to tell them to come and compete in Westminster if they like." And, again, "It is not pleasant for me," he said in his speech on the Government of India Act Amendment Bill in 1868, "to say that in the Uncovenanted Service the proportion of Englishmen to Native officials is six to one." In no department did Sir Stafford's sympathy and justice shine more brightly than in his treatment of financial matters. Especially, as Mr. Lang remarks, he "was most anxious, as much as possible, to shift the burdens of the poor (who are not always very articulate in India) on to the broader but reluctant shoulders of the very articulate rich;" and the attitude of Anglo-Indians towards the institution of an income-tax "filled him with indignation and disgust." When such slow advances were made with Sir Stafford Northcote as Indian Secretary and Sir John Lawrence as Viceroy, and both in substantial agreement on all questions of main importance, one may partly measure the dead weight of opposition to be encountered by administrators who desire to give effect to the principles of reason and justice in the conduct of Indian affairs.

The Governor designate of Bombay will sorely need all the strength and comfort derivable from the admirable record of his distinguished father. Plunged into a maze of unfamiliar questions, and surrounded by Anglo-Indian officials conversant with all the details and full of ideas strange to him, he will require both a cool head and a firm nerve to maintain the independence of judgment that is the sole justification for his official existence. Such would be his position at any time. At the present time, however, the difficulties are exaggerated beyond ordinary example. The famine has settled down to its dire ravages; the plague continues its remorseless devastations; a cotton famine threatens to dislocate the industries of the city of Bombay, and to strain the machinery of local government by throwing masses of the population out of work. "By the time Lord Sandhurst quits office," wrote the *Pioneer* (September 8), "it is quite possible that the Province will be in a state that will make it a heavier charge upon the Governor than any province has been since the Mutiny." There is but too much basis for the gloomy anticipation, but the *Pioneer* works into the picture certain lurid shades that may be safely discounted. "Plague, famine, and all the unmeasured possibilities of sedition and panic"—this is all too glaring. Lord Curzon himself speaks in a markedly different tone. He speaks, with statesmanlike sympathy, of the "sorely-tried country, and its patient and un murmuring population." "Sedition" is but a name for the ignorance, and the dread that is begotten of the ignorance, of the officials that cast about the oppro-

bruous term. They cannot put their finger on "sedition" in the concrete. Nor is there any fear of panic, provided the officials give reasonable consideration to the feelings of the people. Still, when seditious possibilities and panic are eliminated, the situation is sufficiently trying, especially for a Governor new to the business and new to the country. But it is just such difficulties that bring out the qualities of a strong man; and, though Sir Stafford Northcote has never been called upon to face such a trial, there is much reason to believe that he will not be found wanting. True, the strongest hope does not meet the argument that a case had arisen for a clear break in the system, and that a tried man like Sir Antony MacDonnell or Mr. Cotton should have been placed in authority. All that can be said is that, given the system, the Governor-designate is probably as good a man as was available in the usual circle of choice. Let Sir Stafford then take his courage in both hands; let him keep before his mind the eminent example of his father's wise and gentle spirit; and let him never forget that the strongest weapon in his armoury is the compelling power of genuine sympathy with the populations under his rule. Let him, in short, "dare to do right." And so we cordially wish him God-speed.

NOTES FROM BOMBAY.

THE GRIM SPECTRE OF FAMINE.

[FROM AN INDIAN CORRESPONDENT.]

BOMBAY, October 14.

Hopes of rain have now been abandoned, and the people and the Government stand face to face with the grim spectre of famine. Before the blighting effects of the famine that overtook almost the whole of the Indian peninsula in 1896-7 have been effaced, before the rayats have found their feet again, and before the large number of plough-cattle that died of starvation has been made good, poor India is visited by famine a second time. Practically we have had now two famines since 1876-77—two famines in twenty-three years. It has been officially put on record that famine comes once every eleven years. There is the demonstration of that statistical fact which the Caird Famine Commission arrived at on data covering well-nigh two centuries. Wiser by the errors of the last visitation, the Bombay Government has this time been alert to take preliminary measures, which, so far, have received popular approval. At the present moment, of course, the relief works are still in their initial stage, and the task of expelling starvation from the homes of the poorest rayats and others has not been great. But, for want of an adequate supply of water and fodder, plough-cattle in Kathiawar and Gujerat are dying by the thousand.

Both the people and the Government are keenly alive to the evils of this economic phenomenon. Its disastrous effects will tell both on agriculture and on the State revenue for the next ten years at least. The loss of cattle is, indeed, the loss of agricultural wealth, which alone saves the Indian Government and Indian finances from bankruptcy. Thus the State is doing its very best in Gujerat to keep all able-bodied cattle alive. Grazing ground in the wide and capacious forests of the Thana district, measuring some 70,000 acres, have been opened, whither the rayats of Gujerat are at liberty to carry their cattle. But here comes another difficulty. It is not possible for the impoverished peasant to travel the long distance from Gujerat to Thana. He has not the means. In many cases he would have to starve himself and his cattle, which would mean certain death on the roadway. This is what is daily happening. In view of this lamentable fact, Mr. Lely, the Commissioner of the Northern Division, is indefatigable in his efforts day and night to send as many animals by train as possible. For this arrangement the railway companies have reduced their fare to an "irreducible minimum." Large funds are being subscribed by the charitable people of Bombay and Gujerat for the conveyance of the cattle and their preservation. Every possible organisation is being set on foot, and the Government and the people are working together with heart and soul to carry out this object. There are half a dozen subscription lists now open in Bombay, whose strength is being tried at this juncture in more ways than one. Crippled as her resources have been since 1896-7 through the demon of pestilence, whereby trade has greatly suffered, Bombay is still able to help those in want of

funds. Those only whose pockets are heavily taxed have any idea of the private charity among the well-to-do of the Hindu community. Humanity as well as religious sentiment has found full play in this connexion. Even relief for cattle and money for fodder for Kathiawar, mostly owned by Native princes and chiefs, is being carried out with funds subscribed by the benevolent of Bombay. I am in no way exaggerating when I say that the number of small and large subscription lists for a variety of places in that Province and Gujerat is thirty-five. But this is only the beginning of famine. To what straits the revolving months may reduce both men and cattle in the famine-stricken tracts, it is impossible to say. When one contemplates the injurious effects of this lamentable occurrence of the dying century in India, one is appalled. I repeat that agriculture and agriculturists are now receiving a blow from which it will take, at the least, ten years to recover. Poor India! Verily woes have come upon her in battalions. May Providence soon relieve her from them, and make the land once more smiling and the rayats fairly prosperous!

But these two famines should open the eyes of our rulers as to their land revenue policy. There is not the slightest doubt in the minds of those who have been carefully watching the agricultural condition of the country for the last quarter of a century that the agrarian problem is becoming accentuated and annually increasing in gravity. It is developing into a hydra-headed monster which will take many a Hercules to lay it low. But it is a matter of the deepest regret that, so far, no thought is taken of the morrow. Undoubtedly for the time being every effort to save human and animal life from starvation is made. But no sooner has famine disappeared than Government pursues its traditional course as if nothing had happened. There is a kind of fear to face the agrarian foe, so that, as Sir Louis Mallet sagaciously remarked in his memorable minute of 1875, each Government in succession makes the task of his successor more difficult. It is to be hoped that Mr. Romesh Dutt will lay stress on this point in his presidential address at the coming Congress. In my opinion, there is no topic of such paramount importance as the agricultural condition of the country. As Dr. Murdoch in his new booklet has said (while reprinting that invaluable Note by Mr. A. O. Hume, written twenty years ago when he held the port folio of agriculture in the Government of India): The problem is not How to Feed Paupers, but How to Prevent Pauperism. He has hit the nail on the head. For it is only by prevention of agricultural pauperism that the Indian Government can ever hope to drive out famine from the land. Would that Government might even now pause and consider the best way to solve the problem. Mere tinkering of Land Acts and mere paltering with the fringe of the question will never lead to prevention of pauperism. It is to be feared, indeed, that famines will be more frequent than they have been, and more severe in the future.

Deficient rainfall this time has also created a cotton famine. Kathiawar and Gujerat supply the Bombay mills with more than half of their annual consumption of cotton. It is now estimated that the cotton crops will not yield at best more than eight annas. This is a serious matter for our local industry. In the cotton famine of 1864, Lancashire indented upon Bombay for its supply. "Surats" went up to Rs. 600 per candy. But Bombay millowners cannot manage to spin their 20 yarn all out of American cotton, however cheap. That is the difficulty. A few weaving mills may contrive to import this description of the raw staple and carry on their business. But it has become evident to the majority (and we have 80 mills working in the city and 176 in all India) that without an adequate supply of the indigenous staple, the mills must work short time. The mills are doubly unfortunate. They are still suffering from the partial dislocation of trade wrought by the plague; and now there is not only a food famine but a cotton famine also. The weakest concerns, both here and in Ahmedabad, may possibly go to the wall, while the better class of concerns will have to practice the most rigid economy and work fewer hours. Already the mills managed by Messrs. Greaves, Collin and Co., have begun to work only four days in the week, and there is to be a meeting on the 17th inst. of millowners as a body to deliberate as to how their concerns shall be carried on for the next twelve months. Never before has such an incident occurred in the history of the cotton industry in Bombay. As I write, the city is in an extremely depressed condition. There are normally as many

as 80,000 operatives employed, which means maintenance or at least 250,000 souls. Apart from that number, the bulk of the lower and middle classes live on the dividends annually paid by the mills. For them also the present strain means pinching if not something worse. Again, the values of all shares have gone down 50 to 75 per cent. The yarn market is as low as can be, and the cloth market is no better. The commercial and industrial condition of Bombay is, therefore, sufficiently alarming.

The City Improvement Trust has been able to float its first loan of 50 lakhs of rupees through the Hong Kong Bank. Now that it is in possession of ample funds, it proposes immediately to start upon sanitary reform. Several large schemes have been on the anvil, and the first step towards constructing houses of a sanitary kind for the labouring classes is to be taken. In the Agrida district, Byculla, there is ample reclaimed ground. A dwelling-house scheme, costing five lakhs, has just been sanctioned by the Government. On the first anniversary of the Trust's birth (9th November next), Lord Sandhurst (who takes a keen interest in the matter, and to whom belongs the credit of passing the Improvement Act, originally foreshadowed by the City Expansion Committee appointed by Lord Reay) is to lay the foundation of the new dwelling-houses. We wish this good work God-speed.

A Reuter's telegram from Bombay, dated Monday last, stated that "The Bombay millowners have decided that mills shall be worked only four days a week in consequence of the depressed condition of the industry caused by the failure of the cotton crop, the glut in the China market, and the low price of yarn."

TWO LAW BOOKS.

"*The Specific Relief Act: being Act I of 1877 as modified up to the 1st May, 1896.*" By MAHENDRA CHANDRA MITRA, M.A., B.L., Vakill, Hooghly; 2nd edition. (Shibpur, Howrah: Mukherji and Co. 1897.)

Looking at the date on the title-page, we recognise that this volume has been a long time on the way to London, and we should not be surprised if it has gone into a third edition in the meantime. The Act under annotation deals with specific relief in the main, and also with preventive relief. It is drawn largely from the English law, and most of the illustrations are openly borrowed from the English Equity Reports; but various modifications are introduced, the knot of English perplexity is often boldly cut, and a consistent doctrine is laid down in cases where no consistent doctrine can be drawn from the English decisions. Now and again, too, provisions are taken, with more or less alteration in expression, from the New York Civil Code, which in its turn had been beholden to the English Courts of Equity. Such international courtesies of law-making have their historical interest. Mr. Mitra draws largely upon English text-book writers: he might have gone farther and fared worse, yet practitioners will probably, if not necessarily, have anticipated a good many of his extracts. The commentary, as a whole, is ample and intelligent, and the work cannot but be useful to busy lawyers.

"*The Code of Criminal Procedure: being Act V of 1898, together with the Evidence, Extradition, Reformatory, Cattle Trespass, Breach of Contract, Whipping, Police Acts and Upper Burma Regulations.*" Edited, with copious notes and a full index, by CHANTAMAN H. SOHONI, Pleader, District Court, Poona, and Political Agent's Court, S.M.C., 4th edition, thoroughly revised and enlarged. (Poona: The Deccan Book Agency.)

Mr. Sohoni has made haste to get out his fourth edition, and he apologises for not making more; but a stronger reason for apology is furnished by the physical aspect of certain of the pages, although this blemish may possibly be peculiar to our particular copy. As to the substance of the volume, that really needs no commendation now, for there is hardly a High Court Judge but has spoken favourably of its execution on one point or another, and declared it to be a serviceable and indeed valuable work. The treatment is practical and businesslike; and the resources of various type have been effectively invoked for the facilitation of reference. The present edition simply brings the work down to date; or, rather, within measurable distance of date, for there accompanies it a huge quadripartite sheet of "Addenda," which Mr. Sohoni considerably allows his readers "to taste, as they like best." But really they do not like to taste at all: they expect the printer and bookbinder to save them the trouble. Seriously, Mr. Sohoni should have taken his time, and not prejudiced his book, so unjustly too, with indications of slovenliness or hurry. From a prefatory note on the history of the present Code, we learn, without surprise, that "the Bill was strongly disapproved by nearly the whole of the Indian and Anglo-Indian Press and the Calcutta Bar."

LORD SANDHURST'S SUCCESSOR.

SIR HENRY STAFFORD NORTHOOTE APPOINTED.

The Queen has been pleased to approve the appointment of the Hon. Sir Henry Stafford Northote, Bart., M.P., C.B., to be Governor of Bombay, in succession to Lord Sandhurst, on the expiration of his tenure of the office in February next.

The Hon. Sir Henry Stafford Northote, who was born in 1846, is the second son of the first Earl of Iddesleigh. He was educated at Eton and Merton College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1869. In the previous year he had become a clerk in the Foreign Office, and in 1871 he was appointed secretary to the commission which negotiated the Treaty of Washington. In 1876 he became private secretary to Lord Salisbury's special embassy to Constantinople, and from 1877 to 1880 he acted as secretary to his father, then Sir Stafford Northote, Chancellor of the Exchequer. During Lord Salisbury's first Administration in 1885-86 he filled the post of Financial Secretary to the War Office, and from 1886 to 1887 he acted as Surveyor-General of Ordnance. In 1891 and 1892 he was a Charity Commissioner. He was made C.B. in 1890, and was created a baronet in 1887. Since 1880 Sir Stafford Northote has represented Exeter in the House of Commons in the Conservative interest. He married, in 1873, the adopted daughter of the first Lord Mount Stephen, of Montreal.

The news of Sir Stafford Northote's appointment as Governor of Bombay has been received with satisfaction in Exeter. At a meeting held in the city last Friday in support of Zenana missions a resolution was passed congratulating Lady Northote upon the high sphere of influence to which she has been called as wife of the Governor of Bombay, and expressing the hope that she will do all she can to encourage missionary work in India.

Sir Henry Stafford Northote has been appointed Governor of Bombay in succession to Lord Sandhurst. The appointment has, upon the whole, attracted about as much notice as the appointment of a borough magistrate in an English provincial town. But, after all, it is rather a serious matter to be Governor of Bombay, especially at a time like this. A rumour that Sir Stafford Northote was likely to be appointed was current in India a month ago, and even the Anglo-Indian journals that most delight in saying "ditto" to those in power expressed, in firm but civil terms, the hope that the rumour was false. For example, the *Pioneer* wrote: "By the time Lord Sandhurst quits office it is quite possible that the province will be in a state that will make it a heavier charge upon the governor than any province has been since the Mutiny. Famine, and all the unmeasured possibilities of sedition and panic—this is not a combination that calls for putting an untried hand at the helm, just to see how he shapes. On the contrary, everyone can see that the circumstances call for the highest and most tried capacity that the Government has at its disposal, and it is very fortunate in having at hand a public servant who is peculiarly qualified to meet the emergency, and whom the public opinion of the whole of India looks upon as the necessary man." These last words referred to Sir Antony MacDonnell. May we assume that he was offered and declined the appointment? Again, the *Times of India* after saying all it could think of in Sir Stafford Northote's favour, was constrained to add: "But he is fifty-three; he would come as a beginner at a time when it is highly important that everyone connected with the Bombay Administration should know his work and fall at once into his place; and we shall not be disappointed if the Crown in its wisdom makes its choice elsewhere." The Crown in its wisdom has preferred to justify the voice of rumour. Well, we must hope for the best.—*The Morning Leader.*

THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL ACT.

The development of the egregious "reform" of the municipality of Calcutta is probably very satisfactory to the Government, though ominous to impartial onlookers at a distance. It is anything but a pleasure to ourselves to see that our grave anticipations are only too surely in process of realisation. The last telegram from the Calcutta correspondent of INDIA should open the eyes of the British public to the real character of the monstrous Act that has just been passed by the Bengal Legislative Council. That telegram announces that, at the election to fill the places vacated by the simultaneous resignation of 28 out of the 50 elective commissioners the Indian community "practically stood aloof." The result was that 16—the big half—of the elections proved abortive. Only twelve of the places were filled, and of the twelve new commissioners seven are reported to be Eurasians. It is something, indeed, that the Eurasians, even by this odd chance, should get an opportunity of raising their despised heads; but, after all, they cannot be supposed to supply the interest, influence and personal ability of the men whose places they are sent to fill on the Corporation. The vacant 16 seats will now be filled up by Government nominees, so that the official contingent will stand at 41 out of 75. The "reformed" local self-government in Calcutta, accordingly, comes to this: that the nominated members are in an overwhelming majority, and that the elective members are reduced not only in numbers but in quality. In other words, local self-government in Calcutta has been transformed from a notable fact to a contemptible semblance; it is now, for all practical purposes,

non-existent. The Corporation of the second city in the Empire has been turned into a mere extramural department of the Government of Bengal. Not only so, but its efficiency has been hopelessly impaired. Hardly any Native that dares to speak his mind, or has decent self-respect, will seek a seat in a municipal body where his voice must necessarily go for nothing—where he will get no part of the credit, but will be saddled with the blame. For the most part, the Native members under the new system are bound to be self-seeking men of no influence, who will find their personal interest in toadying to the powers that be. Even if they were able and independent men as before, the reduction of their members by half will render it wholly impracticable for them adequately to look after the interests of their ward constituents. On the other side, the increase of European commissioners only intensifies a difficulty that has already been severely experienced; for the Europeans will not devote the necessary time and trouble to the current work of the municipality in which they are but temporary sojourners. This difficulty the new Act attempts to get over by a peculiarly British expedient. By section 93, "every member of the General Committee shall be entitled to receive a fee of 32 rupees, and every member of a sub-committee a fee of 16 rupees" for each effective attendance. The Hon. Mr. Baker said it was "a necessary corollary of the municipal system which they were introducing, which was to place it on a business footing." The Native members of the Bengal Legislative Council opposed this clause tooth and nail, but the European members carried it unanimously. It will but add to the difficulties of the situation. For the main difficulty was the lack of money. If the existing Corporation had had a Fortunatus's cap, enabling it to command an unlimited supply of funds, it would very promptly have cleared out the slums, erected the finest streets in the world, and furnished the town with the up-to-date improvements of every kind. But it was limited in its municipal ambitions—just as London, Liverpool, and Glasgow are limited—by reasonable regard for the purses of the ratepayers. Even so, it did splendid work, as testified by its chairmen, and even by Sir John Woodburn himself. If the new system is to do better, this can only mean that the European Corporation of an Asiatic city is going to carry out great schemes of improvement at the expense of the ratepayers, totally regardless of the real needs of the people, which they cannot possibly ascertain. The British chairmen of the Calcutta Corporation have hitherto testified to its admirable conduct of its business, and the official reports of self-government in India have emphasised year after year the success of the system. And now by a strange logic, comes this adventurous Act, and opens out a new principle of the suppression of local self-government throughout the country, commencing with Calcutta, and, as is already announced, following up with the Bombay Mofussil. If the British public were to conclude that their Indian officials had suddenly gone lunatic, they would certainly not be far wrong. It is the beginning of very grave trouble indeed.—*The New Age*.

MUNICIPAL REACTION IN CALCUTTA.

THE ABORTIVE BYE-ELECTIONS.

Here is an analysis of the results of Thursday's bye-elections of the Calcutta Corporation. There were 28 vacancies in 21 wards. From the beginning there were no candidates in wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, and 21. Six candidates for wards 5, 6, 22, and 23 retired before the day of election. Two candidates for ward No. 9, after the whole day's contest, withdrew at the last moment—the Hindu beating his Mahometan rival by over 200 votes. Thus, of the 21 wards 11 have returned nobody, leaving 16 seats still vacant; and the Local Government under the law will have to fill up these vacancies. Of the 12 persons returned in the place of 28 resigned, 10 have come in without any contest for several wards in the town proper. There were contests in only two suburban wards (Nos. 20 and 26) for one seat in each. The contest in No. 20 was between a Mahometan and a Eurasian, and the latter has been elected. In No. 26 the contest was between two Hindus, but the one who has been elected will, it is reported, now resign. Thus virtually only 11 persons have been returned. They consist of 7 Eurasians, 3 Mahometans, and 1 Hindu.

The result of the bye-elections in Calcutta proves that the Native papers did not vaunt when they said that no respectable and independent Hindu would come forward to fill up the vacancies. It is quite true that in some of the Hindu wards Hindus stood as candidates, but they did so either to create fun or tooust the Mussulmans and Europeans who sought to represent them. It is also a remarkable fact that all the Hindu candidates who retired before or after their elections were very indifferent members of society, and their appearance on the field confirmed the repeated warning of the Native Press that if the Bill were passed no leading Hindu would care to be a Commissioner. Dozens of public meetings were held to condemn the measure. But the fact that no really independent Hindu gentleman offered himself as a candidate is a more potent protest against the innovation than all these demonstrations of the ratepayers put together. The resignation of the 28 Commissioners opened opportunities to nobodies in the city. But even they refused to have anything to do with a measure which has been so persistently and systematically condemned by their countrymen. We are glad the Hindu ratepayers have done their duty so manfully. They were asked to elect fresh representatives in the place of those who had

resigned. If they had done so they would have not only confirmed the disgrace cast upon their representatives by the Government, but indirectly accepted the measure they have so strenuously opposed. The question before them was, Were they to stand by their representatives or throw them overboard? They would have assuredly thrown them overboard if they were guilty. But they were never proved guilty; on the other hand, when they challenged the Government to establish its charges against them the authorities did not accept it. The ratepayers were thus bound to stand by their representatives and had no option but to elect none, and to ask those whom they had elected to resign at once. Thus, out of 21 wards 11 remain unrepresented! What a commentary upon the new Municipal Act! Here is another opportunity for the Government to correct its mistake.—*The Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

The Bengalee writes:—

The 28 Commissioners who have resigned have done a great service to the Government. The statement may appear startling, but it is none the less true. In 11 wards there was no contest in the municipal bye-elections. In 11 wards the Government will have to appoint Municipal Commissioners. Sixteen Commissioners will thus have to be nominated by the Government. There are already 25 nominated Commissioners out of 75. Sixteen are being nominated by the Government for the wards which have declined the honour of an election. There will thus be 41 nominated Commissioners out of a total of 75. In other words, more than one-half of the entire numerical strength of the Corporation will consist of nominated Commissioners. This is very much what the Government wants—this is what the Bill provides. The 28 Commissioners who have resigned have thus placed the Government by anticipation in possession of that municipal constitution, at any rate in one of its most essential features, which the Government was most anxious to secure. The Government will have an opportunity of judging of the system by its results even before the system comes into operation, and for this the Government is indebted to the 28 Commissioners who have resigned. We are quite aware that the scheme of co-ordinate authorities will not technically come into operation before April 1, 1900. But among the Commissioners were those who chiefly helped and criticised the Chairman in his work. They having resigned, the Chairman will be the autocrat of the situation, the undisputed master of all that he surveys, and he will now have really more authority than he is likely to possess under the new law, for his jurisdiction is now co-extensive with that of the Commissioners. Therefore we are right in holding that the new law will practically come into operation at once in all its most essential features, and the public will judge of the tree by its fruits. These fruits are likely to be very much in the nature of the dead-sea apple. We are no prophets. Nobody ought to prophesy who does not know. But one of the certainties of the future is the raising of taxation by one-half—it may be by 100 per cent.—and yet the fact remains that even the Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, the representative of the Chamber of Commerce, said from his place in the Bengal Council that the maximum limit of taxation in the town has been attained. The first fruit of the new system which will herald its birth will be a rise in taxation. It would not be right to say that if the system were not changed the result would have been different. It would be more near the truth to say that under the old system with a preponderance of commissioners representing the interests of the ratepayers, there would have been a vigorous and effective opposition to the raising of taxation. We betray no official secret when we say that this year the executive of the Corporation *versus* bent upon raising the rate of taxation, and the house-tax would have been raised but for the opposition of the elected Commissioners, most of whom have now left the Corporation. After considerable discussion the Chairman himself was convinced that it was unnecessary to raise the rates and taxes, and the ratepayers were allowed to keep the money in their own pockets. Now that the representatives of the ratepayers will be in a minority and the most experienced Commissioners have left the Corporation, we expect the enhancement of the rates and taxes in the near future, and then there will be no doubt even in the mind of the most sceptical as to what the new municipal system means. We are too often apt to discard the wisdom of the past, and we have to pay dearly for it.

PLAGUE NURSES IN INDIA.

A PROTEST.

The *Times of India* publishes the following letter from an "Anglo-Indian":—

I see from the daily papers the arrival of twenty-one nurses, and that another party of them are on their way out for plague work.

What need is there for this heavy expenditure? Are these nurses, who are strangers in a strange land, better able to cope with the disease than the Anglo-Indian, Eurasian, and Native nurses, who have so devotedly given up their whole time and life for the last three years to this work? The pay they receive for their labours is one-third of that received by the English ones. During the months when the plague lessened in any place, most of them were out of work for months together, and they and those depending on them were allowed to suffer any hardship which might come upon them, for all the concern that was shown for them, though they used their utmost endeavours to obtain work, and would do it untiringly for the miserable pittance they get. These same nurses, while working in the hospitals, have been acknowledged by the doctors and members of Committees to be efficient, and the poor patients and their relatives had full confidence in them, but of course their fault was that they were not from England, and so they

are the ones to bear the full burden and risk of life in the work and suffer, while the others get handsome remuneration, and when any honours are to be given are the only ones to be prominently brought forward.

I ask, is this justice? Is outward adornment, cleanliness, administering of medicines and making up of clinical charts, all that the hospital requires? I say "No." These are essential, but in plague, the chief thing is to gain by sympathy the confidence of the patient, who the moment he hears he has plague, seems to think his doom is sealed, and he is already in the clutches of his last dread enemy. To be able to do this, we must know the language thoroughly, and also the habits, so that we can look after them as if they belonged to ourselves, and not let them feel that we know there is a great gulf between them and us. Once we gain their confidence half the battle for their life is won, and we shall find the percentage of cures greater. We all know the influence the mind has on the body, and if this poor ignorant multitude are just brought into hospital, and only the usual hospital routine is gone through without anything being done to allay their fears, and when they do speak of their sufferings, to be told "I don't understand what you say," the result, I am sure, will be very disheartening to the doctors. It is natural for one who is brought up in England to turn away with repugnance from the habits of this poor multitude to which they are so unaccustomed. Let me ask once again, is it fair that our Indian nurses should for ever be kept in the background, and be so unjustly treated, and the incomes which they make for themselves and families to be supported on while they do this noble work, should be taken from them and given to strangers? I do not mean to give cause for offence, or speak disparagingly of our English nurses. I say these would be much needed for their ability and training if the majority of those suffering were an English-speaking race. What we want for these cases is the compassionate nurse. I trust this matter will be looked into, and our Indian nurses have justice. I am speaking from experience, as I myself have been a plague worker for the last two years.

Commenting on this letter, the *Times of India* writes:—

No one in India desires to depreciate the courage and the devotion to humanitarian duty of the nurses and doctors who have recently come to this country on plague service. It is an arduous work which confronts them, and one not unattended with risk. At the same time we should very much like to know whether this formidable draft of thirty nurses and ten doctors has been brought out in response to requirements stated by the responsible authorities in Bombay, or whether the numbers have been determined for us at the India Office. There has been too much reason to believe all along that India has had to bear plague expenditure forced upon her, not in accordance with the estimates of medical authorities on the spot, but in obedience to the estimates of an authority in London very imperfectly conversant with the extent and the quality of the assistance that is required here. To take a salient—we had almost said a scandalous—example of extravagance, we are sure that there is not a single authority in India, medical or civil, who would subscribe to the opinion that Poona has at any time been in such need of the services of a particular plague doctor that it was necessary, or fair to the Indian taxpayer, that emoluments exceeding those of a Surgeon-General should for two years or more be given to a Major in the R.A.M.C. to tempt him to do battle with plague in that impudently chosen city. It is a fair inference from that case, when we find a large draft of doctors and nurses consigned to us by the Secretary of State, that the proportions of the draft have been determined more in accordance with that angust authority's conception of what is necessary than with the calculation of our requirements that is made by competent and infinitely better-informed people on the spot. We have, indeed, good reason for believing that the number of nurses just sent out is far in excess of any demand that has been made on this side. In the interest of the taxpayer, whose burdens just now will in all conscience be heavy enough, a protest should be made against this reckless over-supplying of our requirements. There is, moreover, another aspect of the question, which is put forward with quite reasonable warmth in the letter from "An Anglo-Indian," which we publish elsewhere. Our correspondent writes that the interest of nurses trained in this country, who have done hard and competent work in previous epidemics, and who are being unfairly and unnecessarily displaced by ladies from England. Our correspondent's complaint could be illustrated and strengthened by the experience of the nurses of St. George's Hospital. The sisters and nurses of that institution were the first to take up plague nursing in Bombay when the hospitals for plague patients were in a state of chaos, and when the uncertain attentions of the ward boys represented the maximum personal care that was available in our plague hospitals. They threw themselves into the work before the relative immunity of Europeans against plague had been established by experience, and when plague nursing had all the appearance of being a dangerous as well as an uncommonly arduous task. And they had earned the gratitude of the public for their self-denying labours weeks and months before the first batch of nurses sent out by the Secretary of State had landed in the country. And now, when arrangements are being made for supplying the nursing requirements of some of our local hospitals, it is proposed to pass over these pioneers in plague nursing, supplanting them by ladies who know nothing of the special and local requirements of their work. Even where the appointment of trained and local nurses is contemplated there seems to be a reluctance to give them the same scale of pay as is offered to the less experienced new comers, though in reckoning up what these latter will cost to the country the expense of first-class passages and of allowance for outfit must be reckoned.

Plague administration in the Bombay Presidency has unfortunately so completely passed out of the hands of medical authority that we cannot be sure that Government are able adequately to realise the special qualifications of the nurses trained on the spot. Information on this subject is, however, within their reach, and they will find on enquiry that a serious mistake will be made and a great injustice committed if our hospitals are crowded with nurses who have everything to learn about the people and the disease they are expected to nurse, to the detriment of ladies who already know both. And, lastly, we hope that public opinion will express itself strongly against a policy of plague administration which takes our measures and the expenditure incurred upon them out of the hands of the local authority, and transfers them to an authority in London which has hitherto been more remarkable for the lavishness than for the success of its dealings with plague.

LEAVES FROM THE DIARY OF A TAHSILDAR.

[FROM THE "HINDU."]

I have been installed as Tahsildar of—Taluk. I feel proud that I am the Collector of the Taluk. My promotion has brought me a substantial addition to my pay. Not being quite unacquainted with the work of a Tahsildar, I am able to get on pretty well, i.e., without any complaint from my superior officers. There is one thing which I feel cannot be compensated by my promotion, and that is the loss of magisterial power. I cannot now command the same amount of respect and fear that I could while holding the subordinate position of Sub-Magistrate. I am treated no better than a Revenue Inspector. If now I want to charge a man—even my own servant or a rowdy fellow in the street—I cannot arrest him or order the police to arrest him. I must make a complaint to an inferior officer. This is all the result of the silly "Congress" people, who agitated that Revenue Officers should not be entrusted with magisterial power. What have they gained, after all, by the separation of Magisterial and Revenue functions? The State has gone to the expense of maintaining a number of men called the "Stationary Sub-Magistrates," who, though subordinate to the Tahsildars in name, do yet from the consciousness of their "power" behave with independence or rather impudence to their superiors the Tahsildars, and the majority of the executive officers has suffered in consequence.

I have to be on circuit out of head-quarters for the greater portion of a month. To leave one's family behind and travel alone is a nuisance, which I have now remedied by taking a part of my family also with me. I now no longer feel the irksomeness of circuit life.

I would now rather be on circuit than at head-quarters. I command much greater convenience in camp than at head-quarters. I have given up taking the necessary "samans," things for circuit, as being unnecessary. The village officers and others bring me any supply of whatever I may need, and why should I be so unkind as to refuse their hospitality? Excellent rice they bring, ghee, milk, curd, vegetables, etc. My servant uses them in abundance, giving us a feast every day, and packs up what remains, which is not at all inconsiderable, for the greater part of my own supply. By my circuit I get travelling allowance from Government and supplies from the villages of all that I may need during the year, and why then should I show a partiality for the head-quarters? There was one Tahsildar who was so scrupulously honest as to decline to take even firewood from the village officers. He used to take everything necessary with him, so that the village officers had nothing more to do than to find him a lodging. It is all very well to be honest, and I too once thought that it was dishonest to accept things supplied *gratis* by village officers and others. I have since found that that kind of honesty profits nobody. That other Tahsildar, how did he fare? He was strong in the consciousness of his own honesty, but was not conscious of what enemies he had been making both above and below him. Did Government ever notice his honesty? By his circuit before suspending and degrading him for a trifling offence. The poor man had but the empty satisfaction of having been honest to a fault with an empty pocket. In my younger days while a student, I discussed with an old Taluk office clerk about the impropriety of Government servants going in for presents and supplies from those with whom they may have business transactions. He then very indignantly replied—and his reply and the manner of his utterance are still fresh in my mind. "You fools who have got a smattering of A, B, C, talk big for no purpose; you cannot help yourselves and you cannot help others. A man comes to you on some business—say the opening of a new channel. You get the sanction of the Tahsildar or Collector without much delay and so do him a piece of service. If in return for this service he gives you a present, where is the sin in accepting it? You do not injure anybody by your action, but only help a man who needs help. These English-educated fools of now-a-days pretend to have great scruples in taking these presents, and the result is that the poor rascals and others do not at all get what they want, being unable to get any help from them either for love or money. These fellows too are anxious to make money, but they do not know the proper ways and means. Some experience in the department will set them right by driving the school boy notions from their brain. If you get into the Revenue Department yourself, I shall see how you behave if I live till then." These prophetic words of my old friend appear to have been more than fulfilled.

The Collector is expected to visit my Taluk shortly. I must make the necessary arrangements to receive him *properly*. Unlike his predecessor who has been transferred, the present Collector, they say, is mightily pleased with those who entertain him in a manner that befits his exalted position. The reception will come to about Rs. 500, and how can I meet this large expenditure myself? I must therefore send for the Revenue Inspectors of—Erikhas, and order them to do send for the Revenue Inspectors of—Erikhas, and order them to do the needful in the best manner possible. Each of the five Erikhas will have to find at least Rs. 100—I shall not trouble myself about

how they raise this amount. I cannot pay it out of my poor pocket. But the District duty must be pleased, and so long as he is propitiated I need not be squeamish as to the means adopted, especially as it may contribute to the good of all in the District, or rather, prevent any mishaps due to any unfavourable impression regarding the officers and other people. One Rev. Inspector will look to the adorning of the Traveller's bungalow and the erection of pandals, another must see to the necessities of the table: eggs, fowls, mutton and—God pardon us our sin—beef. The Inspector will consult the butler and do the needful.

The Collector has arrived this evening. A fine *shamiana* has been put up in the railway station, the platform being covered with red baize. A grand pandal has been put up near the Travellers' bungalow, adorned with tapestry hangings from the Temple, and festoons ornament the road from the railway station to the bungalow. All the leading men of the town were present at the station as well as some rich Mirasidars who were specially invited. Except the police inspector who was in his uniform, the rest took care to appear on the platform without shoes. As the train stopped, the crowd, composed of officials and others who came in as spectators, gathered thick round his carriage. I made a low obeisance and introduced myself as the Tahsildar. A proud shake of the head responded to my salutation. As he alighted, the municipal chairman and others were introduced by me and one little shake of his proud unbending head was vouchsafed to each gentleman as he pressed through the crowd to catch the sunshine of recognition from the lord of the district. His hands were extended to the chairman alone and then they found their way into his pockets. The Sahab was garlanded and flowers were showered on him. A benignant smile was on his lips, but he looked most impatient and would hardly look up to see the faces of those present. "Tahsildar" he said in an imperious tone, "let me go." He was led out of the platform with native music and bards playing. Half a dozen lovely dancing girls with bewitching eyes led the procession. The collector's brougham moved on amid the deafening hurrahs of all present. With all these he looked stern and would not exchange a word with me or any one present. Time was when I would have taken this treatment as a great insult. Time was when I upbraided those who performed such *poorjas* to the earthly deities who no more responded to their soft supplications than the tongue-tied images in our temples. But a change has come over my character, which has almost been completely transformed.

The "exigencies" of the department require the subordination of self before the debt which can make and unmake officers. The wonder seems to be that after these 20 years of service in the department one's self should still exhibit symptoms of revolt and dissatisfaction.

The Collector's butler came to me running this morning to tell me that the Sahab was in a great fury that the milk supplied to him last evening was not good. He threw out his tea and would take no more of it, cursing and swearing. I got alarmed, ran to the Revenue Inspector, who was on special duty at the supplies to the Collector. The Inspector swore that he sent him good, fresh drawn cow's milk, and he was quite sure that the best milk available was supplied. He suggested, however, that he had forgotten to tip the butler and very likely he might have adulterated the milk or kept it in a brass vessel. I was afraid to face the Collector, who must be in a very bad temper. He was, I heard, tearing his clerks and hectoring them, much to their bewilderment. I quietly sent for the butler who began a long tale of his master's sickness and the unsympathetic and unsatisfactory manner in which his necessities were being attended to, how disgusted his master was with this Taluq, and how he was pleased with a neighbouring Tahsildar, all these he rattled forth with an affectation of great concern for his master's health and a bit of his master's manner, and I spoke to him fairly and slipped a couple of rupees into his hands. His manner was changed at once. I was sure that the Collector's temper must hereafter be softened. The butler assured me that he would see that everything was right with "master."

The Collector is expected to examine my office this evening. I took care to keep him in good temper by personally attending to the requirements of his table.

The office examination and that of the Taluq was over in a quarter of an hour. Everything went off well, except that the gentleman was in his usual gruff mood.

The Sahab is going away to-morrow. He asked me for my bills. I gave him a bill for Rs. 30 for things supplied to him during the seven days he encamped here. I have spent more than Rs. 300, but the collector did not object.

THE PETITION OF KUAR SING.

The following is the text of a petition addressed by an Indian priest to the Viceroy of India:—

I most humbly and respectfully beg to submit this humble petition for your Excellency's perusal, consideration and orders.

I am the religious priest of the Sikhs at Haripur. I came here to see a relative of mine. On Monday, September 11, 1899, at about 6 p.m., I went out for a walk and was passing on the road near the church in Abbottabad Cantonments. Meanwhile, Lieut. W. D. Villiers Stuart, Station Staff Officer, and Quarter-Master, 15th Gurkhas, Abbottabad, passed by me. As my attention was not much drawn towards him, I failed to salute him. That officer ordered the Gurkha sentry on duty to arrest me and take me to the Station Staff Office. I, although innocent, accompanied the sentry through fear.

When I reached the office, that officer got down from his carriage and commenced to beat me severely with a cane because I did not salute him. Then he ordered me to salute him. I complied with his orders and came away. I was laid up with fever for four days. When fever left me on September 15, 1899, I reported the matter at the Police Station. On the same date I got a complaint written. On September 16, 1899, I filed a complaint under Sections 342-343 Indian Penal Code in the Court of Mr. W. R. H. Merk, C.S.I., District Magistrate, Abbottabad. That officer kindly examined the cane marks on my body and wrote a letter to Colonel Barret, the Officer commanding the 15th Gurkhas, and sent me with his orderly to that officer. Colonel Barret kindly wrote a letter and sent me to Lieut. Stuart. Lieut. Stuart apologised and gave me Rs. 50 as compensation.

As I had neither any personal grudge and enmity nor spite against him, therefore I was satisfied. On September 16, 1899, I filed another application withdrawing my first application and soliciting the District Magistrate's favour to file the papers. Although, through the kindness of Mr. W. R. H. Merk, C.S.I., the District Magistrate, and Colonel Barret, Officer commanding the 15th Gurkhas, the matter has amicably been settled, but I beg to venture to take the liberty of bringing this matter to your Excellency's kind notice, because hundreds of poor illiterate and ignorant people pass through Cantonment, as the Grand Trunk Road passes through it, and many of them fail to salute the officers through ignorance. I therefore humbly solicit your Excellency's favour of issuing orders that no European officer should thrash any person for not saluting him, and for this act of favour I shall ever pray, etc.—I have the honour to be, your Excellency's most obedient and humble servant,

KUAR SING, (Son of Bhai Rattan Sing, care of Bhai Dyal Sing.)

Abbottabad, September 18.

THE PUNJAB LAND ALIENATION BILL.

[FROM THE "LAWTODAY TRIBUNE,".]

At the last meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council, as the reader knows, the long-expected measure for dealing with agricultural indebtedness in this Province was introduced. Mr. Rivaz, in asking for leave to introduce the Bill for amending the law relating to agricultural land in the Punjab, gave at some length an historical retrospect of the case before the Council. He began by reminding his hearers that the question of the indebtedness of the agricultural classes in different parts of India had attracted the notice of Government from the early times of British rule, and that various measures had from time to time been proposed for remedying the evil. Mr. Justice Raymond West, of the Bombay High Court, was the first to draw public attention to this important subject in a pamphlet published in 1872. He argued that experience had proved that free trade in land was not adapted to the present condition of the agricultural population of India; and that the Government ought to impose limitations on the further application of this principle, and to declare all land to be inalienable except with its assent. It is well known that, in 1875, the Government appointed a Commission to enquire into the condition of the agricultural population of the Bombay Deccan, and that the report submitted by the Commissioners resulted in the passing of the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act of 1879. Subsequently, legislation was undertaken for relieving indebted landholders in Sind, in the Broach and Kaira Districts of the Bombay Presidency and in the Jhansi Division of the North-Western Provinces. In 1886, Mr. Thorburn, who was then a District Officer in this Province, wrote a book entitled "Muslims and Money-lenders in the Punjab," in which he recommended, among other measures of relief, that it should be made illegal in the west of the Punjab for shopkeepers and money-lenders to acquire any interest in land except under certain conditions. This proposal was, however, pronounced to be impracticable by Sir James Lynam, the then Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, who was undoubtedly the ablest and most experienced revenue officer in the Province. In 1891, the Government of Lord Lansdowne appointed a Commission under the presidency of Mr. Neill, of the Central Provinces, to report on the working of the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act of 1879, and on the desirability of enacting a similar measure for the other Provinces. The report submitted by this Commission led to the preparation of a draft Bill to provide for the relief of the agricultural classes. The Government of India, however, held that the proposed legislation would only partially meet the difficulties connected with the general problem of agricultural indebtedness; and that remedies of an entirely different character, including measures for further restricting the right of land transfer, were indispensable. Accordingly, a circular was addressed to Local Governments in October, 1895, requesting them to take the question of restricting the alienability of land into their most careful consideration, and to communicate their matured views and definite proposals on the subject.

It appears that when the replies to this circular were received the Government of India decided to deal first with the Punjab as being the province where the question of agricultural indebtedness was considered to be of special importance in its political aspect. In replying to the circular of the supreme Government Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, the late Lieutenant-Governor of this Province, we observe, "recognised that a point might be reached at which the amount of land alienated, and the number of proprietors reduced to the condition of tenants or labourers would constitute a political danger of formidable dimensions, and where this danger was reached the only remedy was to attack the evil at the root by imposing direct restric-

tions on alienation, for instance, by prohibiting landowners of specified castes or tribes from alienating their ancestral lands without official sanction beyond their lifetime or for a fixed period to any person not belonging to those castes or tribes." It is scarcely necessary for us to say that we entirely agree with the late Lieutenant-Governor on this point. The soundness of the principle laid down by him cannot be disputed. The question naturally arises, Has the point mentioned by Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick been reached in any part of the Punjab? All sensible and right thinking persons will support his strong opposition to a law of general application to the whole Province, and agree with him that Government ought not to go further than to take power by law to apply restrictions on transfer of any particular tract in which a full enquiry might show that they are required. Such a position would be perfectly unassailable. But we are told that both the Financial Commissioners of the Punjab differed from their chief and expressed a decided opinion in favour of restrictive measures of general application, and that the majority of the judges of the Chief Court were of the same opinion. Mr. Rivaz, however, tells us that it is not clear whether the judges advocated a general enactment for directly restricting alienations of land, or merely an enabling one as recommended by Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick. If so, their views should have been more definitely ascertained, and the public have also a right to know the opinions expressed by the minority of Chief Court judges, who differed from their colleagues. The Government of India did not, however, accept Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick's statesmanlike views. They communicated to the Punjab Government their belief that partial legislation would fail in its object and produce more difficulty and jealousy than general legislation. They expressed the opinion that a strong case seemed to have been made out for prohibiting all permanent alienations of agricultural land, except with the sanction of some duly empowered Revenue Officer, and for restricting temporary alienations to a maximum period of fifteen years.

The Punjab Government was, accordingly, invited to consider these proposals, and it was suggested that the best way of dealing with them would be to have them discussed by a Committee of selected officers. The Government of India gave effect to this suggestion and appointed a Committee of revenue officers over which he himself presided. Mr. Rivaz did not give the names of the members of this Committee, but he told the Council that the recommendations of the Committee were that any permanent alienation of agricultural land to non-agriculturists, if made without the sanction of the District Officer, should be void; and that the only forms of temporary alienation to be allowed in future should be (1) usufructuary mortgage for a maximum period of twenty years, (2) simple mortgage which, in certain circumstances, may be converted into a usufructuary mortgage, (3) leases for twenty years, or for the life of the lessor, whichever is less. The Committee further proposed to make their suggested restrictions on alienations general throughout the Punjab, but to give power to the local Government to exempt any district, or part of it, or any person or class of persons from the operation of the restrictions, to amend the existing law of pre-emption in the Punjab, and to transfer the hearing of pre-emption cases from the civil courts to Revenue Officers. These proposals have, with some modifications, been embodied in Mr. Rivaz's Bill under notice. From what has been said above it will be seen that the opinion of Sir Mackworth Young's Committee was that alienations between agriculturists should continue to be free from all restrictions. But even this proposal did not find favour with the Government of India. They considered it open to objection, because it would allow an agriculturist who is also a money-lender to buy up land in a village where he would come in as an outsider. They held that all permanent transfers must receive the previous sanction of a Revenue Officer, who shall withhold it in case he is satisfied that the intending transferee is a person who is not a member of an agricultural tribe. This provision which is opposed to the views of the Punjab Committee is, we are told, based on the feeling in favour of the principle of tribal organisation which are said to be powerful factors in the social economy of the agricultural classes of the Punjab. As regards temporary alienations, the Government of India accepted the conclusions of the Punjab Committee that only the two forms of mortgage proposed shall in future be allowed, and that existing mortgages by way of conditional sale shall be void. They agreed with the Committee that leases should be limited to a fixed term, but reduced the maximum period of temporary alienations from twenty to fifteen years. As regards amending the law of pre-emption in the Punjab, the Government of India accepted the proposal of the Punjab Committee; but this matter will be dealt with separately. On the general question whether the proposed legislation shall be an enabling Act or of general application the Government of India adhere to the opinion in favour of an enactment of general application. They have no hesitation whatever in holding that if any restrictive scheme is to be worked in the partial manner strongly advocated by Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick it is inevitably doomed to failure. The Government of India consider this to be self evident, but the soundness of their view is open to question. Restrictive legislation of this sort which must unduly narrow the market for free sales of land, should not be undertaken without the clearest necessity. We are not prepared to admit unreservedly that a case for legislation has been made out even for the four assessment circles in the Rawalpindi division, where Mr. Thorburn made special enquiries when he was in charge of that division.

INDIA AND THE JAPAN TREATY.

Some light is thrown upon the mysterious negotiations between the Government of India and the Government of Japan, regarding the admission of Indian subjects to treaty rights in the Mikado's dominions, by a paragraph which recently appeared in the *Osaka Mainichi*. It may be remembered (the *Times of India* says) that more than a year ago we raised the question of the abstention of India from the Anglo-Japanese Treaty which recently came into force.

On several subsequent occasions we reverted to the matter, and pointed out its urgency, in view of the commercial interests involved. No definite information, however, has ever been vouchsafed from Simla. Bombay merchants trading with Japan have never been told why it was that their Government did not think fit to acquire for them rights which have been obtained by every other civilised Power. When belated negotiations were at length commenced, a veil of mystery was permitted to shroud the whole proceedings. Now we are driven to seek information through the doubtful channel of an *Osaka* newspaper. The journal in question declares that communications were only opened by the Government of India with the Tokio authorities at the close of last year. Terms were then proposed on behalf of India which Japan professes to find excessive. It is admitted that the suggested conditions would not materially affect the interests of Japanese commerce, but they are held to be a variation of the terms imposed upon other nations who are parties to the treaty. The Japanese Government remains unconvinced of the necessity of making special concessions to India, and points out that all other signatory nations must be admitted to similar additional rights if the claims of India be conceded. The Government of India, on the other hand, rejoins that similar conditions are inserted in the treaties it has concluded with various Continental countries, and that it is anxious to preserve uniformity. It will be seen that a passion for precision dominates the negotiations on both sides. The fault to be found with this detailed explanation is that it only reveals the husk of the controversy. We are still left in blank ignorance of the actual terms to which the Government of India has been clinging for the past year. What special privilege does Simla seek to obtain? The oracles of the Himalayas remain singularly silent, while even the *Osaka Mainichi*, in a land where twopenny mysteries are not deemed an essential feature of official intercourse, is apparently thrust into outer darkness. Lord Curzon intimated not long ago that he thought the public of India should be taken into the confidence of Government upon questions of railway policy. May we not suggest that there are other matters upon which even a transient gleam of official candour would be acceptable? This question of the acquisition of treaty rights in Japan is not of overwhelming importance. It has not the remotest connexion with the safety of the Empire, or any of those other great issues which are usually dragged into the foreground when an explanation of a particular point is sought from the powers that be. But it happens to touch the mercantile interests of Bombay rather nearly, and that is why Government is invited to abandon the attitude of somewhat ridiculous reticence which it has maintained for more than twelve months. We have appealed in vain for an official statement on the subject. Private enquiries by merchants concerned have produced nothing more than the customary vacuous replies that the question was "under consideration," or that the negotiations "were still incomplete." The Foreign Department could not have preserved a more solemn air of secrecy if the fate of nations rested on its successful conduct of the correspondence. Why has this cryptic silence been maintained so long? Twenty frank words would have told the mercantile community all they want to know. Upon such a subject evasive answers are mere trumpery superfluities. Two things are now pretty clear in this connexion. One is that the persistence of the Government of India in its demands—whatever they are—is seriously jeopardising this country's chances of participation in the treaty. The other is that the continued reserve of the Foreign Department is causing the original suspicion that the Department neglected to watch over the interests of India when the Japanese Treaty was first mooted to crystallise into an accepted belief. If the Department is thereby wronged, it has only its own policy of concealment to thank.

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON INDIAN QUESTIONS.

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE.

On October 24 Miss Alison Garland addressed a public meeting at Burton-on-Trent, on "Current Politics." At the request of the Chairman, Mr. Evershed, M.P., she dealt largely with Indian affairs. At the close of the meeting Mr. Evershed said he would not comment on Indian politics before an expert like the lecturer, but he could say he heartily endorsed every word she had said, and he knew the members of the Liberal Club at Burton would follow Miss Garland's visit to India with great interest, and he hoped on her return that she would once more visit them to give an account of the Lucknow Congress.

On October 27 a lecturer on behalf of the British Committee addressed a meeting at the Mechanic's Institute, Otley, on "The Economic Condition of the Indian people." Mrs. Hunter, of Newell Close, presided over a large audience.

Speaking on Current Politics at Ripponden and Sowerby Bridge on October 25 and 26, Miss Alison Garland compared the grievances of the Outlanders in the Transvaal with those suffered by British subjects in India, and concluded with an account of the Congress and its aims.

Among other prospective meetings which will be addressed on behalf of the British Committee are the following:—

- November 6.—Aspatia.
- " 7.—Maryport.
- " 8.—Cockermouth.
- " 13.—Attercliffe.
- " 14.—Sheffield.
- " 16.—Exeter.
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