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NOTES FROM A DIARY

Notes from a Diary

Kept chiefly in Southern India

1881-1886

BY THE RIGHT HON.

SIR MOUNTSTUART E. GRANT DUFF

G.C.S.I.

“On ne doit jamais écrire que de ce qu'on aime.
L'oubli et le silence sont la punition qu'on inflige à ce
qu'on a trouvé laid ou commun dans la promenade à travers
la vie.”—RENAN

IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. I

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1899

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TO
ALL THE INDIAN FRIENDS
WHO ASSISTED ME
IN MY PUBLIC DUTIES
OR MADE MY LEISURE HOURS AGREEABLE
AND
TO ALL THE CORRESPONDENTS
WHO KEPT UP MY RELATIONS
WITH THE WORLD I LEFT BEHIND
ON THE 5TH OCTOBER 1881
I INSCRIBE THESE PAGES

PREFACE

IN two volumes which appeared in 1897, and in two others which followed them, at a year's interval, I published large portions of my *Diary* kept between the first day of the half-century now approaching its close, and the 5th of October 1881, when I left England for India.

From these four volumes I excluded nearly everything that related to the more serious interests of my life, such as the business of the House of Commons, and the political opinions I had formed during many journeys, undertaken with a view to study persons and circumstances on the European continent. I had said all I cared to say about these matters, in my place in Parliament, on many platforms, in several books, as well as in a great variety of pamphlets and

signed articles. I thought myself justified accordingly in directing my endeavours chiefly to amuse the lighter hours of readers, whose tastes, in the employment of those hours, were not unlike my own.

The two volumes which I now offer to the indulgence of those who care to follow me into new scenes, cover the period which elapsed between my departure from this country and my laying down the Government of Madras in December 1886.

So far as I can, I have excluded business, politics, and the graver interests of a Governor from these pages also ; but there is this difference between the life to which I had been accustomed in the House of Commons, and the life I led in India. The Head of an Indian Government knows nothing of the Recesses which diversify the Parliamentary year and prevent its monotony becoming intolerable. The day hardly ever dawns for him which is not largely occupied with public affairs of one kind or another.

That being so, it is hardly possible absolutely to exclude business from these pages ; but I have done my very best to effect that object. I am the more able to do this, because in 1884 and 1886 I published in India two "Minutes" *Anglicè* State-papers in the nature of Bluebooks, which, taken together, set forth pretty fully my views upon the things which most occupied my mind in my capacity of Governor of Madras, and sent copies of them to all my friends in this country whom I thought likely to be interested in Indian Administration.

For some reasons I should like to have reprinted these as part of this work ; but as they would have nearly or altogether doubled its size, have been very dreary reading for persons not interested in Indian affairs, and have thus scared away the very readers to whom the four volumes, of which these are a continuation, were specially addressed, that course was out of the question. I have placed, however, in an Appendix, an address which I delivered at

Madras as Chancellor of its University, in which I said a good deal upon subjects lying within the province of an Academic authority rather than of a Governor.

Outside my immediate duties, my two greatest pleasures in the East were the letters of my friends in Europe or elsewhere, and the vegetation surrounding me, which made almost every walk ride and drive extremely agreeable. Of the first of these pleasures, my readers will be able to judge from the numerous extracts with which the kindness of a great many people has allowed me to enrich these pages. I have been obliged, however, for obvious reasons, to leave unused all, or nearly all, letters which dealt with politics and kept me exceedingly well-informed about what was going on, at least up to the eve of the great earthquake which shattered the party with which I had so long acted.

Of the pleasure I derived from the vegetation of the country, I cannot so easily convey an idea. Yet to leave it out entirely would give so false

an impression that, although I shall strike out references to it by the hundred, I must perforce leave a certain number, which can, however, easily be skipped by those who have no interest in plants. Such of my readers as care for good stories will, I think, find a reasonable number of them, though not so many as I may have to offer at some future period, when I may be dealing with my life after I had returned to Europe, and found myself once more, to borrow a phrase from Dr. Parr, *in plena luce Londinensi*.

I trust the two volumes will leave on the mind the impression that the life of an Indian Governor may be a very agreeable one, and it must be remembered that the official portion of it, hardly noticed in these pages, the *solidus dies*, extending from after breakfast till the sun is low enough for the evening ride, is often full of interest. People in this country think that Indian business is dull because its nomenclature is puzzling and its geography unfamiliar. It is, nevertheless, far from being dull to those who

have to transact it in direct contact with the facts. Some matters, no doubt, which come within the ken of a Governor are tiresome enough, more especially the "personal questions"; but the large questions of policy, of which there is good store, and many items of mere current business are frequently very interesting indeed.

When a man has for nearly a quarter of a century led the life of a Member of Parliament, ever critical when out of office, ever on the defensive when in office, it is highly agreeable to be able to say practically the last word upon almost everything he cares to form an opinion about. To look at public affairs from the point of view of the local British Providence for between thirty and forty millions of men, after having looked long at them from the point of view of a member of a huge popular Assembly, teaches one a great deal about human history. He must be strangely constituted who does not become wiser by the double experience.