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THE DECCAN RYOTS

49335

Rare section

AND THEIR

LAND TENURE.



BY

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P R E F A C E .

This pamphlet is a reprint of a series of articles which appeared in the *Bombay Gazette*, in the months of June, July, and August, 1852.

The subject of Land Tenures, which has always excited great attention in India, has recently also been forced into some prominence at home by the agitation of the Tenant Right League in Ireland; and it was thought that an account of a Tenure in some respects resembling the one which it is sought to obtain through that agitation, and which has been voluntarily granted to the peasantry of a portion of the Bombay Presidency, and is about, with all practicable speed, to be extended to the remainder, might prove interesting in England as well as in India.

It will be seen that, in the course of the inquiry, the writer's means of information, (which are for the most

part indicated in the last article,) grew more extensive, and that he speaks, therefore, on one or two points with more confidence and decision in the latter than in the former portion of the pamphlet. There is also a certain assumption of identity with the Editor of the spirited and ably-conducted Journal in which the articles originally appeared, which, now that they are published in a separate form, the writer of course begs to disclaim.

Poonah, September, 1852.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

The correspondent, a letter from whom we inserted in No. IX., has sent us a few remarks on our concluding article, or, rather, on the six paragraphs of it in which we have summed up the results of our inquiries.

Our correspondent thinks that we have scarcely done justice to the results of the new settlement. We believe that we have come to the only conclusions which the evidence—furnished chiefly by the Government records—will warrant.

We also think that some of his remarks are hardly so much comments on our statements as anxious attempts to guard against possible misconstructions of them. But even so considered, the criticisms may be useful, and we therefore insert them in an Appendix.

“Before venturing any observations on your summing up,” I must premise that you have had before you a great deal of correspondence on the subject of the settlement, which I have never seen at all, and that my remarks, therefore, will have reference to that portion only of the evidence of which I am cognizant.

“I am quite at one with your other critics as to the perfect fairness of your whole representation, and your summing up agrees in the main with my own views, though considerably less favourable to the Survey. The following suggestions will explain the points

on which I am at all doubtful of the validity of your results. I will take your six paragraphs in order.

“ 1st.—The deficiency of capital may have been compensated by increased industry, and the evidence seems to shew that it was so to a considerable extent. The slovenly cultivation referred to under this head, is not, I think, proved, unless it refer to the new land taken into cultivation immediately following the introduction of the new settlement.

“ 2nd.—I am not satisfied that cultivation carried on without sufficient capital exhausts the soil. It is not in my opinion the want of capital so much as a bad style of farming that exhausts the land. It is continued cropping without manure that does the evil, and the greater the capital employed in this style of farming, the more rapidly will the exhaustion proceed, because the heavier will be the crops taken off without anything being given to the soil in return.

“ 3rd.—The remarks on 1st paragraph apply with greater force to this. I am not aware of anything in the evidence that supports the conclusion that, *after the reaction*, the land in cultivation is more imperfectly tilled than before the settlement. This is a point to be established by testimony more than by statistics. Frere's account of Indapoor and my own observation, if not over-balanced by the evidence of equally competent witnesses, lead, I think, to the conclusion that improved tillage is a general result of the survey settlements, and consequently that a gross produce has been increased by this, as well as by extension of cultivation. A further inference from this would be, that agricultural capital increases not slowly but rapidly. Without having seen your appendix on prices, I am not in a position to offer an opinion on your conclusion that the markets are overstocked. Prices in this country are ultimately dependent on the necessity of exporting enough to meet our home charges, and this will probably always keep them at a low standard.

“ 4th.—The remarks on the improvements in tillage already given, apply also here. I may as well mention in this place, that I greatly understated the number of saw gins sold to natives in this Collectorate, [Dharwar] in a former letter. I have now obtained from Mr. Blount, the superintendent of cotton experiments in this province, the following information as to the number, size and price of gins sold in this Collectorate up to the present time, which may be relied on as correct.

Number of Gins sold.	Number of Saws in each Gin.	Price of each Gin—Rs.	Price of the whole—Rs
1	25	225	225
2	24	225	450
3	20	220	660
43	18	200	9600
9	14	170	1530
3	13	170	510
5	10	100	500
1	8	80	80
115	7	50	5750
187			19,305

} All purchased by Natives.

5 Purchased by European dealers.

192 Total number sold up to this time.

“The first sales were made in 1848, so that in four years the cotton dealers of this Collectorate have invested 20,000 rupees in the purchase of these machines. This is, I think, a fact worth recording, and I wish you could manage to substitute it for the former incorrect allusion to the number sold.

“5th.—I agree entirely with you in regard to this head. Have you noticed a sad illustration of its correctness in a report published in the *Bombay Gazette* of 6th instant, of a village money-lender in the Sholapoor Collectorate having been murdered by some of his debtors, under circumstances that give strong grounds for suspecting that the whole body of villagers approved of the deed? This casual withdrawal of the curtain for a moment discloses a state of things quite appalling; if we consider the case, as it is to be feared we must, as a result of the general relations which our administration of civil justice has brought about between debtor and creditor in agricultural villages.

“6th.—I question the propriety of the use of the word Pauperism in the paragraph, and doubt if any enquiry would discover anywhere in the surveyed district the existence of what is termed Pauperism in Europe. I understand the word to refer to a state of things in which the able-bodied and willing to work can find no work, and would starve but for the aid of others. I cannot recollect having ever met with this in any of the surveyed districts, and should say that Pauperism is unknown in them all. Parper cultivators in the phraseology of revenue reports are to be met with, but these are bankrupt farmers, and they would have no difficulty

in finding work as labourers. If you refer to the latter, it would be desirable, I think, to explain the sense in which you use the word.

“ With these few reservations your conclusions seem to me to be as sound, as the whole tone of your review is eminently fair and impartial.”

Having inserted these remarks, we ought perhaps to give specimens of a great deal of testimony which we have—especially from native correspondents—differing very widely from this letter. We fear, however, that we are already too voluminous, and will only say that in the very few places in which the difference between ourselves and our correspondent is not merely an apparent or verbal one, we find ourselves compelled to think him somewhat too sanguine in his views; and that, after the fullest consideration of all the evidence we have been able to collect on the subject, we adhere deliberately to the conclusions contained in our final article.

(B.)

AVERAGE RATES OF WAGES AT POONAH.

From 1775 to 1804.			From 1798 to 1820.			Of 1852.		
Labourers,	Monthly wages.		Labourers.	Monthly wages.		Labourers.	Monthly wages.	
	Rs.	A.		Rs.	A.		Rs.	A.
Cook.....	4	...	Carpenter			Carpenter 1st	15	...
Water bearer.....	4	...	No. 1.....	15	...	ditto 2nd	12	...
Carpenter	10	...	ditto No. 2.....	12	...	ditto 3rd	10	...
Servant.....	4	...	ditto No. 3.....	10	...	Bricklayer	15	...
Female servant...	2	8	Bricklayer	15	...	ditto No. 2	12	...
Labourer	3	12	ditto No. 2.....	12	...	ditto „ 3	10	...
Female labourer ..	2	12	ditto „ 3	10	...	Servant.....	3	8
Boy	1	12	Servant... ..	5	10	Female servant ..	2	8
Bricklayer.....	10	...	Female servant	3	8	Labourer.	3	12
Stone-cutter... ..	15	...	Boy... ..	3	...	Woman... ..	2	13
Palanquin bearer.	6	...	Tailor 1st rate	15	...	Boy... ..	2	13
Servant under			Hired Pony			Tailor 1st rate	15	...
Carpenter.....	7	8	with a driver	15	...	Stone cutter... ..	15	...
			ditto Bullock			Sawyer	16	...
			ditto	6	...	Hired Pony with		
			do. cart do... .	15	...	a driver... ..	10	...
			Sawyer... ..	15	...	ditto Cart do.	16	...

This table is framed from the old records of family expenditure of a private gentleman, named Trimbeck Harri Vurtuck,

This is taken from the Nirukh papers of the Peshwa's Duffer.

The table C. has been furnished by some native friends, grain dealers in Poonah,

(C.)

AVERAGE RATES at Poonah of Bajree and Joaree, the grains most largely consumed in the Deccan (and in Guzerat,) from the year 1837 to 1852. Quantity per rupee in pylees and shairs.

BAJREE.						JOAREE.					
Year.	Rates.		Year.	Rates.		Year.	Rates.		Year.	Rates.	
	P.	S.		P.	S.		P.	S.		P.	S.
1837	6	3	1845	5	0	1837	8	0	1845	6	0
1838	8	0	1846	3	1½	1838	11	1½	1843	3	3
1839	5	3	1847	6	0	1839	5	0	1847	6	2½
1840	6	3	1848	10	1½	1840	8	0	1848	12	3
1841	7	0	1849	9	2	1841	9	1	1849	12	0
1842	7	1	1850	6	0	1842	9	3	1850	6	2
1843	8	1	1851	5	3	1843	9	3	1851	7	0
1844	7	2	1852	6	2	1844	8	0	1852	9	0

		Pylees.	
Bajree average for	1st eight years.	7,086	
Do. do.	2nd do. do.	6,560	

Joaree average for	1st eight years.	8,640	
Do. do.	2nd do. do.	7,953	

In the second eight years, one (1846) of very unusual drought occurs;—omitting this, the second averages would be Bajree 7 pylees, Joaree 8.55,—almost identical with the averages for the first eight years.

The general results are of considerable interest and importance. It will be seen that,—

1st. General prices now *are not half what they were at the commencement of the century!* and that the change has been entirely consequent on our accession to power in the Deccan.

2nd. That the fall has long since ceased, and that prices now are either stationary, or, perhaps, slightly tending to rise.

3rd. That the prices of labour have remained wonderfully constant for upwards of three quarters of a century, in spite of great fluctuations, and even great permanent changes in the prices of food; custom, the regulator of so many things in India, although powerless over the prices of commodities, yet ruling the labour market almost absolutely,—as it does, with us in England, the fees of lawyers and physicians.

If we now ask whether we are to rejoice or lament over this low range of prices, the answer will depend very much on the class of interest with which we happen to sympathize. Low prices of produce, of course, necessitate low rates on the land, and the Government, and the native aristocracy, who share the rent with the Government, have to content themselves with a much lower money revenue.

The importance of this will depend on the extent to which the revenue consuming classes expend their incomes on foreign commodities. As prices are low, the low money incomes—did the

consumers demand only the produce of the country—would be just as effective as the former high ones had been. Our Government, however, and, even the native aristocracy of the present day, are very large consumers of foreign goods, and the low rates, therefore, represent to them a real and very great impoverishment of the province. On the other hand, the labourer who obtains the same wages as formerly, and spends almost the whole of them on the produce of the country, which produce is at half its former price, is of course virtually twice as rich. And, indeed, the general result of our *regime* is the elevation of the lower classes, and the depression of the higher. A Dufterdar, the chief native revenue officer in a province, and a village low caste watchman, although still greatly different in social estimation, are, under our levelling rule, undoubtedly much more nearly on an equality than they ever were before. Our Government is emphatically the friend of the poor, and the deadly enemy—not of a commercial or manufacturing aristocracy, whenever that shall arise—but of the old land-revenue-consuming, fighting, and ruling aristocracy.

It will be proper to notice that a part—doubtless much the smaller part—of the reduction of prices, is the result of the abolition of transit duties, the penetration (as far as it has proceeded) of the Deccan by cart-roads, and the greater general security which now exists ; and that, so far, the fall of prices is an unmixed benefit, cheapening goods for all, and reducing nobody's income. Also that, simultaneously with the fall of prices here, the progress of commerce and industry abroad, since the great European pacification of 1815, and especially of English commerce and industry, has caused a very great reduction in the cost of many kinds of foreign goods, rendering the diminution of the money revenue of the province—a diminution which we have seen is only important with reference to foreign products—less felt than it otherwise would be.

And finally we may observe that, as far as we can judge from only one of the Deccan markets, the Revenue Survey Settlement, with all the increased cultivation to which it gives rise, has not produced

any general decline of prices, the present very low range having been reached, apparently, from fifteen to twenty years ago. We must certainly add, however, that this very interesting question is precisely the one concerning which we are in possession of the least amount of information.

THE END.

BOMBAY :

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