

REFORM AND PROGRESS IN INDIA.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON
ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER QUESTIONS
CONNECTED WITH THE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE.

BY
AN OPTIMIST.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS little work has been published from the conviction that a country in a state of what may be called *acute development*, as India now is, will benefit from the ventilation of all views on her needs, however crude and mistaken they may be; because, if fortunate enough to attract any share of the public attention, they will have the effect of directing thought to her condition.

There is another reason why anyone who has anything to say about the country at all, may put in a claim for a hearing, but this will require a few words for its exposition.

No one who thinks at all about India can fail to perceive the danger in which she stands of being made the sport of the various parties who are contending for the acceptance of their rival views on her necessities;

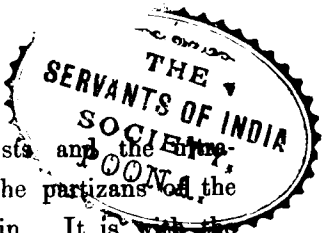
and no one who approaches the subject can fail to attempt the suggestion of a remedy for the evil. It is well to hear all that can be proposed, and to balance the claims of each rival suggestion.

The best part of a century of British rule in India has already passed away, and her Anglo-Saxon conquerors seem no nearer amalgamation with, or even appreciation of, a highly picturesque, imaginative, and artistic people, whose nature is in many respects the the very antithesis of their own. Many thinkers are already beginning to speculate upon the possibilities of the connection being dissolved, by movement from within, or political complication without. As such a contingency must be in every respect deplorable both for England and India, it behoves well-wishers of either country to apply themselves earnestly to the consideration of any measures which may help to ward it off.

What seems most of all wanted is, that proposals for reform, whether coming from within or without, should be anticipated by the Government, and thus robbed of all elements of danger; that the people should be drawn closer to their alien governors, and should feel sure that any reasonable representation or complaint they may have to make will be sure to find a hearing.

In short, a middle course seems required, in which

PREFACE.



all parties—the ultra-progressionists and the ultra-conservatives, the pessimists and the partizans of the “New India” movement—can join. It is with the hope of contributing at least some suggestions towards these great ends that the following pages have been penned.

The aim of the writer has been to adhere to temperance in thought, language, and proposal; and, if this ideal has sometimes been transgressed, lenient judgment is requested, as, when deeply interested in a subject, it is very difficult to avoid exaggeration.

The general scheme of what follows may be here sketched: The first chapter proposes an organization for the systematic prosecution of reform in the country. The four following chapters deal with subjects (Education, Excise, and the Land question) which have each been investigated by special commissions, and the necessity for reform thereby admitted. The sixth chapter considers the *rôle* of the local authorities in reference to the country and its needs; and the seventh contains some proposals for the development of self-government. The eighth chapter attempts to review the relation of religion to the general progress of the country; and the ninth and last contains some thoughts on the political situation. As the majority of the work

has been written up for the press in haste, and, when reference to authorities was impossible, criticism on inelegancies of diction and technical inaccuracies is deprecated.

SYNOPSIS

OF PRINCIPAL MEASURES PROPOSED.

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