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BOMBAY
1885 to 1890

A study in Indian administration

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PREFACE

OAKEN HOLT, CUMNOR, BERKS,
1st January, 1892.

DEAR MISS FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE,

Some time ago you asked me to write a book which would show the practical working of British administration in an Indian Presidency. You pointed out that while the yearly 'Statement of the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India' supplies Parliament with the materials for judging of the results of our rule in India, there is no work readily available to the public which exhibits the local methods by which those results are attained. The constitution of the Supreme Government of India has, indeed, been ably treated of; but similar facilities do not exist for gaining a clear view of the modern mechanism of the Provincial Governments, and of their actual impact on the people.

The Presidency of Bombay discloses in a striking light the progressive and the conservative aspects of Indian administration, and the problem of State-ownership of the land in its most direct form. The recent Governor of

Bombay was peculiarly qualified to deal with questions arising in such a Province, for while trained in an hereditary conservatism of an almost archaic type, he was by personal character and conviction essentially a man of progress. I do not think that I could better fulfil the promise made to you, than by this account of the administration of Western India during the governorship of Lord Reay, from 1885 to 1890.

In laying out the work, I have not been forgetful of the points to which you drew my attention as helpful to a correct understanding of the subject. I open, therefore, with a brief sketch of the country, and of the diverse peoples which inhabit its four speech-divisions. I then explain the framework of the Presidency government, its internal constitution, and its relations on the one hand to the Supreme Government of India, and on the other to the Provincial administrative body. Its dealings with the multitudinous Native States, which form so conspicuous a feature of South-Western India, next pass under review; illustrated, I believe, for the first time, by an attempt to bring out in a clear light the various personal types presented by the Feudatory Chiefs.

Having thus exhibited the system of Provincial government, alike in regard to its internal constitution and its external relations, I proceed to exhibit it in contact with the population of the British Districts; and first of all its attitude to the progressive classes as expressed by the great Department of Education. The State ownership and State management of the land, from the initial questions connected with the conservation of scarcely inhabited forest tracts to the complex problems arising out of tenant-right in densely peopled and closely cultivated areas, occupy the central

chapters of the book. The functions which the Government, as at once the chief landlord and the chief capitalist in India, is called on to undertake for the material progress of the country by means of public works, follow. I then endeavour to explain the new and extremely interesting developments which the decentralisation of Indian finance is bringing about. The Provincial taxation, apart from the land revenue, leads to a discussion of the much-vexed question of Indian excise, with its effects on public morals and on the discouragement, or the spread, of intemperance. The chapter on the protection of person and property reviews the judicial and police systems. I next pass to the question which is, perhaps, the crucial question of Indian Provincial administration in our time, and to which you asked my particular attention—the development of local self-government by means of municipal institutions and District Boards. An account is then given of the changes in the armament and defences of Bombay during the five years under review: and the volume concludes with certain questions which may materially affect the Presidency government at a not distant date.

Now that the work is done, to whom can I more fitly dedicate it than to you, dear Miss Nightingale—to you whose life has been a long devotion to the stricken ones of earth; to you whose deep sympathy with the peoples of India, no years of suffering or of sickness are able to abate?

I am,

Your Sincere Friend,

W. W. HUNTER.

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