India

FOR THE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

CONTRARY to the usual custom no inspired "forecast" of the Speech from the Throne was issued to the Press on the eve of the meeting of Parliament yesterday (Thursday), and there has been therefore some little delay in settling the precise terms of amendments to the Address. We believe, however, that members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee are likely to give notice of amendments somewhat to the following effect:—

(1) And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that upwards of 30,000 of Your Majesty's British and Native Indian troops have for many months past been employed on active service in South Africa and elsewhere outside the limits of the Indian Empire; and that it is desirable in the interests of the Indian people, especially in view of the increasing expenditure and diminishing revenue consequent upon recurring famines, that the entire recruiting, transport, and annual charges of 20,000 of the British troops in India should be transferred from the Indian to the Imperial exchequer, while remaining stationed in India as a reserve force available for service outside Indian territories.

(2) And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that, although Your Majesty's Secretary of State for India and Chancellor of the Exchequer have agreed that from the first day of April next a sum of £257,500 shall for the future, in accordance with the unanimous recommendation of the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, be transferred from the Indian to the Imperial expenditure, no provision has been made for any repayment of the arrears of the charges covered by this sum, which in the aggregate reach a total of many millions, and that in justice to the people of India all the arrears payable on account of the items covered by this sum so transferred, which have arisen over the apportionment of expenditure during the past twenty years, should be repaid from the British Exchequer to the Indian in the form of a liberal grant in relief of the Indian famine.

(3) And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that in view of the constantly recurring famines which occur in India it is desirable that the Government of India shall be instructed to appoint a full and independent enquiry into the economic condition of the people of India with a view to discovering the causes of famine and undertaking practical measures for their prevention.

Mr. Caine will move one amendment, and it is probable that others will be in the charge of Mr. Herbert Roberts and Mr. Schwann.

Mr. Caine has given notice of the following question for Monday:—

To ask the Secretary of State for India if he has yet considered the unanimous recommendation of the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, as contained in clause 334 of the report; that a grant of £50,000 should be made by the Imperial Government in aid of the charge for the India Office, and, if so, how he proposes to deal with it.

Lord George Hamilton's reply should throw some light upon what we have termed the "slimness" of the India Office.

Sir Antony MacDonnell has been putting very incisive and suggestive queries to some of the witnesses before the Famine Commission. The following is part of the examination of Mr. Maconochie, Collector of Sholapore:—

I have been told on very high authority you may have the name of a person recorded as owner who may have sold his land. Some one else, meanwhile, may have purchased and sold it to a third person, and he in turn may have mortgaged it to a fourth person. The original holder may have died long ago, but his name remains on the register. How are you to follow up the actual name of the tenant under such circumstances as that?—We can generally make a pretty shrewd guess at the facts of the case.

Then you have no written register with the name of the actual owner?—We have a written register, but it does not always record the actual facts up-to-date.

Then if you had a register with the names of the owners changed from time to time and marking all the transactions that occur, you would be able to make the particular classification you mentioned (*i.e.* into two classes—the capitalist landowner and the peasant proprietor)?—Yes.

In such circumstances do you think you would give suspensions with reference to the crop on the ground only to the peasant proprietor, and only give suspensions to the richer men after considering their circumstances?—Yes.

This is no new discovery, indeed; the importance of the case is that some reform may come out of such a public exposure. Really, it is too preposterous to keep a register from which you can draw only "a pretty shrewd guess at the facts of the case." And what if your guess is wrong, as may happen? The thing is to get the burden put upon the right back.

Take another case. Mr. J. P. Orr, Collector of Thana, and formerly Assistant-Collector of Poona, said there was a great deal of indebtedness in his charge. Sir Antony then took him in hand:—

We have been told that the original proprietor, having lost his title to the sowkar as landowner, frequently remains as sub-tenant to the purchaser?—Nearly always.

And he remains on at a rack rent which, we have been told, is often half the crop, and the sub-tenant has to pay assessment also. Would you say that many of the original tenants had been reduced to that position of servitude?—In the majority of cases.

We have also been told that the name of that sub-tenant remains on the register as proprietor of the holding?—Yes. The man who comes in may get the title transferred to his name, but he seldom does.

From these items of evidence, in conjunction with others, it would probably be a pretty close inference to deduce that the indebtedness of the rayats is all but universal. Mr. Moore, Collector of Nasik, admits that four-fifths of his people were "in the clutches of the money-lenders." Then it is plain that the slackness of the officials in seeing to the accuracy of their registers allows the sowkar to escape his just liabilities, while on the one hand the rayat is ravaged by the revenue officer or on the other hand the Government has to grant suspensions or remissions, delaying or thwarting its just expectations. Such a rotten system cannot stand. The Government can hardly neglect the obvious means of relieving the strain on its revenue system, at the same time protecting the rayat from the imposition of a rack rent by the sowkar.

We observe also with satisfaction that Sir Antony MacDonnell is keeping his eye steadily on a system of agricultural banks. At Nagpur (January 17), Mr. Carey, Commissioner of Customs, said he thought it would be difficult to the malguzars to take 4 per cent. for a loan when they could get 12 per cent. "But look at the advantage to the malguzars," rejoined Sir Antony; "it would insure their rent." Still, it may take some little experience to get them to see the position in that light. Meantime the *Times of India* remarks:—

Everyone must have recognised the importance of the questions which Sir Antony MacDonnell put to nearly all the witnesses at Nagpur concerning the feasibility of agricultural banks. It is scarcely too much to say that these questions indicate that a serious endeavour to give effect to this long-discussed project must be in contemplation. Sir Antony MacDonnell's interest in the subject is a more than personal one. It may not be generally known that already a small group of village banks is in operation in the North-Western Provinces, and that legislation is in contemplation for giving larger extension to the enterprise. It will probably be found that the project favoured by Government will be one in which State intervention will be reduced to a minimum, and in which the principle of joint village responsibility will have a prominent place. . . . . The scheme, as outlined in Sir Antony MacDonnell's questions, seems to be a very modest one, but some of its features have been tested in practice elsewhere.

Such a scheme "will essentially differ from that which was promoted by the Bombay Government fifteen years ago, in which the help of the revenue officials for the collection of advances was provided for, and the rayats' debts to the sowkars were to be liquidated with State assistance." We must wait for the actual form of the

project, glad meanwhile that at last something practical is on the eve of being attempted.

The Gujerat Revenue Enquiry was continued at Olpad from January 17 to January 23, when the court adjourned on receiving the news of the demise of the Crown. Several witnesses deposed that they had been beaten because they had failed to pay their dues; some declared that they had been threatened, and one gave evidence that although no violence had been offered to him, he had seen others chastised. On the other hand, two witnesses withdrew statements which they had made to Mr. Jivanji Limjibhai, who has been so active in getting up evidence for the prosecution. One of these witnesses declared that he had been forced to write a letter which was produced by Mr. Jivanji, of whom he was afraid. Asked why he was afraid of him, he answered that he had business dealings with him; and also there were factions in his village, and the people might be instigated against him.

The official who was most commonly accused of personal violence to the revenue defaulters was the *Karkun*, Chhaganlal Atmaram. He gave a curious explanation of the origin of the rumours against him. When he went to Takarma on May 6, he stayed at the *Utara*, and while indulging in some gymnastic exercises he happened to knock his arm against the wall. The noise made the villagers think he was beating some one. They crowded round. Some rushed towards him, and in self-defence he came forward with a whip. He denied that he had ill-treated anyone while collecting revenue. Mr. Parekh, who had got to the end of the cases originally brought forward, wished to call evidence in support of some new cases; but this the Court would not allow.

There were several witnesses who deposed to hardships they had undergone and losses they had experienced owing to the demands of the revenue collectors. Makan Vanmali, having no more fodder left, joined with some neighbours in collecting a cartful of cotton. He took it to Sayan, but was there stopped and asked if he had paid his assessment, the first instalment of which was not due for a fortnight. He had to get a surety to whom the money obtained by the sale of the cotton had to be given up instead of being spent in buying fodder. The surety eventually handed the money to the authorities. In other cases the cultivators had to sell their *bantu* (grass for cattle). One man had to sell four-fifths of his land. Another, Dhania Kohia by name, early in the famine sold a bullock for Rs. 7. This he was compelled to give up, though his wife and children were starving. He was then forced to sell his house for Rs. 20, though it was worth Rs. 60. Of this Rs. 19 were paid by the purchaser to the Government, and he was allowed to receive Rs. 1.

The *Friend of India* rejects the floating opinion that India is more liable than most countries to a failure of harvest, and holds that famine "is a consequence rather of economic than climatic causes." Chief among these economic causes "is the fact that normally not only is India entirely self-supporting in respect of her staple food-stuffs, but the rise of prices that must take place before she can import these food-stuffs in the ordinary course of trade is so great as, in the absence of public measures of relief on a large scale, to imply the starvation of multitudes of her people." The development of railways has led to an active export of grain, "till to-day it is the exception for any but the wealthiest cultivators to store more than sufficient grain for a few week's consumption of themselves and their families."

> In the absence of State interference, it is hopeless to look for a reversion to the old order of things in this respect. On the contrary, the probability is that the tendency in the future will be towards a still further diminution in the storage of grain, and consequently, to increased liability to famine. Such being the position, it seems to us that, whatever else it may do or leave undone, it is plainly incumbent on the Government to take effective steps to encourage, if not to insist on, the storage in the country, in some form or other, of at least sufficient grain to enable it to tide over one year's failure of the harvest without acute distress.

This aid to prevention of famine need not interfere with or delay the deeper remedies we have been urging. The absence of such stores of grain has often been alluded to regretfully by Sir William Wedderburn. The late Robert Knight urged the point "with much persistence" upon the Famine Commission of 1879-80 when it was in India, and recurred to it again and again in powerful articles in the London *Statesman* in 1880-81. It is amazing how much hammering it requires to get an obvious idea into official heads.

Colonel Sir T. H. Holdich, speaking at the Royal Geographical Society on February 11 about "Advances in Asia and Imperial Consolidation in India," brought up the fusty charge against the Indian rayats that "their own improvidence and multiplication was their chief undoing." We are tired of exposing this perennial fallacy. As to the loyalty of the people of India he said:—

> Could such a sentiment as loyalty be evoked in the breast of the half-naked aborigine, who still dips his arrows in poison and sets up rude stone monuments to the demon of the wood? It could. He spoke merely as an ordinary observer, who had walked and talked with the people of India for thirty years in their hills and jungles and plains, and had learnt a little of their moods and methods. In truth, the quality of loyalty was not caught by contagion in India. It was always there, the hereditary possession of a race of soldiers who, so long as they could see and know who it was that they served, would serve with all the hereditary valour of their race.

The Colonel added a striking story of "a simple Mahometan soldier" he knew, who "to his eternal satisfaction had been selected as a representative of the Indian Army at our late Queen's Jubilee," and had received five kind words and a touch on the hilt of his sword from her Majesty. "His gratitude and his admiration were unbounded. Loyalty with him had become a life's faith." Yes, if only our officials had a tithe of the Queen's tact and fellow feeling!

The same afternoon Sir A. J. Lyall, presiding at a meeting of the National Indian Association at the Imperial Institute, spoke of the Queen's deep sympathy with her Indian subjects in their misfortunes. He mentioned that "the great scheme for bringing medical aid to suffering women in India cut off by the customs of the country from male assistance owed its inception to her." He also stated, what is probably not very widely known, that the Viceroy sent her an account of the situation in India by every mail. He added:—

> They could imagine what a store of knowledge of Indian affairs must have been gathered in the Queen's memory. She had her reward in the immense affection, respect, and reverence with which she was held in every village in India. He could speak with thirty years' experience in the country, and could say without hesitation there was not a corner of it where her name was not known.

We understand that the British Indians in Natal lately presented to Earl Roberts a congratulatory address, and that he has sent an autograph portrait to the President of the local Indian association. This interchange of civilities is distinctly interesting. But it should not close our eyes to the very real danger that the position of British Indian subjects in South Africa at the close of the war may, in spite alike of their heroism, their sacrifices, and the ostensible objects of the war, be no better than it was before. When for example, one hears it said that the local laws and customs of the Transvaal and of the Orange River Colony are to be as far as possible retained, it is well to remember that these local laws and customs included most injurious disabilities for Indians—disabilities which Lord Lansdowne says filled him with peculiar indignation. Moreover the *status* of British Indians in British colonies generally needs to be levelled up. We hope very much that, amid the varied and competing claims which must arise when the question of the settlement in South Africa falls to be seriously considered, the claims of the British Indians will not be overlooked.

Imperialism shows itself in various ways. According to the *Pioneer*, the populace at Sydney cheered the Indian troops sent there for the inauguration of the Commonwealth; but Mr. Barton, the Federal Prime Minister, has placed in the forefront of his programme a law prohibiting the immigration of Indians. No wonder that our contemporary remarks:—

> An Imperialistic sentiment, however, which cheers as the Bengal troopers ride past and a few days later proposes to translate itself into legislation for the exclusion of Asiatics, must appear somewhat contradictory to the troopers' countrymen. . . . The way of doing a thing has only less effect in India than the thing done; and with the Indian contingent still in Queensland this pronouncement of Mr Barton cannot be considered well-timed.

Thus the first result of this vaunted Imperialist achievement may be to extend restrictions and disabilities to the peoples of other parts of the Empire.

The *Times of India* returns to the position of Indians in South Africa, of which it takes a very gloomy view. The "splendid self-effacing work" of the humbler Indians in South Africa, the way in which they fearlessly entered the line of fire on their work of mercy, though by the terms of their enlistment they might have kept outside of it, produced a great change in the attitude of the colonists.

> Praise of the Indian Ambulance Corps was in all men's mouths. General Olpherts publicly extolled these men for having done a work which required even more courage than that of the soldier.

But unfortunately there are already signs that these first impressions are wearing off. At the Cape the Imperialist Premier, Sir Gordon Sprigg, threatens a Bill for the prevention of Indian immigration. The *Times of India* is shocked that an Imperialist should father such a measure, but perhaps it is ignorant of the character of South African Imperialism. There is little doubt that even in Natal, which has so lately been saved by India, hostility to Indians is again growing up. We look to the Colonial Office and to Lord Lansdowne to do their duty in this matter, and not to fall short of their professions.

When the mail left India Mukta still lay under the sentence of transportation for life passed on her for killing her daughter. Her story is one of the saddest which the famine has produced. Up to September last, Mukta, who belonged to a village in the Ahmednagar district, had been receiving a Government dole. But this was stopped, and Mukta with her little daughter Saganda wandered away in search of food. For days they could find none. At last they came to a well, and the girl said to her mother: "Throw me into the well, if you don't give me bread." The girl's body was found floating in the water, and the mother was convicted and sentenced. The High Court could do nothing, but they sent the papers in the case to the Bombay Government, from whom a commutation of the sentence is expected. The *Champion* declares:—

> Mukta ought to be the accuser and not the accused. Before that lone, helpless, foodless woman we must all feel guilty. She accuses us all—our laws, our policy, our civilisation. She points to her dead child and tells us we have failed. This is the real verdict in this most sad and painful case.

The general chorus of disapproval throughout India, reinforced by a remarkable utterance of the Bishop of Bombay, has had some effect on Dr. Welldon. In an address he gave at Trichinopoly his lordship declared that he was "conscientiously and consistently opposed to any action on the part of Government tending to interfere with the cause of religious freedom in India." It is satisfactory to find that the Bishop of Calcutta is amenable to the influence of public opinion, though it is difficult to reconcile the words quoted above with his proposal to introduce the Bible into every Indian school supported by the Government. So serious did the words of the Metropolitan appear, that the Bishop of Bombay, although his subordinate, has thought it necessary to say that "to thrust Christianity upon the people in purely Government schools would be a breaking of our obligations and contrary to the utterances made by successive statesmen." He further declared that "it would be a complete revolution because it would be going back to the policy of the Mahometans and others who preceded us in this country." Seldom has there been such unanimity in India as that produced by Bishop Welldon.

The *Englishman* was among the chief supporters of the "reform" of the Calcutta municipality, yet the longer it has experience of the reformed Corporation the less it seems to admire it. It says:—

> It is with a keen sense of disappointment that we confess that the Municipality need never have been remodelled for all the good the remodelling has done.

Thus in the opinion of its chief supporter the changes in the Calcutta municipality have been useless, the Act has been a failure and the bitterness of controversy need never have been provoked. Our contemporary, which, in spite of the failure of its recommendations, now clamours for still more drastic changes, contrasts the apathy of Calcutta in public matters with its "extraordinary commercial activity." As we pointed out at the time, it was just this absorption in business, coupled with the desire to return to Europe, which made it impossible to induce a great part of the European community to take any great share in municipal affairs. And yet this was one of the chief objects of the Act.

Yet another monthly magazine, the *Empire Review* (Macmillan). We give it a cordial welcome, in the hope that it will devote enlightened attention to Imperial affairs in a truly Imperial spirit. India is the part of the Empire which pre-eminently, if not solely, justifies the title. So far as India is concerned, however, the first number of the *Empire Review* is somewhat economical of attention. The Duke of Devonshire writes the first article, on "The British Empire"—a commonplace summary notice. Referring to the Native races of India and Africa, he says "we are conscious that we have not been unequal to the task of governing them with justice and firmness, and we feel neither the inclination nor the right to abandon that task to others." With regard to Indian questions in Parliament, he thinks "it is of vital importance that, when they recur, as they are bound to recur, they shall be discussed not only with sympathy but also with knowledge." For the rest, he justifies in retrospect Disraeli's proposal to confer on the Queen the title of Empress of India. The paper would be perfunctory were it not that it is necessarily of the most general character. Colonel Sir G. S. Clarke, who wants "An Imperial Conference," does not so much as mention India in his article.

So far we find little that is hopeful. But here are seven pages on "The Church and the Empire" by Bishop Welldon. Again disappointment. For the Bishop magnifies his Church so extravagantly that the substantial elements of his article seem endangered. He at all events does not agree that there "ain't no ten commandments" East of Suez. "Indian securities" are dealt with in a financial article, but very thinly. Beyond these meagre points, we see nothing about India, except what the Editor himself says in an "Introductory Note." "The Viceroy of India," he announces, "has written me a personal letter wishing every success to the Review." Lord Curzon, we know, is polite. But that does not take us far in "knowledge of the problems which have to be solved by the Governments responsible to the Throne for the welfare of the different communities," and of India among the rest. "Millions of Natives that a hundred years ago were subject to barbarian rule," says the editor, "now enjoy the benefits and participate in the privileges of British administration." Surely the editor cannot have India in view in this arrogant statement? Yet, if not, what can he mean? Well, this is but the first number, and an editor cannot do everything at one time. We shall patiently wait and see. Only we should have been more hopeful if the present issue had even offered an indication that the editor is alive to the "problems which have to be solved" in India—the most pregnant and the most pressing of all Imperial problems.

The first volume of the English version of "The Vedanta-Sutras, with the Sri-Bhashya of Ramanujacharya" (Madras: the Brahmvadin Press), by Messrs. Rangacharya and Varadaraja Aiyangar, was published a couple of years ago; and probably we owe the copy that has just come to hand to the fact that the volume is dedicated to Max Müller. We have pleasure in repeating that Sanskrit scholars of the highest eminence have expressed their strong approval of the work in point of fidelity, accuracy, and usefulness. But what has become of the remaining two volumes?

Remittances on India for 70 lakhs were on Wednesday offered for tender by the India Council, and applications amounting to Rs.3,18,00,000 were received at prices ranging from 1s. 3$\frac{3}{32}$d. to 1s. 4$\frac{1}{16}$d. The following amounts were allotted—viz., in bills, Rs.35,72,000 on Calcutta at an average of 1s. 3·970d., Rs.19,42,000 on Bombay at an average of 1s. 3·967d., and Rs.8,06,000 on Madras at an average of 1s. 3·968d.; and in telegraphic transfers, Rs.3,90,000 on Calcutta at an average of 1s. 4·046d., Rs.1,00,000 on Bombay at an average of 1s. 4·062d., and Rs.1,90,000 on Madras at an average of 1s. 4·031d. Tenders for bills at 1s. 3$\frac{3}{32}$d. and for transfers at 1s. 4$\frac{1}{16}$d. will receive about 21 per cent. Later the Council sold bills for Rs.21,053 on Madras at 1s. 4d., and telegraphic transfers for 2 lakhs on Calcutta at 1s. 4$\frac{1}{16}$d. Last week remittances for Rs.76,10,000 were sold for £506,152, making the total disposed of from April 1 to Tuesday night Rs.15,04,59,912, producing £10,021,743. Next week 70 lakhs will again be offered.

A FRENCH VIEW OF INDIA.[1]

M. PAUL BOELL, a French writer of the Positivist school, who has travelled in India and lived for many years in the East, has just published a study of the Indian question, primarily intended for the enlightenment of his own countrymen, but containing much matter that deserves the consideration of those more directly interested in the country with which he deals. The author is certainly very unlike the ordinary French writer as he appears to English eyes. M. Boell is not superficial a large part of the book is occupied with hard facts drawn from official sources. He avoids controversy wherever it is possible. He shows no trace of Anglophobia, and is eager to display the good features of English rule in India, the rectitude of her magistrates, and the capacity of her administrators. But he is equally far from attempting to hide the terrible evils from which India is suffering. If there is a weak part in this otherwise excellent work it is where M. Boell treats of social reform and the Indian family. Of the beauty of the Indian family, and of the relations between mother and son and between husband and wife, he seems to have little conception. He quotes at considerable length on these subjects another French writer, M. Filon, who seems to be entirely wanting in that sympathy and insight without which any true appreciation of the Indian family is impossible.

A large part of the book is taken up with a review of India as it exists, the country, its climate, and its agriculture, its people and their ways of living, its religion and its social institutions, its government and its finances. But both in its economic situation and in the relations of the Indians to their alien Government, we come into the midst of embittered controversies. It is here that the calm mind of a foreign observer is most useful; and in spite of a too great reliance on official documents and information, the main arguments of the leaders of the Congress evidently appear irresistible to M. Boell. Nay, it is satisfactory to find that not only does he give the Congress a warm though discriminating support, but he sees none of that decay in the movement by which some Indian observers have allowed themselves to be discouraged. He speaks thus of the Congress at the present time:—

> The organisation is in full prosperity. Its very intelligent general secretary, Mr. D. E. Wacha, a Bombay Parsi, is activity personified. Thanks to his care and to that of his sturdy colleagues, the Congress must see its utility and its influence increase from year to year.

One danger, indeed, M. Boell sees very clearly. He has no sympathy with those who think that what India needs is the crude transportation to that country of Western institutions For instance, he declares universal suffrage altogether inapplicable to India, where the elements of society are so diverse, and the interests so divergent, where 90 per cent. of the male population is illiterate and where the caste is the most active social unit. But he strongly advocates those proposals of political reform with which the Congress is especially identified — the increase in the power of the members of the Legislative Councils, the opening to a much greater extent of the Civil Service to Indians, and similar reforms. Nay, he declares that for the Indian, "Home Rule" is a legitimate demand.

On the economic question he is even more outspoken, though here his views will be very familiar to our readers. The great and growing taxation, especially the land-tax, the consequent necessity of borrowing, the loss of the Native manufactures, and the tribute—all these find their place in M. Boell's diagnosis of the disease of India. Of the latter cause he says:—

> But the most important factor in the poverty of India is probably the continual drain on the resources of the country, a direct and almost inevitable consequence of its present political and economic state.

He thus summarises the arguments of Sir John Strachey and other officials who consider the tribute only a fair payment for services rendered or money lent:—

> That means, in two words, that India can never pay too dear for the good fortune of being governed by England.
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> Nevertheless, the rayat will have some difficulty in admitting that the eighteen millions sterling which he has had to pay for the Afghan war was the remuneration for a service rendered. Without doubt, if he were left to himself, he would say: Defend me from my protectors: as to aggressors, I will take care of them myself.

And M. Boell asks if the payments made by India towards the cost of wars in Africa are among the "advantages which India draws from her union with England." He concludes his remarks on this subject with a protest against the "affectation of optimism" which is one of the great barriers to reform.

An interesting chapter is that in which the gradual change of religious attitude in the conquerors is traced. First, in the eighteenth century, when there was little tendency to Christian proselytism, the Company granted no privileges to Indian Christian converts while scrupulously respecting the Hindu and Mussulman customs. The Company had other business on hand than that of missionaries. Then came the growing indignation of the English evangelicals early in the nineteenth century, and the gradual withdrawal of the Government from the administration of the funds of the Indian religions; till at last the Christians, once scarcely recognised, became the only endowed body. M. Boell does not think very seriously of the subventions given to the Christian Church in India. No doubt it is a small amount in itself, but considering the poverty of India, it is surely unjustifiable, even when the Bishops do not abuse their position by urging the rulers of the country to break faith with the people by introducing the reading of the Christian scriptures into the Government schools.

Finally, it must be said that in spite of some faults which we have already noticed—a want of sympathy with the beautiful life of the Indian family, so difficult to understand in the West, a tendency to rely too much on the official view, and perhaps a needless fear of being unjust and ungenerous to England—M. Boell's book is an excellent one, covering almost the whole ground of the Indian problem and containing a great amount of information in a small compass. We have come across no such book in French, and to many of his readers M. Boell's account of the Congress and its aims will be their first introduction to that body. And if he appears to some of us too moderate in his estimate of the present, he will appear to others too extreme in his hopes for the future.

> On the day when the public opinion of the West is convinced that the profits of these operations go exclusively to a very small number, while the cost on the contrary is borne by all, it will regain its moral equilibrium and will energetically oppose this policy of brigandage which by an elegant euphemism is known under the name of "colonial expansion."
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> When the British people have learnt that, even if India is a source of profit to a handful of officials and merchants, it is on the other hand for England itself a heavy burden, a terrible and increasing responsibility, a source of numerous difficulties without appreciable compensation; and moreover, that three hundred millions of men are not governed for ever against their will . . . . then the time will be at hand; the present system will have lived its life; and "home rule" . . . . will without doubt be on the point of becoming a reality.

On the whole, then, the Indian public should certainly feel some gratitude to the stranger who has thus defended their cause and put their case so ably before the people of his country.

[1] "L'Inde et le Problème Indien." Par Paul Boell. (Paris: Albert Fontemoing, 4, Rue de Goff, Editeur. 1901.)

PEERING INTO THE CRYSTAL BALL:
THE EFFICACY OF WESTERN INFLUENCE.

MR. MEREDITH TOWNSEND, a very Nestor of journalism, with prolonged experience in India as well as in England, has been moved by the extravagances of European "Imperialist" aspiration to deliver his mature opinion on "The Influence of Europe on Asia." It reminds one of the chapter on snakes in Iceland: "There are no snakes in Iceland." "After fifty years' study of the subject," Mr. Townsend declares in the February number of the *Contemporary Review*, "I do not believe that, with the possible exception of a single movement, Europe has ever permanently influenced Asia, and I cannot help doubting whether in the future it ever will." The possible exception depends on the validity of the theory that the white family originated in Europe, and, wandering to the East, imparted energy and character to the races of China and India. But Mr. Townsend does not accept this theory, and so we may dismiss it. The Greeks, the first Europeans to try the project, "left in the end scarcely an impression of themselves." The strong Roman, with superior advantages, was yet "a very limited person," and "he failed in Asia as completely as in Britain, where, after reigning for 100 years, he stamped himself as little as"—as what?—"as we should be found to have stamped ourselves if we

quitted India to-morrow"! "Of Asiatics he romanised not one tribe. Something in them rejected him utterly, and survived him; and at this moment, among the eight hundred millions of Asia, there are not twenty among whom can be traced by the most imaginative any lingering influence of Rome." The "barbarians" of Northern and Central Europe? "In Asia they made no serious attempt." Their descendants, the Crusaders, were mere raiders on a minute corner. In modern times there is no advance. As to India, Mr. Townsend makes this remarkable estimate of British "influence":—

To the external world one half of Asia appears to have become European. In reality, however, neither Russia nor Great Britain has as yet exercised any "influence" upon the millions she has conquered. . . . . Great Britain has enforced a peace which has produced manifold blessings, but she has neither won nor converted any large section of her subject populations. There is no province, no tribe, no Native organisation in India, upon which, in the event of disaster, she could rely for aid. After nearly a century of clement government there are not 10,000 Natives in India who, unpaid and uncoerced, would die in defence of British sovereignty. . . . . The British remain masters; but beneath the small film of white men who make up the "Indian Empire" boils or sleeps away a sea of dark men, incurably hostile, who await with patience the day when the ice shall break and the ocean regain its power of restless movement under its own laws. As yet there is no sign that the British are accomplishing more than the Romans accomplished in Britain, that they will spread any permanently successful ideas, or that they will found anything whatever. It is still true that if they departed or were driven out they would leave behind them, as the Romans did in Britain, splendid roads, many useless buildings, an increased weakness in the subject people, and a memory which in a century of new events would be extinct.

Here is food for Imperialist reflection. It is also worth the attention of officialdom. But what if an Indian had given utterance to such an estimate of the results of the most beneficent of Governments and the most splendid official service that the sun ever shone upon?

Mr. Townsend, consequently, has no hope of the future. In the first place he finds no "evidence that the separateness of the Asiatic mind is in any way diminishing." East is East and West is West, and between the two yawns "a gulf of thoughts, aspirations, *and conclusions*." Then, again, "there is also in the Asiatic mind a special political and a special social idea." The European desires self-government; the Asiatic desires government by an absolute will; and there must be something more than accident at the bottom of the difference. The Asiatic believes his social system to be divine, and so "is content with it, clings to it, and resents interference with it." Christianity? No; "the truth is that the Asiatics, like the Jews, dislike Christianity, see in it an ideal they do not love, a promise they do not desire, and a pulverising force which must shatter their civilisations" Force? No. For even if force succeeded, what then? Mark this:—

Grant victory to Europe at first, and think of the lingering war, of the endless insurrections, of the bitter quarrels among the Powers, of the huge garrisons which must be kept up, and of the steady systematised cruelty which would be needed if Asia adopted the perfectly simple expedient of refusing to work for Europeans; a refusal which, in India, where the preliminary conquering and garrisoning and organising for revenue purposes has been already done, would bring the Empire down in a month. And all this terrible outlay of energy and treasure and human life would be for what object? Simply to provide opportunities of manufacturing prosperity for the European tribes, which opportunities would disappear as they arose under the competition of the Asiatic factories which would arise the moment order was secured. The masses of Europe, who rule in the last resort, do not particularly care to conquer Asia, and would not continue for ages to pay taxes for that purpose. We are all devoted to the "Empire," of which India is the flower, but how long should we keep the Empire if it cost us a hundred millions a year?

What, then, is to become of Asia? "The only possible reply," says Mr. Townsend, "is: what God wills and not what Europe wills." And so we are left in a quandary.

The points raised by Mr. Townsend suggest a volume of discussion, and cannot be dealt with in a paragraph. But we may suggest that, after all, the position of Britain in India is very essentially different from all the historical cases cited. Britain affects India far more materially than even Rome affected Britain—the strongest of the cases in question. How far Britain could rely on aid from India in the event of disaster would largely depend on the facts of the disaster; but some indication has been given in the South Africa and China emergencies. Mr. Townsend does not accurately represent the Mutiny; for, in point of fact, next to British doggedness, it was Native fidelity that enabled us to put down the revolt—which, it is to be remembered, was a military, not a popular, insurrection, and even then was due firstly to our own folly, and secondly to our own local military incapacity. We do not believe in the least that there is any ocean "boiling or sleeping away in patience" for a chance of outburst; and we are quite certain that all the influential thought of modern India, however critical, is on the British side, and is critical only with a view to the improvement of the British rule. Besides, consider the magnitude of the business. How is it reasonable to anticipate any great transformation in the course of a century? But if Mr. Townsend knew India to-day as well as he knew India forty years ago, we are very sure that he would feel that British influences have set in motion forces that have already initiated such a transformation as has never been seen in the history of nations. We neither mean nor hope that Indians are to be turned into Britons; but we do assert that under British influence Indian thought has received such a stimulus as will weld the country into a nation and eventually bring even its social forms into unison with the conditions of progress. Mr. Townsend seems to be inadequately aware of the operations of the National Congress and the Social Conference.

If Mr. Townsend is grievously pessimistic, his old journal, the *Spectator* (February 9), is curiously optimistic. It thinks that India will not "spew forth" Britain, but that "the special conditions of our rule in India will enable us to retain our hold on the great Peninsula." We think so too, but for reasons very different from the *Spectator's*. Our contemporary says:—

Our first ground for thinking that the verdict of history will be reversed in this case is that India is not in any sense a homogeneous country, and that, therefore, as long as we do not irritate the various Indian races by over-government, they may be content with the control of the British race, as the rule that divides them least. . . . Each race and religion would vastly prefer its own Empire to ours, but each would put us second on the list. . . . We shall, we believe, be tolerated as the universal second-best as long as we do not become intolerable owing to our own mistakes.

The writer ignores the specific differences between the British Indian Empire and all others before it and so misses the only reasonable ground of hoping for a different issue. He has nothing of the historical vision that lies open before Mr. Townsend's mind. He also fails to grasp the facts of the present. Whatever action may be taken by the various Indian races must be set in motion by their leading men; and we are satisfied that there is no leading man in any race in India at this moment who would think for a moment of deposing the British Government, hard as it is, in favour of a Government of his own people. It is too slippery work to argue about the term "homogeneous," but not a day passes but renders India more homogeneous in a political sense, and that, too, in the sense that the British Government is absolutely indispensable. The writer proceeds:—

Another ground for our Empire proving an exception to the rule of Asiatic conquest is that the British rulers are all birds of passage. We make no permanent homes in India, we do not colonise. Thus we maintain an aloofness from the people of India which is a security for that separateness which, as Mr. Townsend points out, they are determined to keep up. Owing to that aloofness, we, no doubt, exercise little or no influence on them, but in our view the failure to exercise influence is the thing which makes the white man tolerable to the Asiatic.

So the *Spectator* openly gives away the case to Mr. Townsend, and holds up the British Indian Government as a vulgar and despicable Imperialism. But what matters it that our officers are birds of passage? That does not make our Government a bird of passage, and in any case the metaphor is utterly misleading, seeing that the civilians pass at any rate a quarter of a century in the country individually. Moreover, the writer overlooks the frightful abyss of evil omen in this acknowledged fact of "aloofness." But he has a third reason:—

Yet another reason why British rule in India is not intolerable to the Asiatic is the fact that it is based on the principle that the welfare and convenience of the governed is the first thing to be consulted.

And so it is in official professions. But is it so in fact? The first concern of the British Government is to hold India securely in hand, and India, very much against both the welfare and the convenience of the governed, has been impoverished in paying for wars admittedly undertaken in the main for Imperial, and not Indian, objects. Again, the British Government holds India not only for glory, but also for commercial purposes and for official openings; and it draws some thirty millions a year

for which India gets no economic return. Obviously, if we keep an overpowering military force in the country, and exclude the Indians from military commissions, we need have no fear of a military rising; and, if we keep the taxation low, the ignorant rayat is not likely to grumble. But is this the height of "Imperialism?" And is this the way to "influence" the people? Has the *Spectator* not yet heard of the oppression of the rayat—an oppression that has been dinned into official ears for half a century, from Raja Rammohun Roy to Mr. Romesh Dutt, to say nothing of the significance of those terrible famines? Yet it has the astounding complacency to agree with Mr. Townsend in leaving the decision between his pessimism and its optimism to the future, as if the future were not decided by the present! "There," it says, "the British people must perforce leave the matter—content, whether they fail or succeed, if they can truly say that they have done their best and so done their duty." But how can they say they have done their best and their duty if they refuse to see the facts that lie patent to their eyes, refuse to fulfil honestly their large promises by statute and by Royal Proclamation, and refuse to give the Indians free scope to exercise their energies and their abilities in the government of their own country under the direction and "influence" of their British rulers? Mr. Townsend's great difficulty of "separateness" is substantially traditional education and habit. The leading Natives have taken the first step to bridge it in opening their minds to the facts. When will leading British officials—and journalists—begin seriously to do likewise?

OUR LONDON LETTER.

WESTMINSTER, Thursday.

FOR the first time almost in living memory a British King is to-day opening the Imperial Parliament. The State coach in which Edward VII. drove this afternoon from Buckingham Palace to the House of Lords was last used for the purpose by William IV. Nearly forty years have passed since Parliament was opened by the then reigning monarch in full State. Not since 1886 has a visit, even in semi-State, been paid to Parliament by the occupant of the throne. It is important to recall these facts, for they are at once an explanation and an apology—an explanation of the remarkable interest shown by the public in an event which has all the charm of novelty, and an apology for the indifference, which undoubtedly prevails, as to the more important, if less showy, affairs of the Session. A moralist of the Carlylean school might find food for cynical reflection in this spectacle of a nation more interested in the trappings of a ceremonial than in the possibilities of legislation. The truth is that, for the time being, both Parliament and the Government are completely overshadowed by the Court.

Paradox flourishes in the purple. The King comes down to Westminster to open Parliament, which consists of some seven hundred Commoners and some six hundred Peers. What happens? Members of Parliament are admitted to the ceremonial on sufferance. The Peers are squeezed out by the Peeresses, who crowd the floor of the house, overflow into the galleries reserved for members of the House of Commons, and encroach on the limited accommodation provided for the Press. Judges occupy the centre of the floor, and the bishops are evicted to make room for the Corps Diplomatique. When all have been provided for, the remaining space is at the disposal of members, one-sixth of whom, perchance, may be able to find seats. But the anomaly goes further. All the space, with the exception of a small pen at the bar, having been occupied, Black Rod marches across to the House of Commons and solemnly summons the six hundred and seventy members of that assembly to attend on the King. If those gentlemen had a keen sense of humour they might return an embarrassing response. Happily they are a prosaic race, and while knowing perfectly well that not more than forty of their number can get inside the doors of the Gilded Chamber, they all make frantic efforts to keep up with the Speaker and hustle one another jovially on the way. And then they lose their tempers and make terrible vows, and in less than a week forget the whole affair.

But this time, so many affronts have been offered to Parliament that some public protest is almost certain to be raised. Members who took their places in the stand provided for their accommodation on the day of the Royal funeral are not likely to forget their experiences. When the procession came abreast to the stand they found themselves so far removed from the main avenue that all they could see was the crest of the cortege. A few contrived to extend their range of vision by standing on the highest tier of the structure, while others promptly descended and took their chance with the crowd. There would have been room for all, as it turned out, on the stands at Buckingham Palace, tickets for which had been distributed with so much jealousy that at the last moment the police had to be empowered to bring in respectably dressed citizens from the mob to fill up the vacant spaces. At St. George's Chapel there was a similar miscalculation. Tickets of admission were to be had for neither love nor money. Yet in the end the place was little more than half full.

With grievances such as these to occupy the Parliamentary mind there is perhaps less inclination than usual among members to discuss the prospects of the Session. But the general impression appears to be that the Parliament which is now entering on its first working term is destined to be short-lived. It is a new Parliament, and yet an old one. Its lease of life has been renewed, but not its youth. The country cherishes no illusions as to its character, and members themselves are equally indifferent. There is something anomalous in the position. Legally, Parliament has just been re-elected for a further term of seven years, yet everyone feels that it is already decrepit and that once the war is at an end both the Government and the majority that keeps Lord Salisbury in office must end with it. From a legislature so apathetic, cynical, and pessimistic it would be foolish to anticipate either useful reforms or vigorous administration, and, to be candid, few people seem to be infected with that particular folly. Members on both sides give themselves two years of Parliamentary existence before the next general election.

After absenting themselves from two Sessions of Parliament—for both the short war Session of December and the even briefer Session occasioned by the Queen's death passed without their presence—the Nationalist members have now crossed the Channel in force to continue the new agrarian campaign at Westminster. They are likely to have a powerful ally in Mr. T. W. Russell, whose propaganda is scarcely less thoroughgoing than Mr. William O'Brien's. But Mr. Russell will be left to fight for his own hand. The Nationalists do not intend to repeat the mistake, which they made in the financial relations agitation, of entering into an entangling alliance with a third party. If Mr. Russell does anything to embarrass the Government they will of course lend him a cheerful support, but for the rest they mean to pursue their policy on their own lines—or, rather, on the lines laid down by the late Mr. Parnell in the stormy Parliament of 1880-85.

Only one of the Africander Bond delegates has so far reached this country, but Mr. Merriman hopes to be joined shortly by Mr. Sauer and Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr. It is interesting to note that the attitude of those gentlemen in relation to the proposal that they should seek permission to address the House of Commons on the position of affairs in South Africa conforms precisely to the principle explained in this column some weeks ago. Mr. Merriman reminds his friends, as they were formerly reminded here, that when Benjamin Franklin spoke from the bar of the House of Commons on behalf of the American States, he spoke as a witness—and not only as a witness, but as the representative of the whole Assembly of his native State. Messrs. Hofmeyr, Merriman and Sauer are not likely to be called as witnesses to the bar of Parliament, and in any case they are the representatives of a Parliamentary minority. Accordingly, as Mr. Merriman acknowledges, they are without a precedent to support the claim which some of their friends had urged on their behalf. Their mission, therefore, must take some less ambitious form. Happily, signs are not lacking in the country of a growing disposition to give such advisers a patient hearing.

French customs of dress are evidently to be favoured by the Court in some of its public ceremonials. Members of the County Council who attended at Marlborough House yesterday to present a loyal address to the King were expected to appear either in levée or in evening dress. His Majesty, having regard to the democratic tendencies of the Council, had stretched a point and hinted at the admissibility of an ordinary morning coat, but the hint certainly suggested an *arrière pensée*. Even

the reporters received an intimation the other day that they would be expected to don evening dress for the opening of Parliament. Happy are they who, on such occasions, have the right to assume some gorgeous, if mysterious, uniform! The members of the City Corporation quite eclipsed their rivals of the County Council yesterday by presenting themselves before the King in all the glory of mazarine and fur. Some people may think this a trivial matter, but a glance at the late Queen's diary would show them that the sartorial aspect of life is not so regarded in the highest circles.

Among the theatrical novelties of the week Mr. F. R. Benson's revival of "Coriolanus" is not the least important. The part of the too ambitious Roman is played with passionate energy by Mr. Benson, and that of the majestic Volumnia by Miss Genevieve Ward, whose dignity of manner and measured enunciation are peculiarly appropriate in the portrayal of this character. Additional interest is lent to the performance by the announcement that Sir Henry Irving has the same play in preparation for his next Lyceum season.

NOTES FROM BOMBAY.

THE DEATH OF THE QUEEN.

[From an Indian Correspondent.]

Bombay, January 26.

When I wrote last week giving expression to the country's deep sorrow at the sudden and tragic death of the Hon. Mr. M. G. Ranade, little did I expect that within the short space of another week I should have to express again the heartfelt grief of the entire population of the Indian Empire at large at the demise of their aged and most beloved Sovereign. When the mail left we had the first faint news of what was called the serious illness of her Majesty. By Monday her condition had grown worse and the wire flashed the sad news of the alarming nature of the illness, and of the members of the Royal Family having been summoned to her bedside. Bulletins after bulletins, official and non-official, followed, and we were told that it was only a question of hours when the Sovereign, who had so majestically held the sceptre and worn the Crown of England for the unparalleled period of sixty-four years, might cease to breathe and be once more with Him who had given her her life. The morning of Wednesday proclaimed to the world the melancholy calamity which had been anticipated.

All was over with the Queen of England, the Great White Queen and the Empress of India. The signs of mourning were visible in every important public and private place. The ensign of the might of the great British Empire floated half-mast high in stately grief. Other emblems of similar character waved on the top of many an edifice. All business stopped automatically. Within a few short hours the entire country seemed to be wrapped in suits of woe. It appeared as if one vast funereal pall covered the whole length and breadth of the land. Telegrams from the most distant nations came pouring in in hundreds to the capital cities of the Empire bringing reports of mass meetings immediately held to express grief at the lamentable event and heartfelt sorrow towards his Majesty the King and the other members of the Royal Family. Instantly, as if by magic, the population understood what it meant and what significance it had over the whole civilised globe. Unique as this greatest of female sovereigns was, she was by virtue of her seniority unique also. There was not a ruler of any country in the world who surpassed her in the long period of her reign. There was not a potentate, be he president, king or emperor, who had her exceptional experience, and who had at his or her fingers' ends the thread of the globe's politics for sixty-four years past. She alone was the possessor of the mighty historic secrets.

That such a Sovereign should command universal respect when living and be generally mourned when dead was of course to be expected. But Queen Victoria had other virtues which ever more endeared her to the world, of all nationalities and all creeds. Her womanly virtues, her sovereign tact, her benignancy, her sense of stern justice, her deep solicitude for all that was human in the world of humanity, and above all her unceasing care for those subjected to her sway in all the continents—all these elicited admiration and respect. In India she was simply adored. The people cherished her name, and millions of them, with affection. Their respect for her was more profound than they have for their own parents. In every sense she was their *Rani Mâti*, their Queen Mother, who all through the long tract of time wore not only the Crown of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen but the white flower also of a pure and blameless life. The first feeling of the Indian people was that in her death they had lost their own nearest and dearest relative. It was this feeling which made itself so wonderfully manifest, with the rapidity of lightning, within a few short hours of the announcement of her death. Cities have vied with cities, towns with towns, villages with villages, in expressing their simple but sincere sorrow at the event. And communities after communities of all the great races inhabiting the Peninsula have met in their temples and mosques, their churches and pagodas, to offer their prayers for the departed soul of their gracious Sovereign.

It is manifestation of the feeling of the nation I have here feebly essayed to echo which tells the great English people, as naught else can ever tell, how deep is the loyalty of the Indian people to the British Crown, and how sincere is their attachment to the person and rule of the British Sovereign. No people are more conscious than they of the general beneficence of the English rule. Grievances they have and their number is legion. But where may be the country, whether subject to a foreign domination, or swayed by its own people, which has no grievances, which has not cause for dissatisfaction at certain acts of Government? If so self-governed a people as the English people themselves have a Parliament where every six months of the year you hear of little else but grievances which demand redress, is it strange that Indians, who are governed by an alien race, should have grievances? And where may be the country which has enjoyed the millennium of a perfect Government, without a flaw, a Government without a complaining people? But grievances apart, no people on the surface of the earth are more attached to British rule than Indians. They rejoice that for over half a century they were governed by a Sovereign whose constant endeavour was to promote, so far as her royal prerogative and so far as the English constitution permitted, their moral and material welfare.

Her gracious Proclamation of 1858 stands out in the greatest prominence so far. The Indians have all through accepted it as their Magna Charta, fully and implicitly relying on its solemn character and still more on the solemn intentions and wishes of its author. They express their undying gratitude to the Queen for it. It is the Victorian era that has witnessed the rising of universities, colleges, and schools in the land—institutions which have sent forth their thousands who appreciate more and more the benefits of education. It is the same reign that has established law and order and consolidated all elements in the Government which go to make it durable. As yet it is not broad-based on the people's will, but Indians are fully convinced that the day must come, however slow it may be in coming, when the Government will be carried on in that spirit without which no Government can ever hope to secure permanency. Thus it is that contentment and security generally prevail. The contentment is not unqualified. But still it can be said with truth that the people *are* content with British rule, and centre all their hopes of future political and material progress in its righteousness and beneficence. Education has taught them that a better rule under a foreign government could never be had, despite all drawbacks. Their own permanent prosperity lies in the maintenance of that rule. They are willing to help it and place it even on a sounder foundation than the one on which it now rests, if only they are more trusted and confided in. In Queen Victoria they believed they had a monarch who silently exerted her influence in that direction.

And they have in this darkest hour of the country the satisfaction to know that in the present successor to the throne they have a Sovereign whose heart beats in unison with theirs, a Sovereign who was the first of the Royal Family of England in its history to visit the dominions over which he is now called upon to rule. In Edward the VII, "the Prince," as he has been familiarly known here, they have every hope that India and Indians will prosper even more than they did under the rule of his illustrious mother. His popularity has not waned since he first honoured them with a visit twenty-five years ago. On the contrary each revolving year has increased it. India, therefore, hails with acclamation the accession, to the throne of Victoria the Good, of Edward VII, son of Albert the Great and Good. Long live Edward VII!

THE FAMINE AND ITS LESSONS.

Among a number of excellent articles on current topics of large interest in the *Co-operative Wholesale Societies' (England and Scotland) Annual for* 1901 (published by the Co-operative Wholesale Society, Limited, 1, Balloon Street, Manchester, and the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, Limited, Morrison Street, Glasgow) is a luminous and vivid sketch of "The Indian Famine and its Lessons" from the pen of Mr. Vaughan Nash. After describing the territorial extent of the calamity —"in fact, nearly half India"—Mr. Nash points out its character and effects.

A Three-Fold Famine.

The distinctive mark of the famine was its three-fold character, the lack of crops, of fodder and of water. To the first cause the rush to the famine works and the terrible sufferings in the villages was due; to the second the loss of cattle, of which millions upon millions perished; whilst the scarcity of water added to the sufferings of the people and their beasts, and paved the way for the attack of cholera which, as I write in August, is still raging through the famine districts. The visitation, therefore, was one of merciless severity. It gave no quarter to any living thing, man, woman or child; and the beasts in the jungle, the birds whose bright plumage makes the only bit of vivid colour in the brown wilderness of an Indian famine, the patient bullocks who draw the plough and haul the farm produce to the market, the milch cows, and the goats and kids perished together. Besides the famine and the diseases following in its train, the plague was busy at work.

The months that Mr. Nash spent in the famine districts—March, April, and May—are the hottest months of the Indian summer: 110°, and not unfrequently 120° in the shade. Already there had been nine months of famine. Mr. Nash thus describes the desolation of the country:

The Indian Wilderness.

It is difficult to give any idea of the desolation of those thousands of square miles of burnt up country where the fight was being waged, the interminable stretches of brown earth, hard and dusty, utterly deserted by man and beast, except for an occasional foraging party of lean bullocks and buffaloes in search of food and water. The beds of rivers and nullahs were as dry and dusty as the plains themselves, and nearly all the village "tanks" were marked by bare depressions in the ground, where sheets of shining water, the glory of the Indian villages, once had been, leaving the huts of mud and thatch and the village temple at the top of its flight of steps looking out forlornly over the waterless desert. Except for the trees and the patches of irrigated fields there was often, for hundred of miles together, nothing to suggest that this wilderness had ever borne crops or would ever bear them again. And the very trees were sharing the same fate as the birds and cattle, dying, not from want of water, for their roots seemed to hold the moisture of old rainfalls, but because their leaves were the last food left to keep the cattle alive. I often saw dark figures, like monkeys high up amongst the branches, tearing away at the last of the leaf crop, and for miles together along the roads the avenues were stripped of branches as if a hurricane had passed along. The trade in leaves was one of the by-industries established by the famine, and the stumps of millions of dead trees will stand as a famine memorial when the Indian fields are green again. In keeping with the desolate country were the sights to be met with on the roads: family parties plodded silently along through the scorching dust, the father and mother carrying the household belongings or the babies, and the elder children helping the smaller ones, exhausted bullocks being driven to the butcher's and loads of hides drawn along by patient bullocks whose own hides would soon be going to the market. . . . . In Bombay City there were large parties of farmers and their families who had walked all the way from Kathiawar, some two hundred and fifty miles. They camped out on the open spaces and lived on the doles of grain given them by the charitable traders. At Ahmedabad, some twelve hours north by rail, there were twenty thousand refugees from the country round and the neighbouring Native States, many of them starved beyond the point at which recovery could be hoped for, and only able to lie down in the streets of the city and die. They brought in branches of trees, rafters from their dismantled homes, the farm cart, the family hand-mill, the tiles from the roof, hides of goats, the cooking vessels in which there was no longer anything to be cooked—in fact, anything they could lay their hands on, and that their strength allowed them to carry or drag to the town in the hope of finding a market. Anything more piteous than the last despairing struggle of these brave people to win a morsel of food could hardly be conceived.

The greatest "trek" was the endless procession of half a million people with their beasts and household goods from the State of Marwar to Central India, to Gujerat, and to the North-West. The terrible thing was "the refugees' discovery that famine and drought were in possession of the countries where they hoped to find refuge and succour."

The Charge of Pauperisation.

It was only the fringe of the people who came to the Government for relief. The villagers are independent and self-respecting, and intensely attached to their homes and customs. To go on the relief works stands to them as a worse degradation than going into the "House" does to the agricultural labourer at home. It implies mixing with other castes, abandoning cherished and sacred customs, and losing the status which is the stamp of social order, religion and civilisation. The timidity of a superstitious and home-loving folk was another deterrent. Often I heard stories of strange rumours and alarms which set the nerves of whole famine camps twitching, stories of how the children were to be kidnapped by the missionaries, of dreadful ghosts which walked the lanes between the huts at night, of the intention of the British to send away the men to the Transvaal, where they were to form a screen for the firing line. We may scoff at such fears, but to the child-like mind of the Indian villager they were real and dreadful, and no doubt the reports of what was on foot nerved numbers of people in the villages to stay at home and starve on roots and berries rather than venture to the famine camps. In justice to the people it must be reiterated that whenever there was work to be done, however miserably it might be paid, and so long as there was food in the house or ornaments or savings unpledged, the great mass of them refused relief. The charge of demoralisation which the Government of India—unfortunately, as I think—were led into making, and which they urged as a reason for stiffening the tests and increasing the harshness of the regimen of relief, is susceptible of a simple test. The Government returns, issued in May, showed a population of ninety millions in the famine districts. The precise percentage who were suffering acutely from privation is a matter of conjecture, but certainly a very large percentage were living in bitter poverty, eking out their scanty stores of grain with such food as they could grub from the ground or pick in the jungle. Yet at no time was there more than six and a quarter millions in receipt of Government relief. When it is remembered that of this army the great majority were women and children, and that it included the blind, the halt, the maimed and the aged in villages scattered over an area twelve times the size of England and Wales, can it be fairly said that the evidence supports the charge of demoralisation and pauperisation? . . . . . If I were to sum up my own impressions, I should say that the people showed wonderful resource and Spartan courage, and that they were only drawn by stress of dire privation to accept the help of the Government.

Mr. Nash describes briefly the system of relief, and repeats in substance his main criticisms of the mistakes of the authorities, and his admiration of the work of the British famine officials.

The British Officials.

Even where the systems were harshest the conduct of our officials in the execution of their trying and dangerous duties was often a bright spot. It is right that Englishmen at home should be made aware of the fine spirit and temper in which the work of relief has been carried on by their fellow-countrymen. I met dozens of men who were quietly doing work of a higher heroism than charging the enemy in the field or carrying off a wounded comrade under fire, work that was done in silence and loneliness, with every circumstance of depression to sicken the heart and slacken the nerve. There were no comrades to applaud and no public at home to rejoice over their brave deeds on these fields of death, to thank them for the firm and cheerful front they carried amidst scenes more horrible than any battlefield, and far more perilous. It was all in the day's work, and if death came at the end our Red Cross Knights lay down and died like men. That also was part of the bargain. The very quality of these men's services makes it all the sadder to reflect that, owing to mistakes and misconceptions and alarms in high quarters, the quality of our mercy was so strained, and help when it was given was in many instances given so late or so grudgingly as to make the efforts of the district officials in too many cases a forlorn hope. Bitter, too, is the memory of what happened when the case for an Imperial grant was brought before the British Parliament, when India, clothed in rags, her children dying, her flocks and herds destroyed, laid her head in the dust and in vain besought the supreme power who sits in the seat of her old gods to have mercy.

Dealing with the poverty of the people as a cause of famine, Mr. Nash remarks that "there was grain enough in India for everyone and sufficient food for the needs of the cattle, but the people had no money to buy." And things are going from bad to worse.

The Impoverishment of the People.

The Indian cultivators and their labourers are not only poor, but they are growing steadily poorer, and even such a hasty glance as I was able to take at their economic condition convinced me that the country is drifting to a position in which the money famine will become so chronic and acute as to endanger India's position as an agricultural country. It needs no power of prophecy to understand that land without capital will go out of cultivation, and the truth is that the cultivator's capital is rapidly running down to vanishing point. This famine has wiped out many millions, and left the land and the people in a worse state than a ten years' war would have done. As a writer has recently pointed out, there were twenty years of comparative immunity between the great famine of 1877 and that of 1897, and yet after the last famine the Commissioners reported that the resisting power of the people had decreased rather than increased; in other words, they have become poorer than before. If this progressive impoverishment is going on in good years, what is to become of the three hundred millions of people in India when famine and recurrent famine comes upon the scene? No Imperial question, as I think, comes home more closely than this to the English people, and specially to those who know what poverty is and who appreciate the freedom to combine and to make laws for the betterment of the community.

Mr. Nash then proceeds to enquire: What does the Indian rayat's poverty consist in?

How the Rayat Lives.

His wants are very few, and they are the same to-day as they were thousands of years ago. The Hindoo farmer asks for enough unleavened bread for himself and his family, for a little *ghi* or clarified butter, some condiments to flavour the bread, and for a well of sweet water. Give him these and supply him with a rough hut, a few cooking vessels and a handmill, sufficient clothes—not a heavy item—and fuel for cooking, and let him see his way to keeping his farm in working order, and he will be content. His pleasures are few and simple, and he has no ambitions except to be able to make the customary provision for his daughters on their marriage. To win the

means of livelihood he and his wife and children will toil and slave to make the most of their bit of land. No. The impoverishment which has overtaken millions of cultivators is of the stern order which often denies to the worker even this bare return for his work. "The rayat," wrote one of the great administrators of India, "toils that another may rest, and sows that another may reap." And one of the saddest sights to be seen in the Indian Empire, a sight so tragic that it forces you to ask whether our efforts to govern India for India's good have been in vain, is the ruined rayat as he bids farewell to the fields of his father and turns his back on the ancestral home.

"The expropriation of the hereditary cultivator," says Mr. Nash, "is the symptom of a state of poverty so extreme that it is mere waste of time to bandy words with those who would have us believe the lot of the Indian cultivator is in normal times a flourishing one, and that this lot is steadily improving under our administration. . . . . The general tendency is downwards into deeper misery and indebtedness and the final gulf reserved for a landless disinherited peasantry."

The Bondage of the Rayat.

The rayat loses his land or sinks into the position of a tenant-at-will—in fact, a serf—because of his indebtedness. But how is it that he has sunk into this hopeless bondage? And how comes it that land, which in the days before our rule could never, under any circumstances, be transferred outside the tribe or family, is permitted to be seized by the alien money-lender in satisfaction of his claims? The answers to these two questions hang together. It is admitted to-day by the Government of India that "the idea of a free transferable interest in land is at the root of the trouble." This "idea" was given currency to by the British under the impression that free trade and individual property in land would stimulate the ambition of the thrifty peasant and introduce Western ideas of property and all that entail. But experience shows that the gift was a fatal one to put into the hands of an ignorant peasantry. The new idea was worked by the cunning and unscrupulous usurers of the country for their own ends; the cultivators were tempted into debt, and the path of debt was smoothed for them in every way; the Government soon discovered that the new power of mortgaging was of assistance to them in collecting revenue from the cultivators; and finally the seal was set on the people's ruin by the institution of Civil Courts which put the power of the law at the disposal of the usurer.

The "ways of the money-lender" and the causes and extent of village indebtedness are concisely but effectively presented. Mr. Nash points out that the co-operative constitution of the village, which "had been proof against all the shocks of war and famine," has given way before "the corrosion of the individualistic competitive ideas brought from the West," and "the village life is held together only by a few shreds." He also touches on the vicious plan of borrowing for payment of the land revenue. Speaking generally of the land revenue, he shows its steady growth from £13,287,000 in 1861-65 (five years average) to £18,306,000 in 1898-99.

The Taxation of the Poor Man.

The revenue from the land is by far the most important source of income to the State, and it forms nearly half the Exchequer receipts. In India the poor man pays the taxes. He pays the bulk of the salt tax, which brings in nearly £6,000,000 a year; of the provincial rates, £2,609,663; and of the customs, £3,127,230. But if it is suggested that the land tax is excessive, the orthodox official reply is that the payments made are in respect of rent, and, as half the rent or farming profits is left to the cultivator, there can be no hardship in it. If this contention be examined on the spot and tested by the evidence of many of the most distinguished British officials, it will be found illusory. The idea of averages, as we have already seen, has broken down under the joint pressure of famine and debt, and in innumerable cases the "rent" is paid not out of profits at all, but out of what should be the subsistence fund, or else the money-lender pays it. The estimate which determines the assessment is itself a mere shot in the dark, a haphazard speculation, which, worked out though it is with infinite pains, is as liable to be upset by times and seasons and the turn of the market as the predictions of Old Moore's Almanac. . . . . To my mind the method of ascertaining "rent" that obtains in India is a species of necromancy, and one day the Government will wake up to find that in the name of rent it has been exhausting the soil and the people, drying up the source of India's wealth, and endangering the very existence of the country."

Finally, Mr. Nash makes certain broad suggestions towards a remedy for the disastrous state of things he pictures.

To Save the Rayat.

To remedy matters it is evident that there must be a revision of the whole system of land revenue in the direction both of flexibility and moderation; that the law must be brought to bear for the protection of the people against the money-lender; that a better system of credit must be devised; and that steps must be taken to preserve the people in the fields which for hundreds of years have belonged to them. India wants an anti-famine policy, a policy for the preservation and restoration of the rayat, a policy that will help him to recover something of his lost co-operative strength whilst giving him what his nature can stand in the way of Western stimulus. I have said nothing of the material aid afforded to such a policy by the extension of irrigation and the encouragement of industries, because these are matters on which everyone is agreed and some progress is being made. The connexion between the sad plight of the people and the economic situation which we ourselves have created is not so generally admitted, but its recognition is vital to the welfare of our Indian Empire, and every famine that passes calls to us afresh to understand and act.

While admitting that "there is some truth in the theories of Indian poverty which lay stress on the over-population of certain districts, on the process of morcellement (or cutting up of holdings), on youthful marriages, and excessive expenditure on social functions," Mr. Nash argues that "it is surely poor statesmanship to rely on the argument so often heard in India that the existence of evils that are due to the people's ignorance or the tyranny of custom, frees the Government from the obligation of undoing its own mistakes and striving its best to make the people prosperous and secure."

INDIAN FAMINES AND THEIR CAUSES.

ADDRESS BY MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI.

[From our own Reporter.]

On the evening of Sunday, February 10, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji lectured to the members of the Hatcham Liberal Club on the subject of "Indian Famines and their Causes." There was a fairly large attendance of members and their friends.

Mr. Naoroji after expressing his thanks for the invitation extended to him to lecture to them that evening, said the subject of India was one of vast importance to the British Empire at large, and he thought he could best illustrate the point he wished to make by asking his hearers to place themselves for a moment in a position similar to that occupied by the people of India. Let them suppose that this country was in the possession of the French, and that all the high Government offices were filled by Frenchmen, who compelled the English to pay some fifteen or twenty millions sterling annually to cover the cost of their own government. Suppose at the same time that Englishmen were only admitted to the low subordinate offices, what would be the result? The money paid to the French officials, with the exception of a very small portion of it, would be taken out of England and spent in France, and the English people consequently would get no return for it. It might even be worse. The money thus drained from England by French capitalists might be used for the exploitation of the English mineral and vegetable wealth. The resources of the country might be entirely monopolised by the French, the English being employed as mere labourers or helots. All the products of the soil would be taken away from England for the benefit of Frenchmen, and by that means the country would be subjected to a further drain of another twenty or twenty-five millions sterling annually. How could it be expected to prosper under such circumstances? Would the English be likely to remain contented under a foreign ruler under such conditions of life? Would they not immediately rebel? (Cries of "Yes.") Well, those were the conditions under which the Natives of India were compelled to exist. Year after year they had to provide 200 millions of rupees for the payment of the European Military and Civil Services. What was the inevitable result? As the ocean, if it did not receive back from rain and rivers the water which was evaporated from it, must in the long run dry up, so India subjected to this constant and heavy drain must be ruined, and the result was already apparent in the famines, pestilences and other miseries which were for ever afflicting her people. The money annually drained from India was no doubt sent back for the exploitation of her mines and other natural resources, but even these industries were monopolised by Europeans to the exclusion of the Natives and, consequently, the annual drain amounted to fully thirty or forty million sterling per annum. Could any country on the face of the earth stand such bleeding? And this it should be borne in mind came on the top of what had passed before. On the formation of the great Indian Empire England had not spent one single shilling. The whole cost had been borne by India, and in addition to that the greater portion of the blood shed in building it up had been blood of the Indians. England now possessed a great and magnificent Empire in the East; had she turned it to the best advantage? For 150 years English rule had obtained in India, and during the whole of that period the drain of Indian resources had been going on. At the beginning of the last century the sum annually taken out of the country did not exceed five millions sterling. But year by year the drain had increased in volume until the people had been reduced to the most miserable condition possible. Ought that to be the result of the British connexion with India? That was the question he wished to ask them that evening, and it was the question which the Indian Natives desired to address to the masses of the English people. It was to the British public that they looked for the redress of their grievances . . . . grievances which were due to the action of the servants of the British people. The Indian authorities had failed in the performance of their duties. He was confident that the British people had no desire to see India go to wreck and ruin. (Hear.) On the contrary they clearly and distinctly wished that India should be justly governed. (Hear, hear.) If only the promises held out in Acts of Parliament and in Royal Proclamations were duly fulfilled no country could possibly desire to be governed under better conditions. But, unfortunately, the European officials

in India had absolutely ignored all these promises. In the middle of the 18th century, when England first obtained territorial jurisdiction in Bengal and Behar, oppression and corruption were admitted to have prevailed to an extent "which had never been equalled in any country or in any age." That, according to the admission of the Court of Directors, was the beginning of the connexion between Britain and India ("Shame"), and the oppression went on until at last our statesmen, out of very shame, interfered. In the thirties the great reform movements were brought to a successful issue in England, and Emancipation Acts were passed which raised the British in the scale of nations, and earned for them the title of the most humane and civilised nation on the face of the earth. But nothing effectual was done at that time for India. It was the custom in those days for the Government to institute an examination every twenty years into the affairs of the East India Company with a view to the renewal of its Charter. In 1833 such an examination took place, and the leading men of the day discussed very exhaustively the question as to the way in which India should be governed. They came unanimously to the conclusion that there should be no distinction of colour, creed, or race, and that Indians should be employed in the service of her Majesty. (Hear, hear.) That was really the first Charter given to the Indian people. More they could not and did not want. They desired to be treated as British subjects and not as helots. But, unfortunately, the East India Company ignored the terms of the Charter for, although they wrote a fine despatch promising that admission to their service should be according to merit, without distinction of race or creed, they did nothing in the matter, and, in 1853, when their Charter again came up for consideration, great efforts were made by John Bright and others to insist that effect should be given to the promises made twenty years earlier. Soon after came the Mutiny, which was the fault of the authorities themselves. It was brought about by their own misconduct, and it was eventually admitted by English statesmen that the Natives themselves were not to blame for it; indeed, the Mutiny was chiefly suppressed by the aid of Indian arms. In 1858 they got what was known as their Greater Charter, in which it was promised that in the future Indian subjects should be treated in exactly the same manner as all other subjects of this country. (Hear, hear.) That Charter was later on twice confirmed by Queen Victoria—on the assumption by her of the title of Empress of India in 1877, and on the occasion of her Jubilee in 1887. Still the promise had remained a dead letter, and England had gone on bleeding and exhausting India for the sake of a small profit. Another century had begun. What was to be the future of India? He appealed to the people of this country, and especially to the democracy, to say whether these things were to continue. For 150 years the process of depletion and exhaustion had gone on. Was it not time that an end was put to it? (Hear.) Macaulay once said that the heaviest of all yokes was the yoke of the stranger. Was it to be the case that the yoke of Great Britain in India was to be, not that of the friend and helper, but that of the stranger, and consequently the heaviest of all? He hoped not. (Hear, hear.) The British public by their utterances in the past had shown that they did not wish India to be misgoverned. The failure to govern properly had been due, not to the will of the English people, but to the action of their servants in ignoring the solemn pledges which had been made. The result was plain before the world: India was now practically the most wretched of all countries. The failure to fulfil the pledges was dishonourable and contrary to all that the Indian people had been taught was the chief characteristic of England. They were always told in their schools that the British had acted according to their promises and did not shirk their responsibilities, but unfortunately experience had taught them a very different lesson. What would be the result if the present state of things continued? The Duke of Devonshire once said that if the present system of treating India were to be continued the effect would be that the Natives would wish to get rid of their European rulers! He appealed to the English people to realise their duties and responsibilities towards the Natives of India. He believed that if they fulfilled the solemn pledges so repeatedly made the famines and other troubles which now continually afflicted our Eastern dependency would disappear. (Hear, hear.) There was another ground—a selfish one—upon which he might also appeal for justice. If they enabled the people of India to become prosperous, if they afforded them the means wherewith to purchase British manufactures, British trade would enormously increase, and it would be impossible to find sufficient people for the employment which would be ready to their hands. (Hear.) Let them contrast two portions of the British dominions: in Australia with a population of barely five millions, and where free trade principles did not obtain, the inhabitants bought British manufactures to the extent of £5 per head per annum; in India where the population exceeded 300 millions, the purchases of British produce represented less than 2s. 6d. per head per annum. If, therefore, this country would exercise only an intelligent selfishness what a vast trade it might create for itself! We were ever on the look-out for fresh markets, yet here in India there was one ready to our hands, populated not by savages such as were to be found in South Africa, but by a highly civilised people who, 2000 years ago, when the British people were roaming nuclad in the forests, had already learnt to enjoy the good things of this world. (Hear.) In conclusion, Mr. Naoroji said the Indian people were anxious to forget the past and to let bygones be bygones. (Hear.) A new century had come in, a new Sovereign was reigning over us, and he was glad to remind them that King Edward had confirmed the action of his august Mother and had promised to follow in her footsteps. To him, therefore, they appealed for the redemption of the promises made in the various Royal Proclamations. In his efforts to fulfil them would he receive the support of the English public? Would the masses of this country compel the Executive Government to do their duty towards India? He believed that when the English people realised the terrible effects of past misgovernment, when they saw, too, how by doing mere justice to India, not only would the Indian people be benefited and relieved of their terrible misery and suffering, but the British nation would simultaneously profit to a far greater extent, they would insist on justice being done, and the appeal he was addressing to them would not have been made in vain. (Loud cheers.)

A resolution similar to that passed at other meetings addressed by Mr. Naoroji was unanimously adopted, and, after a short debate, which elicited from the lecturer some interesting information as to the oppression caused by the existing land system in India, the proceedings closed with the customary votes of thanks.

THE FUTURE OF INDIA.

SIDELIGHTS FROM SHAKESPEARE.

The Hon. Dr. Miller, Principal of the Madras Christian College, has published through Messrs. G. A. Natesan and Co. a striking brochure on Shakespeare's "King Lear";[1] and perhaps the most remarkable part of it is the conclusion where he attempts "to point for Indian students some of the morals with which 'King Lear' abounds." These morals are well worth the attention of every politician, British as well as Indian.

Dr. Miller does not anticipate that any one will contest his allegation that "it is broadly true of India hitherto, as of the Britain set before us in this drama, that the bond of society has been bare authority on the one side and unreasoning obedience on the other"; nor yet his further allegation "that the time has come in India, as Shakespeare represents it as having come in the days of Lear, when this condition of society must give place to a better and a higher." On the latter point he says:—

> Those must be strangely ignorant of the forces which are at work, and which ought to be at work, in the India of our day, who can imagine it to be either possible or right that the inmost principle of rule for the generations next to come should be that on which countless bygone generations have been governed. As plainly as in the days of Lear, the time is upon us when if there be not such transition as he felt to be required, there will be such phenomena as were rising round him, "in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; . . . machinations, hollowness, treachery and all ruinous disorders," until society becomes rotten to the core and ends in dissolution.

Accordingly Dr. Miller proceeds to set forth the principles that "must regulate this indispensable transition":—

> The first, the broadest, the most important, of those principles is that the possibility of the transition being made without ruin depends on those moral forces being at work within society which this play sums up under the comprehensive name of "love." If those moral forces have not an effective influence on the life of the body politic, calamity of every kind is sure to come as soon as bare authority begins to be withdrawn, or begins to be unwelcome to the ruled and accordingly to be resisted by them.

He cites Milton to enforce the lesson of Shakespeare. "Nay," he proceeds, "does not the story of England in Milton's time give ample emphasis to the lesson which he tried in vain to teach?"

> Yes, the failure of the Commonwealth and the lapse of England into the moral anarchy, the social degradation, and the political enslavement that came after it, is an example, to those who can read history aright, of the absolute need there is that "love" should have deep and widespread influence if any community is to pass safely through the stage at which it is right that unreasoning obedience should cease, and that bare authority should no longer reign. It is an example equally of the danger of haste in effecting the transition from the lower to the higher stage. In the play, the attempt of the king to introduce the reign of love at a single stroke, with the consequent preference of the pretence of love to the reality, is largely responsible for the tragical result. In historical fact, the attempt to reduce to practice the grand ideals of the English Commonwealth before the mass of those who made up the social organism could so much as understand them, was to no small extent the cause of the collapse of everything good and true which marked the Restoration.

But while "fatal disorganisation is the sure result if force be withdrawn before 'love' has gained sufficient power," "fatal disorganisation is the equally sure result if the dominion of bare authority be maintained too long."

> In a country situated as India is at present, this is the side on which there is the greater practical temptation to err. When long established custom tends in the same direction as that regard for self and desire of prominence which is strong in nearly all men, too prolonged clinging to authority is more probable than its premature abandonment. When rulers are men of ordinary calibre and but ordinary insight, there is pressing danger that they will be extremely slow to transfer any of their power to others, or rather perhaps that, while laying aside some of it in appearance, they will struggle to retain every particle of it in reality. It is given to but few who have become habituated to rule, as it was given to Lear, to see when the time has come for the *régime* of "love" taking the place of the *régime* of authority. Nay, there is the further danger, which

[1] "Shakespeare's 'King Lear' and Indian Politics." By William Miller, C.I.E., D.D., LL.D. (Madras: G. A. Natesan and Co.; London: Luzac and Co., Great Russell Street. Price Re. 1, or 2s.)

also did not escape Shakespeare's observation, that even those in whom "love" is strong, and who have no personal ends to serve, may be tempted to fall back on outward force for the cure of evils which force can no longer cure. It is the deeply injurious mistake of the noble and true-hearted Kent. To steer between the Scylla of too soon and the Charybdis of too late in effecting the transition from the lower to the higher stage of social and political organisation will be the perilous but honourable task of those in charge of the destinies of India in the years immediately before us.

Dr. Miller, of course, disclaims the attempt to define the safe middle way, but he offers a suggestion on both sides. In the first place:—

Those who see, as Lear saw in his kingdom, that the time has come when India must be ruled on principles different from the principles that have been supreme till now—those who rightly see that India needs to be transformed into an organism far more self-directed, and affording far more scope for individual energy, are not to suppose that no condition of society is healthy or satisfactory except the most fully developed that is exemplified anywhere in the world. . . . . Things go wrong only when there is an attempt to maintain methods and principles of rule after the time for which they are fitted has gone by, or when methods and principles are introduced before the time which they befit has come. Those who desire that, in matters of government, India should be even as Britain, are not to be disappointed when it grows clear to them that there can be full consummation of their hopes only in a distant future. Every step on the way to that consummation, if only it fits the time, will be beautiful and healthy—far better and more beautiful than any portion of the way will be if progress is pressed prematurely on. There is fitness and therefore beauty, and there ought to be supreme satisfaction to the onlooker, in every stage of the life-history of a plant—in its green upspringing, in its branching and its leafage, in its tender unopened buds, quite as much as in its flower, or in the fruit which it produces when decay and death are near. This is the warning which a review of "King Lear" suggests to those who, in regard to Indian politics, are in danger of rushing on the Scylla of *too fast*.

On the other hand, there is a "warning for those who tend to be overwhelmed in the opposite Charybdis of *too slow*":—

The indispensable transformation of the principle of rule must not be delayed for ever on the pretext that preparation for it is insufficient, and that inward moral forces are still too weak. Perfect preparation for anything whatever there will never be in this world. . . . . What is needed is that those on whom the responsibility rests should have discernment to know when what Shakespeare calls "love" is present in sufficient force to bear the community through the dangers of transition, and that they should have the strength of will to choose the time that is neither too early nor too late. Of course those who have the wit and the decision so to act will reap little popularity. They will be denounced on the one side as demagogues and firebrands at the very moment when they are being denounced on the other as time-servers, reactionaries, and cowards. If they are men of "love," the amount of suffering implied in this abuse from both sides will not be too hard for them to bear. If at the same time they are men of strength, the abuse may lighten their task by affording them amusement. Men gifted thus with power to discern their time and bear its burdens—gifted with that constructive statesmanship of which the dearth is lamentably conspicuous—are the crying want of India as regards its social and political concerns.

In conclusion, Dr. Miller refers to a few essential points. Thus:—

Prominent among them is the lesson that such men must give free play to whatever of this "love" they have. Nothing must be allowed to withhold them from any action that the time demands. They may be tempted to keep in the background by disgust at the malignity of others, or by some fit of temper. This is what is seen in Cordelia. Or they may yield to such slowness or timidity of nature as holds Albany in subjection for a time. A hundred evil tendencies, perhaps in the disguise of modesty, may restrain them. But if those who are sound at heart are silent when they ought to speak, or inactive when deeds are called for, behold the inevitable result! The neglected opportunity will be seized by the Generils and Regans of the hour. Power will pass to those who will use it for wholly selfish ends. These will soon find Oswalds to be their tools, Edmunds to bring energy and talents to their aid, and perhaps Cornwalls to emulate their atrocities.

It is further needed that single-minded patriots should, "in regard to everything, and chiefly in regard to patience, conform to the laws by which this whole frame of things is governed." Thus:—

Edgar, not Lear, must be their model. It has been shown that the old King's grasping after the immediate attainment of his ends is the direct occasion of all the ruin. His ends are altogether excellent. He fails to gain them because he takes his own hasty way instead of following the patient path by which alone it is possible to reach them. Those who wish to bring on a brighter political and social day in India must try no short cuts. They must learn from history how the good things they desire can really be got. They must be as ready to act on the laws which history reveals as the cultivator is ready to act on the laws which, after long digging, and manuring, and watering, and tending, provide for him the harvest that he longs for.

Then there is the need of self-restraint. And finally this:—

Those who are to give effective help in that transition must be prepared to pay the price not only of loss of popularity—that is but a small thing—but of real trouble and real suffering. They will suffer for mistakes which they are sure to make themselves. They will suffer for the mistakes of others. They will suffer from the hatred which their very devotion to unselfish ends is certain to inspire in those whose motive is self-interest, or love of applause, or love of power. It is only by treading the path of suffering that "love" can combat the evils of its time and vanquish them. Men may shut their eyes to this law, or may complain of it. It is useless to do either, for this is the unalterable condition on which enduring good is ever done. To its heroes and benefactors, the world always "gives the cross where it owes the crown." Their suffering may pass in course of time, as it does with Edgar; or it may end only when life ends, as with Cordelia. But without pain and self-sacrifice and trial to those who achieve, there cannot, in this world, be achievement that is worth the name.

"By the help of those, and none but those, who face these facts and are not deterred by them, can the transformation take place which it is only right all sons of India should earnestly desire." Readers must go to the brochure itself for the full force of Dr. Miller's able and judicious exposition.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

THE REFERENCE TO THE FAMINE COMMISSION.

The *Manchester Guardian* writes (February 11):—

The news from India is disquieting. On January 24 the Viceroy telegraphed that in Gujerat, the Deccan, and the Carnatic districts of Bombay the crop prospects were bad, and serious distress was expected between now and August. In other words, another year of famine over a large part of Bombay Presidency is now inevitable. The Native State of Baroda and part of Hyderabad will also be affected, and indeed at the present moment there are in these districts nearly a quarter of a million people—the remnant of the sufferers from last year's famine—on relief. At the same time that new relief measures are being concerted the Famine Commission is at work in Gujerat enquiring into the relief administration of 1899 and 1900, and some very strong remarks from the President, Sir Antony MacDonnell, have been telegraphed home respecting the deficiencies of the Bombay system. He is reported to have said that the people in the Gujerat famine camps died like flies when subjected to excessive tasks, and that totally inadequate provision was made for the distribution of gratuitous famine relief. Our readers who followed the story of the famine will hardly be surprised at this verdict, given as it is before the evidence has all been heard and far in advance of the Commission's report. We can only hope that the Commission will carry the same fearless judgment into every part of the field of investigation, so that in the fresh year of suffering which is visiting these unhappy people the scenes that were described by our special correspondent may not be repeated. Some natural disappointment has been expressed at the limited nature of the Commission's reference. Is it too much, we wonder, to hope that Lord Curzon may see his way to extend it so as to include the contributory causes of famine? We are aware that at the present moment a Committee is enquiring into the means for organising some system of public credit for the benefit of the rayats who are being drained dry by the money-lenders, while the Public Works Department are seeing whether more cannot be done to develop irrigation works during times of distress. All this is as it should be. But a widespread demand exists for a report—or, to use Lord Rosebery's expression, a stock-taking—of the economic position of the peasantry of India, so that we may know the extent and causes of the chronic destitution which afflicts the people of India and lays them low at the approach of drought.

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON INDIAN QUESTIONS.

On February 17 Sir William Wedderburn will deliver an address to the South London Ethical Society (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New Road, S.E.) upon "Famines in India and their Causes."

On February 27 Sir William Wedderburn will deliver an address upon Famines in India at Toynbee Hall.

Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji proposes to deliver addresses on Indian questions as follows:—

February 26.—New Lansdowne Liberal and Radical Club, 1 and 2, Twemlow Terrace, West Street, London Fields, at 8 p.m. Subject: Famine in India.

March 9.—Leighton Park School, Reading, at 8 p.m.

March 10.—Reading: (1) To members of the First Day Adult School, at 9.30 a.m.; (2) to the Castle Street Chapel Pleasant Hour Society, in the Chapel, at 3 p.m.

March 31.—South London Ethical Discussion Society (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New Road, S.E.) at 11.15 a.m.

On Sunday next, February 17, Mr. G. P. Pillai will speak on "Your Duty to India," at the Bayswater Free Church, Queen's Road, at 3 p.m.

PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO INDIA.

To be obtained from
THE BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,
84-85, PALACE CHAMBERS, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

Reports of the Proceedings at the Annual Sessions of the Indian National Congress, from the 3rd to the 14th Session. 2s. each, post free.

The Skeleton at the (Jubilee) Feast (Congress Green Book I.), by Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN, Bart. (being a series of suggestions for the prevention of famine in India). Post free, 7d.

Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure: Evidence-in-Chief of the Indian Witnesses. (Congress Green Book II.) Post free, 1s. 10d.

The Proposed Separation of Judicial and Executive Functions in India. Memorial to the Secretary of State. With two Appendices. (Congress Green Book III.) Post free, 1s. 2d.

Two Statements presented to the Indian Currency Committee (1898), by MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI.

Speech by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P., in the House of Commons, August 14, 1894, on the Debate on the Indian Budget.

Ditto do. in the House of Commons, February 12, 1895, on the Debate on the Address.

Ditto do. on British Rule in India (1898).

Presidential Address by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P., delivered to the Indian National Congress at Lahore, 1893.

Presidential Address by Mr. A. M. Bose, M.A., delivered to the Indian National Congress at Madras, 1898.

Speeches of Mr. Alfred Webb, M.P., President of the Indian National Congress, 1894-5.

Valedictory Address of Mr. Alfred Webb, M.P., delivered at Bombay, January 17, 1895.

Speeches of Mr. D. E. Wacha delivered at the 9th, 11th and 14th Sessions of the Indian National Congress.

Is the Government of India Responsible to Anyone, and if so to Whom? Speech delivered at Croydon by Mr. W. C. BONNERJEE.

The Famine in India. Speeches delivered at a Public Reception to Mr. Vaughan Nash on his return from the Famine Districts, July, 1900.

Mr. A. O. Hume's Farewell to India. Speech delivered at Bombay, 1894.

India Reform Pamphlet IX. The State and Government of India under its Native Rulers. 3d.

The Indian National Congress: its Aims and Justification. By ROBERT KNIGHT.

Indian Politics. A Series of Papers on Important Indian Questions by Prominent Congressmen. Post free, 4s. 4d.

A Needed Reform in the Indian Administration, by ROMESH C. DUTT, C.I.E.

The Bogey of a Russian Invasion. A Lesson from the Tirah Campaign, by Col. H. B. HANNA.

The High Courts and the Collector-Magistrates in India, by J. DACOSTA.

The Government of India and its Reform through Parliamentary Institutions, by J. DACOSTA.

Indian Polity: being Extracts from the Writings of Major Evans Bell.

Note on Sir J. Westland's Budget, 1894-5.

Note on the Explanatory Memorandum of the Secretary of State for India, 1894-5.

Note on Sir James Westland's Budget, 1895-6.

Note on Sir H. Waterfield's Tables, 1884-5 to 1894-5.

The Poor Man's Lamb: Famine Insurance for the Masses *versus* Exchange Compensation for the Classes.

REPRINTS FROM "INDIA."

The Judiciary and the Executive in India. Interview with Mr. Manomohan Ghose.

The Bombay Government and Higher Education, by the Hon. C. H. Setalvad.

A National Famine Grant. Letter from the London Indian Society to Lord Salisbury, 1900.

India and the General Election (1900).

"Melancholy Meanness."

The "Over-population" Fallacy Again.

No National Contribution?

A Selection of the Publications enumerated above will be forwarded to responsible persons or Associations in the United Kingdom for gratuitous distribution, on written application to the British Committee, Indian National Congress, 84-85, Palace Chambers, Westminster, S.W.

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