

Protected Princes in India

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By

SIR DAVID WEDDERBURN, Bart.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

"BE JUST AND FEAR NOT."

THIS article is a plea for the establishment of a tribunal to provide a public and judicial hearing in cases, civil and criminal, affecting the interests of Indian Princes; and more especially those cases in which the Paramount Power, now acting as sole arbiter, is itself an interested party. In no other way can the position of Indian Princes be rendered secure, as guaranteed by Queen Victoria in the Proclamation of 1858, when assuming the direct Government of India. On that memorable occasion Her Majesty, speaking on behalf of the British people, declared, "We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of Native Princes as our own"; an inviolable pledge, endorsed and ratified by King Edward and King George.

The conception of such a tribunal is nothing new or strange: the principle was enunciated, one and a quarter centuries ago, by Edmund Burke when, as the cardinal factors of a good—and safe—administration in India, he prescribed "a government by law, and publicity in every executive and judicial concern." And a definite proposal on these lines was put forward by Mr. John Bright in his great speech of June 24, 1858, in the House of Commons, when he foreshadowed the main provisions of Queen Victoria's Proclamation. In that speech he proposed the establishment of "a Court of Appeal, the judges of which should be judges of the highest character in India," for the settlement of disputes in which the Government of India

was a party; and he added, "I would not suffer these questions to come upon the floor of this House. I would not forbid them by statute, but I would establish a court which should render it unnecessary for any man in India to cross the ocean to seek for that justice which he would then be able to get in his own country without corruption and secret bargain."

Again, twenty years later, the claim for this measure of justice was revived by Sir David Wedderburn, an independent member of the House of Commons, who had made India his special study, and was deeply interested in her welfare. In the article, now republished by favour of the *Nineteenth Century*, he points out that the Indian Princes "enjoy neither the independence of foreign princes, nor the privileges of British subjects"; also, that the procedure now followed in political cases is open to grave abuses, the decision being based on secret enquiry, and confidential reports from political agents, without the sanctions of publicity and recorded evidence.

On January 1, 1877, at Delhi, before a solemn assemblage of the princes and people of India, proclamation was made that Queen Victoria had assumed the title of Empress of India; and Sir David quotes with sympathy the "Deccan Address" of December, 1876, a document indicating the royal boons which, following ancient usage, would have added special grace to Her Majesty's historic announcement. In this document a hope was expressed that the opportunity would be taken to bring the Princes of India into more cordial association with the Councils of the Empire, so that those dependent Sovereigns might be confirmed as "a permanent and integral portion of the Imperial system." With what seems prophetic intuition of coming events, the framers of the Address, speaking for enlightened Indian opinion, declared that by the development of free

institutions the people of India would become more manly and self-reliant; and would "welcome their connection with England as a providential arrangement intended for their welfare, and resolve to abide by it through all the troubles and trials of their mutual growth."

Accordingly, in the present European crisis, the Indian Princes, as the natural leaders of the Indian people, have, with one accord, placed their personal service and all the resources of their States at the disposal of the King-Emperor; and there could not be a more fitting occasion for a gracious act of Imperial recognition, which would secure to them their rights, dignity, and honour; and at the same time would be welcomed by the whole of India.

The establishment of a suitable tribunal to make public enquiry, and advise His Majesty's Government with regard to cases affecting the interests of the Ruling Chiefs, would be to them practical proof that the Paramount Power is determined to do justice, without fear and without favour; and would inspire in their minds confidence in the enduring goodwill of the British people.

To those who understand the Indian character it will be evident that the path of safety lies in the direction of mutual trust and practical solidarity of interests.

W. WEDDERBURN.

Meredith, Gloucester.

November, 1914.

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WHEN proclamation was made, on the 1st of January, 1877, to all the Indian princes assembled around the walls of Delhi, that the Queen of the United Kingdom had assumed her statutory title of Empress of India, an uneasy feeling was aroused in the minds of those princes as to the political changes which the new title so pompously announced might be expected to involve. The native prince resembles the British farmer in believing that, however unsatisfactory the existing state of affairs may be, any change is likely to be for the worse; but after the lapse of a year alarm seems to have given place to disappointment, for exaggerated hopes as well as fears had been entertained by many. Certainly the occasion seemed a fitting one for the inauguration of useful reforms in the complicated relations subsisting between the British Government and the native chiefs, from the Nizam with his 9,000,000 subjects down to a Kathiawar Garasia with his cluster of mud hats and his revenue of one thousand rupees. The old policy of annexation upon the slightest pretext has indeed been formally abandoned, and the ruling chiefs at the Imperial assemblage received distinct assurances that the new Empress has no intention of reducing their numbers, or diminishing the extent of territory which they now possess. Nor have these assurances been words only, for in the recent case of the Gaekwar a practical proof has been given that the Paramount Power is unwilling to annex, even under the most tempting conditions. Of all native States the one best qualified to excite British cupidity is Baroda, embracing a fertile and populous territory intermingled with our own in a manner calculated to produce endless difficulties as to revenue and jurisdiction, lying near Bombay, our principal seaport, and incapable of

offering any resistance to our forces. This State was ruled in 1875 by a treacherous tyrant of proved incapacity for government and without any legitimate heir. Here was certainly a strong case for annexation according to the notions of 1855, and Malhár Rao would have been the last Gaekwar had the Dalhousie ideas been still in favour. But the experience of twenty years has altered our policy in India as well as in Turkey, and after the deposition of the offending prince no attempt was made at rectification of frontiers, nor was a British official appointed to administer the State. The widow of Malhár Rao's brother and predecessor was allowed to adopt a child, said to be descended from the original founder of the Gaekwar dynasty, and to him the principality was transferred, while the regency during his minority was intrusted to a native administrator from a remote part of India, Sir Tranjore Madava Rao of Travancore. Such a course cannot fail to produce a tranquillising effect upon the native mind; and as we did not annex Baroda in 1875, it may be taken for granted that the encroaching red line is not likely to make much progress upon the map of India in the immediate future, and that the time is yet distant when the prophecy ascribed to Hyder Ali shall be fulfilled: "Sab lál howega," all shall become red.

If this be the case, and if we are still to have the native princes in our midst, it is desirable that their constitutional position in the Empire should be clearly determined, and that their part should be assigned to them in its general administration. Hitherto no definite policy has guided the Government of India in dealing with the protected chiefs, who have been coaxed and bullied, patronised and snubbed, according to the temper of individuals in the highest quarters, cajolery and patronage being at present the order of the day, although there are already symptoms of a change. At the Delhi assemblage it seems to have been taken for granted that the highest ambition of a Raja is, or ought to be, the possession of a golden medal, a silken banner, and an heraldic coat-of-arms. Titles of dignity and orders of knighthood have been distributed with a lavish hand, extra guns have been fired in salutes, even honorary rank in the

British army has been conferred upon Hindoo chiefs. If the great princes felt a secret humiliation in being summoned from all parts of India to grace the triumph of a British viceroy at Delhi, nothing was spared that stars and ribbons and blank cartridge could do to alleviate their humiliation. At the same time they were given to understand clearly that the British Government are equally unwilling to relinquish and to annex, and that no demands would be entertained upon such vexed questions as Gwalior Fort or the Berars. Altogether recent occurrences go to prove the desire of our Government, so far as India proper is concerned, to maintain intact our existing frontier, and to annex, if anywhere, beyond the external boundaries of Hindostan. Nearly four-fifths of the population of India are already under British rule, but 50,000,000 are still subject to native rulers, besides 5,000,000 in Mysore, who will be placed under the young Maharaja when he attains his majority, and two-fifths of the entire area of the country are included in the native States. The authority possessed by the numerous chiefs, who rule collectively over a territory equal in area to France, Germany, and Spain, varies greatly in degree, some of them being wealthy princes, holding powers of life and death over populations equal to those of second-class European kingdoms, while others resemble feudal barons, exercising a limited jurisdiction over one or two villages, and others again are no more than petty squires. A complete manual of what may be called the Indian Peerage, with its numerous and varied grades, has just been given to the public in a work containing detailed information about all the native chiefs and States of India. Of those who maintain soldiers there are as many as four hundred and sixty, with a grand total of more than 300,000 troops, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, about two-thirds of this numerically strong force belonging to ten important States. The numbers of these troops may seem alarming, especially when we hear that the artillery consists of 9,390 men and 5,252 guns; but most of the latter are fit only for a museum of antiquities, and the functions of the former consist mainly in firing salutes from such guns as may be mounted on

carriages and may be expected not to burst. It is certain that most, but not all, of the native armies are kept for show, and are not effective in a military sense; above all it must be remembered that they do not possess breech-loaders.

The average life of an Indian prince is short, and the period of minority according to English law is long, so that native States are frequently under a regency, and a large proportion of those seated upon the "gádi" or cushion of State are children. When all the Indian princes assembled at Delhi for the Imperial proclamation, only three were entitled to a royal salute of twenty-one guns—viz., the Nizam, the Gaekwar, and the Maharaja of Mysore—and all three were children. During the minority of young chiefs the Paramount Power claims a special right of intervention, and, like the Roman senate and people in similar cases, assumes the office of guardian. The manner and degree of intervention have varied greatly from time to time, and so many different experiments have been tried that something is now really known as to the most suitable mode of government for a protected native State. In some cases a British official has been appointed with large powers to govern the country, and without his express sanction not a single rupee can be spent: *e.g.*, Kolhapur, the oldest surviving Mahratta State, where chronic minority has recently prevailed, the late Raja having died just as he attained majority. In the case of Baroda a distinguished native statesman has been summoned from a distance, and placed in authority over the minor's dominions. In other instances a native regency of local notables has been formed, and left to act mainly upon its own discretion. Perhaps the most successful of all arrangements has been that of "joint administrators," such as was adopted by the Bombay Government for the State of Bhaunagar in the Kathiawar peninsula. Here a member of the Bombay Civil Service was appointed to administer the State during a minority in conjunction with a Brahman of high character and great experience, the minister of the former chief. These two administrators exercised jointly the same powers as had been enjoyed by the late Thákur, but in case any irreconcilable difference of opinion

should arise between them a casting vote was given to the European official. It was confidently expected that this special power would seldom be employed, and that if European and native happened to take opposite views of a question a fair compromise would generally be effected; but it was deemed desirable that, when this could not be done, English ideas should be allowed to prevail. The actual result was that during a joint administration of six years and a half the casting vote was never once employed; a happy blending of European and native ideas was accomplished, whereby local opinion was carried along with many reforms that appeared desirable from an English point of view, while in other cases the danger was avoided of injuring the people, as they are so frequently injured in India, by energetic endeavours to do them good against their will. The native minister, thoroughly understanding his own countrymen, kept his European colleague clear of the besetting error of forcing on changes beneficial in themselves, but premature. At the same time the strong sense of duty and the love of justice, for which natives give full credit to the "Sahebs," influenced all the dealings of the Bhaunagar Darbár, and, the selection of the two colleagues having been peculiarly fortunate, an almost ideal government was the result. Among other merits this arrangement has maintained a continuity of men and measures, and will leave the State in a condition fitted for the resumption of native rule when the young Thákur attains his majority.

During the course of a prolonged tour through India, in British territory and in native States, nowhere have I seen more distinct evidences of general contentment and material prosperity than in Bhaunagar, which does not enjoy special advantages of climate, soil, or position, being an arid, treeless country, without railroads or good harbours. During the last half-dozen years roads, bridges, tanks and plantations have been made on all sides, useful and elegant public buildings have been erected, such as schools, court-houses, light-houses, and travellers' bungalows, while regular steam communication with the mainland has been organised across the Gulf of Cambay. A branch railway to join the "Bombay,

Baroda, and Central India" line has been also proposed by the Bhaunagar Darbár, who offered to advance the money necessary for its construction at a low rate of interest; but the scheme has not yet received the sanction of the British Government, although it is difficult to imagine any objections to it on public grounds, and there is reason to fear that it has met with interested opposition, as the proposed branch railway to the port of Bhaunagar might divert a portion of the cotton traffic now passing along the main line.

The reproductive works and permanent improvements, of which we hear so much, and see so little, in British India, have been actually carried out with success in this native State, with an area of 2,784 square miles, containing about 400,000 inhabitants, and possessing a gross revenue of twenty-six lakhs of rupees, a quarter of a million sterling. It may be asked: "Have not the future resources of the State been heavily mortgaged in this process by the contraction of debt? Have not the people been crushed with taxation in order to effect improvements such as an Indian community is too poor to afford?" The reply is that the Bhaunagar treasury contains a surplus accumulated to meet the possible exigencies of famine or pestilence (war being happily out of the question in a protected State), and that taxation, as distinct from land-revenue or rent, is so light as to be almost unfelt. Salt in particular is scarcely taxed at all, bringing in less than 8,000 rupees, opium upwards of 18,000 rupees, taxes on trades, etc., 73,000 rupees, and customs by land and sea 3,11,000 rupees: altogether a small proportion of a total revenue of 26,00,000 rupees. As regards the land-revenue, on the other hand, the amount paid in Bhaunagar is equal to five rupees per head of the population, while it varies in the British Provinces according to the following table:—

					Rupees	Annas	Pies
Assam	...	...	...	...	11	5	0
Bengal	...	...	...	...	9	3	0
Bombay	...	...	...	...	2	4	0
Madras and North-west Provinces	...	...	...	...	1	5	0
Punjab	...	...	...	...	1	1	7

As land-revenue is the rent payable to the State as owning the soil, a large amount so paid is less an indication of oppres-

sion than of a productive and well-cultivated soul, while a low figure is usually the result of sterility or over-population.

The people of Bhaunagar, even the humblest classes, are conspicuous, beyond those of any other part of India that I have visited, for the abundance and cleanliness of their garments, and in a climate where clothing is rather a matter of dignity than of necessity such a fact is full of significance. Even in this country the pawning of the Sunday suit is one of the earliest and surest symptoms of hard times among the working classes, and in India there is no surer sign of prosperity in any district than the amount of clothing habitually worn by the inhabitants. A good opportunity for judging of the material condition of the inhabitants was afforded by the great Mohammedan festival of the Mohurram, which took place while I was in Bhaunagar, and which brought crowds of well-dressed and well-fed cultivators into the town to join in the revels of the citizens. Although the Mussulmans are few and uninfluential in this part of Guzerat, the festival is eminently popular, and all took part in it, including Brahmans and Rajputs, with as great a zest as if Hindoo divinities, not Mussulman martyrs, had been thereby honoured and lamented. The scene was simply the Italian Carnival or Saturnalia in an Eastern garb, and seemed brilliant even to eyes fresh from the gorgeous pageantry of Delhi; but whereas the display at Delhi was the result of official pressure and princely emulation, this was the spontaneous holiday-making of a prosperous commonalty. Among the many honourable and pleasant functions which an Indian civilian may be called upon to discharge, few if any are preferable to such an appointment as that of administering a well-to-do native state, where he can literally "scatter plenty o'er a smiling land." But changes in the Indian service are sudden and violent, and great was the consternation of the Bhaunagar people when a telegram arrived from headquarters ordering off their English administrator to the other end of the Presidency to take charge of a famine-stricken district in the Southern Mahratta country. The chorus of lamentation was universal from the young Thākur down-

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wards. Mr. P.* was leaving the place without any prospect of returning, and there was little either to hope or to fear from him in the future; but high and low vied with each other in their testimony of affectionate gratitude and regret. As a witness of what then passed, I was satisfied that it is possible, although by no means easy, for a genuine friendship to arise between British officers and the natives over whom and through whom they rule.

Between the people of India and the British authorities there is no class which occupies a more independent position than the missionaries of various Christian denominations, and although their converts are few, they frequently succeed in acquiring the complete confidence of the natives as being men of courage, integrity, and culture, totally unconnected with the Government. The evidence of such men upon native affairs, especially as regards the raiyats, is perhaps the most valuable that can be obtained, and in the case of Bhaunagar there is the authority of the local missionary for stating that the cultivators are "in the most prosperous condition." The young Thákur has been carefully educated under English tuition, he has also been for some time associated with the joint administrators in the management of public affairs in order to prepare him for the duties which he will soon have to discharge on his own responsibility, and it may be reasonably hoped that the country will continue to prosper under his rule.

I have dwelt at some length upon the case of Bhaunagar, partly because I had special opportunities for observing and understanding the management of this State, which is by no means Utopia, and partly because the success of this experiment seems to have an important bearing upon our general policy in dealing with native States, if not with our own provinces also. Under the system of joint administrators the cheap and simple machinery of native rule has been used to carry out the more enlightened principles of the British Government. How far is it possible to administer India generally in a similar manner and with similar results? In attempting to answer this question we are at once brought face to face

* Mr. Percival.—ED.

with our most serious Indian difficulty—finance. Our “home charges” and our military expenditure stand in the way, and render cheap administration impossible; we cannot afford expensive improvements, however desirable; we must tax salt, even though its price has been thereby increased fivefold within forty years, because of the many millions of tribute payable as home charges to England, and because upon our provinces falls the entire cost of the army that holds and defends India. The protected States, on the other hand, enjoy complete exemption from war and all its burdens. “Pax Britannica” reigns from the Snowy Range to Cape Comorin, and for this British India is alone responsible, the contributions in men or money by the native chiefs being seldom more than nominal; that of Bhaunagar is one lakh and three quarters, 17,500*l*.

Being thus practically exempt from tribute or military charges, the revenue of a native State, after defraying all necessary costs of administration, provides a large margin without the necessity for laying upon the people any really burdensome taxation. How this surplus may be expended is a matter of vital interest, as it is available for those public works of which the country stands most urgently in need, if it is not squandered upon the caprices and luxuries of the ruling chief. A long minority under careful guardianship is a fortunate contingency for a private property, and happy is the native State that has a child for its nominal ruler. The opportunity then presents itself for reaping the advantages of British administration without incurring its cost, for paying off arrears of debt, for effecting all sorts of permanent improvements, and even for laying by money to meet extraordinary emergencies. Meanwhile the young chief may be educated for his position, and the stifling atmosphere (moral and physical) of the Zenana may be exchanged for the bracing influences of a college such as has been established at Rajkote for the illustrious youths of Kathiawar. Here Rajput boys of the highest rank receive a liberal education modelled upon that which in English public schools is deemed suitable for the rising generation of our statesmen and legislators. Many games, including cricket, football,

and gymnastics, are encouraged, and personal competition upon equal terms is developed among lads hitherto reared in haughty and indolent isolation.

The contrast between the condition of a British Indian Province and a well-governed native State brings out into strong prominence the one truly serious danger which menaces our Indian Empire. On the 5th of January, 1877, took place the most striking spectacle of the "Imperial assemblage," when all the troops collected in the vast camp were paraded before the Viceroy. First marched the military retainers of the native princes, a motley and brilliant host, infantry, cavalry, and elephants, glittering with gold and silver, armed with every variety of weapon, and arrayed in every variety of garb. Four field-pieces represented the artillery of this picturesque army, the famous golden and silver guns of the Gaekwar, the guns themselves, their carriages, the housings, and even the horns of the bullocks that drew them, displaying the precious metals only. Then came the British troops, perfect in appointments and discipline, a force capable of marching "from Delhi to Rameshwar" without encountering any opposition that could seriously delay its progress. Among the cavalry and infantry were native troops from all the three Presidencies, but the artillery was exclusively in European hands. The matchless horse-artillery thundering by at racing speed seemed the very embodiment of British supremacy, while the golden toy-guns symbolised the wealth and the weakness of our great feudatories.

The native princes keep soldiers mainly for show and for amusement, and can at any time dispense with their services, if financial considerations render it desirable so to do. With the British Government it is otherwise; to them a powerful army is absolutely indispensable, they have to keep the peace for the whole Indian Empire at the expense of their own Provinces, unaided by the native States or by the mother country. The authority of a solitary British resident or political agent is indeed supreme in the protected States, but European batteries and bayonets in the background are essential to the maintenance of that authority. If it were possible to dispense with these auxiliaries to moral suasion,

the financial condition of British India might soon become no less prosperous and solvent than that of a native State during a minority. Meanwhile how do matters stand with us? Financial collapse impends over us perpetually; our annual deficit is a matter of course, and can only be concealed upon occasion by dexterous manipulation of the Indian budget, and by affecting to treat as "extraordinary" years those in which wars, famines, or pestilences occur. It is in fact no "ordinary" year when some such events do *not* occur in any part of our Indian Empire, and it is clear, taking one year with another, that our revenue shows no disposition to increase proportionately to our expenditure. For all emergencies we continue to borrow: we spend casual windfalls as if they were derived from permanent income; we are menaced with the failure of the opium revenue through Chinese competition, and the repeal of import duties through British manufacturing interests; while the salt-tax is attacked simultaneously by the friends of humanity and by the owners of English salt-works. Indian financiers may well be at their wits' end: any considerable increase of taxation is impossible, and the choice seems to lie between sweeping retrenchment and bankruptcy. The example of the native States, most of them naturally poorer than our own Provinces, proves that an Indian community can easily support all the burdens of government, except "home charges" and European soldiers. How far it may be possible to retrench upon these two items of expenditure, or how far the contributions of the feudatories towards Imperial revenue may be increased, this is not the occasion to inquire; but the suppression of military contingents from certain native States, and the substitution of money payments in their place, would conduce alike to economy and efficiency. It is worthy of note that in 1875-6 the cost of the army in India was 15,308,460*l.*, and this, together with the expenditure in England on account of stores, pensions, interest on debt, loss by exchange, etc., amounts to a full half of all the ordinary expenses of our Indian Empire. The inhabitants of our Provinces may well think that they pay dearly for their privileges as British subjects.

In our relations with the native States an important practical reform might easily be effected, which would remove one of the greatest blots upon our Indian administration. There exists at present no judicial tribunal for the decision of cases, civil or criminal, to which the protected princes of India are parties. In all such cases the British Government, as the paramount power, acting in their executive capacity, decide without appeal, inasmuch as the ultimate appeal lies to the Secretary of State for India, who is himself the highest executive officer of the Government. If the Secretary of State confirms the decision of his own subordinates, there remains as a court of appeal only the floor of the House of Commons, where a last effort may be made by a native prince, if he is wealthy or influential enough, to force his grievances upon the attention of Parliament and of the public. When the Government of India is arraigned before Parliament upon charges of injustice towards a native prince, all judicial evidence is wanting for the proof or disproof of such charges. No record of proceedings at any former trial is available, no witnesses upon either side are heard, mere *ex parte* statements for and against Government are made, the Opposition front bench comes to the rescue of the Ministry, and usually the original decision against the appellant is once more confirmed. A less satisfactory tribunal can hardly be imagined, but it is at present the only one open to an Indian prince who has had the misfortune to incur the wrath of the paramount power, and it is certain that neither in India nor in England can a native prince hope to obtain a hearing which shall be public, impartial, and complete, even when his most important interests are involved. In particular, when accused of a crime, he is denied the privileges enjoyed by the meanest British subject: he is not tried by his Peers, nor confronted with his accusers, whom he has no opportunity of cross-examining.

There is thus no justice for the protected chief, according to the sense in which the word justice is usually understood; he is not amenable to the jurisdiction of the British Courts, nor can he avail himself of their protection. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council works well as a Court of

Appeal for British India, but it takes cognisance only of cases which have been judicially decided, and is therefore not open for appeal to ruling chiefs, whose cases are not tried before properly constituted courts. Our mainstay in India (besides British breech-loaders) is admitted to be our character for justice. "The Sahebs do not understand us, and they constantly make mistakes, but they endeavour to do justice, and they do not fear the face of man." In these words a native has briefly summed up his countrymen's opinion of their masters, and this character for justice we are bound to maintain. So far as our judges and magistrates are concerned there is in this respect every cause for satisfaction: before them the humblest raiyat may plead fearlessly and successfully, even if his adversary be the Viceroy himself. The Government of India may be a despotism, but this has been hitherto tempered by a free press and an independent judiciary, whereby the worst evils of despotism have been obviated, and the High Courts have never failed to resist any attempt at encroachment on the part of the Executive. An inhabitant of British India, who may find himself at variance with the Government under whom he lives, will have his case tried before a properly constituted local tribunal; he enjoys the right of appealing to the High Court of his Presidency, and if need be, as a last resort, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. A public hearing will be accorded to both sides of the case, the evidence on which the decision rests will be duly recorded, and the ultimate Court of Appeal is absolutely beyond the control of the Indian Executive. Very different are the proceedings if the accused, or the would-be litigant, happens to be one of the protected chiefs, who enjoy neither the independence of foreign princes, nor the privileges of British subjects.

In cases of dispute between rival chiefs the British Government may indeed act as an impartial arbiter, but even then the method of conducting the inquiry is very objectionable. The matter is investigated secretly by a Political Agent, through whom pass all communications between Government and the disputants, and upon whose confidentially expressed opinion the ultimate decision is based.

Such a course of proceeding is open to grave abuses, and considerations of general policy are confessedly allowed to weigh no less than the intrinsic merits of the case in decisions, the reasons for which are seldom made public. More especially does this occur when the dispute has arisen between a ruling prince and other subordinate chiefs, whom he may claim as his subjects, but who assert a kind of tributary independence. It is almost impossible to draw a distinct line of demarcation between independent and subject chiefs, so numerous are the grades of power and importance between the Nizam and a petty Talukdár. In certain cases the smaller chiefs have been recognised as independent princelings, in others they have been regarded as a sort of feudal nobility, but the general tenor of British policy has been to strengthen the hands of the more conspicuous and influential princes, who have thus been enabled to curtail seriously the powers and privileges of the lesser Sirdars. The wisdom of such a policy in itself is less clear than the injustice of allowing considerations of selfish expediency to sway the decisions of an arbiter.

Nevertheless it may be conceded that, if the whole procedure were public and judicial, no better arbiter than the British Government could be appointed for the disputes between native chiefs, and the possession of irresistible force obviates all difficulty as to enforcing awards. However bitter may be the quarrel or the sense of injury, there can be no question of an appeal to arms, or any breach of that "Roman peace" which England has established throughout India—a boon beyond all cavil. But when protected princes are accused of distinct crimes, the British Government act in the joint capacity of prosecutor, judge, and executioner, occasionally also of executor and heir-at-law to the accused. In no part of the British Empire can the meanest citizen be subjected to such a mockery of a trial as that which is reserved for an Indian prince, nominally a sovereign. Down to a recent date his condemnation for any crime or misdemeanour was apt to be followed by the annexation of a portion of his territory to the British dominions, and it was then, of course, impossible to persuade the natives that a fair trial had taken place. Even now, when confiscation of territory does not

immediately follow conviction, and in cases where the Government may themselves be regarded as unbiased judges, they are by no means in possession of unbiased evidence. They do not themselves examine the witnesses for the prosecution and defence; as a rule, they see with the eyes and hear with the ears of the local resident official, who from the nature of his position can hardly avoid being more or less of a partisan. Residing on the spot, where he takes an active and even a controlling part in local politics, he is liable to be personally involved in the affair which he has to investigate, and he may be committed beforehand to a particular view of the question. Even when (as happens occasionally) a special commission is appointed to investigate and report, the proceedings are not necessarily public; they are regarded as political or diplomatic rather than judicial, and are apt to be clouded over with traditional diplomatic obscurity.

In short, everything is conducted secretly, and herein is the root of the evil: our Government cannot hope to obtain credit for acting impartially so long as this "hole-and-corner" system is maintained. Edmund Burke, speaking in 1786, recommended "as the means of reforming Indian abuses a combination of three things—a government by law, trial by jury, and publicity in every executive and judicial concern." The experience of well nigh a century confirms thoroughly the recommendation of Mr. Burke. If the existing system is objectionable when the British Government are acting in the capacity of arbiters or criminal judges, having no direct interest in the question at issue, it is needless to enlarge upon the evils liable to ensue when they sit as judges with closed doors upon cases to which they are themselves parties. A most difficult and responsible duty devolves upon the so-called "Politicals," to whom has been entrusted hitherto the conduct of the peculiar relations subsisting between the British Government and the native chiefs. These Politicals are called upon to act as administrators, as diplomats, and as judges, controlling with greater or less authority some 800 chiefs and some 55,000,000 people. Aably and faithfully their arduous duties have been discharged, and no body of public servants can boast of more distinguished names than the Politicals, most of whom are soldiers,

but who have rather laboured to preserve peace and to maintain good faith than to promote a policy of aggrandisement and annexation. Had it been otherwise, and had our Indian political system been carried out by less worthy agents, it could hardly have survived until now. Nevertheless, the interests of justice would be safer even in the hands of inferior men conducting their inquiries in the light of day than they can be in those of first-class officers working without a sense of responsibility to public opinion. Open justice should be our mainstay on native territory as well as in our own Provinces; and we have nothing to fear from publicity, even in the political department. A secret system affords opportunities for intrigue, corruption, and chicanery, in all of which the natives have the advantage; our officers are hoodwinked and misled by diplomatists subtler and less honest than themselves. What is required is the substitution of the judicial for the diplomatic system in dealing with protected States. The mere existence of an impartial tribunal, however constituted, before which the Government might be compelled to assign publicly the reasons for their policy, would be a complete protection against any act of flagrant injustice. Possibly no existing tribunal would be competent to undertake such functions, and it may be necessary to create a special Court for the purpose. Above all, it is desirable "to render it unnecessary for any man in India to cross the ocean to seek for justice," even from so competent a tribunal as the Privy Council affords.

When the India Bill was under discussion in the House of Commons, on the 24th of June, 1858, Mr. John Bright said:

I would establish a Court of Appeal, the judges of which should be judges of the highest character in India, for the settlement of those many disputes which have arisen between the Government of India and its subjects, some native and some European. I would not suffer these questions to come upon the floor of this House. I would not forbid them by statute, but I would establish a Court which should render it unnecessary for any man in India to cross the ocean to seek for that justice which he would then be able to get in his own country without corruption or secret bargain.

When this excellent suggestion was made by Mr. Bright, he may have used the word "subjects" inadvertently, but by

so doing he excludes from the advantages of his proposal the very persons who really stand in need. As already stated, British subjects, if involved in dispute with the Government, can have recourse to judges of the highest character in India, besides the last Court of Appeal in London, while no legal machinery exists for adjudicating between the British Government and the native chiefs. The Royal Proclamation of 1858 announced a new policy with regard to the native States, declaring that their rights would be respected and their governments maintained. In particular the declaration that her Majesty (then assuming the direct administration of India) would accept and recognise the claims of children adopted in due form by native princes, has been styled the Magna Charta of the Protected States. "Only act on the Queen's Proclamation, and you may send these soldiers all back again as soon as you please." General Jacob, in his *Western India*, mentions the above remark as having been made to himself by a native officer of experience on witnessing the arrival of European reinforcements.

In January, 1877, when the Imperial Proclamation was made before the largest and most brilliant assemblage of Maharajas, Rajas, and Nawabs ever yet seen in India, an opportunity equal to that of 1858 presented itself for reassuring native minds, by the announcement of practical reforms affecting the feudatories of the new Empire. Formal declarations of future policy on the part of the British Government produce upon the natives the effect of deeds, rather than of words, so strong is the general reliance upon our good faith, and when it has been resolved to adopt a generous policy, no time should be lost in making it known as widely as possible. The opportunity has, however, been thrown away, and it cannot be doubted that there was a feeling of keen disappointment among the assembled chiefs, when they found that they had come so far to hear so little, and to receive no boons more valuable than medals and ribbons.

This gathering together of eastern kings resulted in a procession, rivalling in magnificence the "long victorious pomp" of a Roman triumph, and in a vast circus, crowded with all that is wealthy and powerful in India. The splendour of the scene will doubtless be realised by the

English public when the great canvas of Mr. Val Prinsep is placed before their eyes, but it was nothing better than a costly theatrical pageant.

If any radical reform is to be effected in the political system of India, it can hardly be expected that the Government will take the initiative in condemning arrangements under which they have so long wielded absolute power over the feudatory States. Although the present policy of Government is favourable to the maintenance of native rule, old traditions of intervention and confiscation still linger in the political department. It is to Parliament and to British public opinion that the "protected" princes must look for protection. The British nation occupies, as regards India, the position of an absentee landlord, unable to investigate personally the disputes between his agents and his tenants, and leaving everything to the discretion of the agents. These may be able and upright men, but their one-sided decisions are not likely to satisfy the tenants.

In the House of Commons the mantle of Mr. Bright, as a tribune of the Indian people, seems to have fallen upon Mr. Fawcett, and India has been singularly fortunate in securing the disinterested services of two such men, unconnected by official or family ties with that country. Mr. Bright has not of late taken a prominent part in Indian parliamentary debates, but India has to thank him for many wise and eloquent utterances on her behalf, and in particular for that in which he shadowed forth the terms of the Royal Proclamation of 1858.¹

"Be just and fear not" is the motto which he has chosen, and it ought to be that of the British Government in India. It is pleasing to find that by acting consistently up to this motto a British statesman, without holding office in any Government, may make his name a household word wherever the English language is spoken, as Mr. Bright had already done ten years ago. At the present time, it may be in New England, or it may be in India, to mention the name of John Bright at a public meeting is to produce a cheer, although so considerable a period of time has passed since the events

¹ *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by John Bright, M.P.*, vol. i., India I. House of Commons, June 24, 1858.

with which that name is mainly associated, whether in America or in Hindostan.

It would not be difficult to multiply statements of hardship suffered by protected chiefs at the hands of Government, but it is of the very nature of the political system that such statements should be mere *ex parte* complaints, as we have not access to the confidential reports of the Government agents. Whether, or not, injustice has been committed in any particular case we cannot certainly know, but we know that all proper means were not adopted for arriving at a just conclusion. Even with the best intentions and the utmost care, mistakes and miscarriages of justice will occur, but the real evil of the secret system is, that under it Government never can obtain credit for having made honest mistakes, and the worst of motives are attributed by those who feel themselves aggrieved. Indeed, one cannot help feeling "astonished at the moderation" of a Government who, acting as prosecutor and judge, are able to confiscate the property of an accused person, without having to assign publicly any reason for so doing. In a recent instance jurisdiction over a large tract of territory was restored to the State of Bhaunagar after the lapse of more than half a century, during which the villages in question were administered by the British Government as a punishment for misconduct on the part of the Thákur. The legal validity of this restitution was disputed, as involving the cession of what was virtually British territory, to cede which was said to be beyond the competency of the Indian Government, and a case was raised to test the question. The High Court of Bombay decided against the validity of the cession "in time of peace," but this decision was overruled by the Privy Council, and the restitution has been definitively carried out, an act calculated to have a very reassuring effect throughout the protected States.

The principle of arbitration, which has been so successfully applied to the settlement of disputes between independent nations, might be difficult of application in India, when the paramount power is directly concerned, but it is in complete harmony with native ideas and practice in ordinary life, and panchayets or juries of native chiefs would command the confidence of their own countrymen.

It is much to be regretted that the opportunity was missed in the recent Baroda case of establishing a precedent for the trial of native chiefs by their peers in open court, and credit must be given to Lord Northbrook for at least making an attempt in the right direction, although the experiment was not fairly carried out. The reigning Gaekwar was accused of attempting to poison the British Resident at his court, and a Commission was appointed by the Government of India to investigate the case. This Commission was composed of three British officers and three natives, two of whom were sovereign chiefs of very high rank, the Maharajas of Gwalior and Jeypore. To obtain the consent of two such eminent and powerful princes to serve on the Commission was in itself a notable political success, and no pains should have been spared in order to prove that our Government appreciated their services and co-operation, especially as the tendency of native opinion was to regard the condemnation of the Gaekwar as a foregone conclusion, and the appointment of native commissioners as a mere farce. The inquiry was conducted judicially, counsel being heard on either side, and many witnesses being examined; but when the Commission came to report it was found that the Europeans and natives took opposite views of the case, the former condemning the Gaekwar as guilty, the latter regarding the charge against him as "not proven." The Government were thus placed upon the horns of a dilemma, as the commissioners were equally divided, and there was no casting vote. It was resolved to depose the Gaekwar, and thus to endorse the decision of the European commissioners and ignore the natives, a course which seems to have been ill-judged.

It was of little importance whether the particular offence in question was brought home to Malhár Rao or not; so bad was his general character that ample reasons for deposing him could readily have been adduced, but to condemn him on a charge from which his own peers and countrymen had virtually acquitted him was to make him a martyr in the eyes of natives, and to pass a needless slight upon distinguished chiefs, whose friendly co-operation in Imperial affairs it is most desirable to secure.

During the terrible crisis of 1857 the capitals of the native

princes, almost without a single exception, were as rocks of refuge amid a sea of mutiny and massacre. Everywhere these princes cast in their lot with us, even when our fortunes seemed to be at the lowest, and it is an ungracious task now to inquire what may have been the motives prompting this course of action in individual cases. It proved to be as prudent a course as was that of the German princes, few in number, who sided with Prussia against Austria in 1866. To the protection afforded by some native chiefs, often at their own personal risk, many British fugitives owed their lives, and to the active military aid of others, notably the Sikh Rajas of Patiala and Jheend, was due in no small degree the capture of Delhi, before the arrival of any reinforcements from England. No one will dispute the substantial services rendered to us during the mutiny by the rulers of native States, although there may be doubts as to the merit of certain individuals. The case of the Maharaja Holkar is in many respects a typical one: his troops mutinied and attacked the British Residency at Indore, the Maharaja having warned the Resident three weeks previously that these troops could not be depended upon, and having vainly urged him to send ladies, children and treasure into the fort at Mhow, which was garrisoned by European artillery. It is difficult to imagine a stronger proof of good faith than was afforded by Holkar in giving this warning and advice at so critical a period as the 9th of June, 1857, when the Bengal army was in open mutiny and the gravest apprehensions were entertained as to the armies of Madras and Bombay. Hindostan proper was in the hands of the mutineers, the Deccan was in a state of ferment, while throughout Central India and the whole Mahratta country a word from Holkar would have sufficed to produce a general rising. The temptation to speak that word was perhaps strong, but it was not spoken. Holkar remained faithful to the British alliance, even when his own soldiers turned against him, and when a battery of six guns represented the power of England in Central India. The ingratitude and injustice of imputing treachery to Holkar under these circumstances has been recently exposed in a posthumous work by Mr. John Dickinson, entitled the "Last Counsels of an Unknown Counsellor." In position and con-

duct during the great mutiny, Sindia, the Maharaja of Gwalior, resembled strongly his brother Mahratta Prince at Indore, and although the same accusations have not been openly preferred against him, he also has been treated with ungenerous suspicion, and has been deprived of the great rock-fortress which overhangs his capital city. Sindia's services to the British Government have been amply recognised so far as titles are concerned: he stands first on the list of Knights Grand Commanders of the Star of India, his name appears, along with those of the German Emperor and Marshal MacMahon, among the Knights Grand Cross of the Bath, and he is a General in the British Army. It is to be feared, however, that he is not satisfied, and that he would consider the restitution of Gwalior fort a better proof of gratitude and confidence than all these dignities and titles.

Some ridicule has been recently cast upon Lord Beaconsfield for establishing an order of chivalry for ladies in a country where women are condemned to absolute social seclusion, but worthy "Dames of the Imperial Crown of India" may be found from time to time among the Ranees and Begums. In India, as in England, it has long been held that women are unfit to discharge any public functions, except the highest of all, and history proves that in both countries some of the most eminent rulers have been female sovereigns. The most conspicuous Indian case is that of Bhopál, which has been governed for three generations by Mussulman princesses, and is regarded as a model State.

The number of native chiefs exercising a modified sovereignty, and paying tribute direct to the British Government without an intermediate superior, is gradually being reduced by voluntary action on their own part. Kathiáwar is no doubt an extreme case, as being much subdivided, but here with a population of less than two millions and a half, there were in 1860 as many as 224 chiefs, divided into seven classes, according to their rank and wealth. This number is now tending steadily to diminish, among the lowest classes, who are conscious of not having sufficient power to govern, and are glad to relinquish their jurisdiction into the hands of their Paramount, thus lapsing from the condition of medieval barons into that of modern nobles.

Shortly before Lord Lytton's imperial assemblage took place, a very remarkable document was prepared by the Poona Sarvajanak Sabhá,² an influential native association. It was known as the Deccan Address to her Majesty, and bore originally the date of 5th December, 1876, being intended as a reply to the gracious proclamation to be issued on the approaching New Year's day. It was, in fact, a petition praying her Majesty to inaugurate a number of important reforms upon the auspicious occasion of her assuming the new title of Empress of India, such a course being in accordance with Indian traditional usage. It begins by stating the many advantages enjoyed by the people of India since her Majesty's rule began in clemency and justice, and the great proclamation issued in 1858. A prominent place is given to the fact that "the native princes, great and small, are protected by the strength of the paramount power from internal dissensions, and the continuance as the feudatory members of the Empire has been assured to them beyond all risk of change." Satisfaction is expressed at the honour conferred upon India by the assumption of the Imperial title, and various apprehensions are described as having been at first aroused and subsequently allayed in connection with that title. In particular, "it was apprehended at one time that the treaty rights and independence of the princes and chiefs of the country would be to some extent overridden by claims founded upon the assumption of the Imperial title. On this point your most gracious Majesty's Ministers have vouchsafed an assurance that beyond legalising *de jure* what has been true in fact—namely, that the British power is paramount over all other powers in India, which are protected by its sovereign rule, the treaty rights and independence of native princes will be respected as before." The reforms prayed for include a permanent settlement of the land revenue throughout British India; the extension of the British guarantee to the Indian National Debt; the employment of natives in the higher grades of the services, military as well as civil; the introduction of representative members into the legislative councils of India.

But upon none of these radical changes is a greater stress

² 'National Association.'

laid than upon the claims of the native chiefs, and their association in the councils of the Empire for the discussion of Imperial questions is strongly advocated:—

On this occasion of great rejoicing, your most gracious Majesty's subjects would submit at the foot of your Royal throne our humble prayers and expectations, with a view that this great event might be associated in all minds with the triumphs of peace and progress, and free government, greater than any the world's proudest conquerors have enjoyed. The kind expressions of opinion contained in some of the most influential organs of the English press lead us to hope that an effort will be made to associate the great native princes in the practical work of the administration of British India, and that the system of keeping political agents and military camps in native territories will give way to a more cordial association of them in the councils of the Empire, through some organisation of a recognised diet or assembly, where they could meet one another and the great officers and statesmen who rule India, and discuss all Imperial questions. The time has arrived for such a change. The paramount claims of the British power are unquestioned. An Imperial Government cannot be imagined without a constitution regulating its relations with dependent sovereigns. The germs of such an assembly already exist in many Durbar gatherings which take place from time to time. It is only necessary to legalise what is now done informally and as a matter of favour. Questions regarding the policy of small frontier wars with barbarous tribes, boundary disputes between native States and similar differences between British and non-British territory, the measures to be adopted with respect to rulers who misgovern their territories, questions of adoption, extradition, coinage, and of imperial legislation might be referred to such a council.

Nor are the claims of dispossessed princes forgotten, and ample proof is given of the interest taken by the most enlightened of our own subjects in the fortunes of ancient native dynasties:—

By the assumption of the Imperial title your most gracious Majesty has formally assumed larger responsibilities than before in connection with the Government of India. Your subjects earnestly hope that on this memorable occasion your most gracious Majesty will feel disposed to show generous sympathy with some of the native chiefs, who have been the unfortunate victims of the policy which obtained before the mutiny. It is their humble prayer that the same magnanimous consideration and firm adherence to treaty obligations which were shown in the restoration of the states of Dhar and Mysore, will influence the councils of your Majesty in disposing finally of the yet pending questions connected with the memorial by the heir of the royal

family of Sattara, and of the question relating to the restoration of Berar. Such acts of royal condescension and sympathy with fallen greatness will not fail to reflect additional lustre on the Government, and will set at rest the anxieties of the Princes and people of this country on the score of the revival of the annexation policy.

In conclusion it is urged that the present should be taken as a new point of departure and an opportunity for remodelling the Indian administration:—

Your subjects pray that just as the proclamation of 1858 corrected the evils of the annexation policy which preceded the mutiny, and gave a constitutional guarantee for the continuance of the existing native States in their integrity, so the assumption of the imperial title may be signalised by the grant of new constitutional rights to the people of the country, thereby inaugurating a new era in the gradual development of the institutions of this country, elevating its people to the political and social status of the British nation, and teaching them gradually by example and encouragement, and by actual exercise of responsible power, to be manly and self-sustained, prepared to welcome their connection with England as a providential arrangement intended for their welfare, and resolved to abide by it through all the troubles and trials of their mutual growth.

The Poona Sarvajanic Sabhá may be regarded as representing enlightened native opinion in a part of India where the enlightenment is greater than usual, and where a certain amount of public spirit exists. It may not be possible at present to concede all that is petitioned for in this address, but it is well to know the views on reform of so intelligent and independent a body of natives, and particularly their ideas as to our proper attitude towards the protected princes. The native States are no longer to be looked upon as creating mere temporary difficulties and inconveniences, and as being certain to disappear sooner or later from the map of India. They constitute now a permanent and integral portion of the Imperial system, and the relations between them and the paramount power have assumed a new significance. Many suggestions have been made for utilising the Indian princes as supporters of the Government, and for inspiring them with a genuine pride in their position as recognised feudatories of so mighty an Empire. In the Address above quoted the organisation of an Imperial Diet is proposed; and if such an assembly could be constituted, it is evident that many important questions would properly fall to be discussed and

settled therein. For instance, the abolition of the vexatious "salt line" between Rajputana and the British territory, and even the establishment of a Zollverein, or complete customs' union for the whole of India, including the native States, which are scattered in numberless detached portions over the surface of the country, and amount to more than 600,000 square miles of what, for fiscal purposes, is absolutely foreign territory.

A glance at the map of Central India will show that the advantages of a Zollverein could hardly fail to be as great there as they have proved to be in Germany—a country, the map of which, even after recent consolidations, strongly resembles that of Central India. To prevent smuggling of costly and portable articles, such as opium, is, with the existing frontiers, a simple impossibility, and so great are the inconveniences at present experienced, that negotiations have been set on foot for the general abolition of inland customs duties. Evidently the proper method of conducting such negotiations would be to assemble a general congress for the whole Empire, where the native chiefs could be represented by their Karbháris, or appointed deputies.

Another suggestion is fanciful, perhaps, but by no means impracticable, and might recommend itself to the imagination of the present Prime Minister. It is the creation of a *Guardia Nobile* or *Garde Chevalier*, recruited exclusively from the scions of princely native houses, to whom should be assigned the duty or privilege of guarding in person the Empress of Hindostan. The Maharaja Duleep Singh has taught us how readily a Hindoo prince can adopt our tastes and mode of life in this country, and it might become the highest ambition of the cadets of reigning families to serve in the new body-guard, whose number would of course be limited. The visible presence in the metropolis of fifty or one hundred vassal princes or great nobles would certainly tend to bring home to the British people the reality and greatness of their own Empire in the East.

Several Hindoo chiefs have been raised to the rank of general in the British Army, and of these the most distinguished is Sindia, who is at heart a soldier, and has organised and disciplined his own forces with remarkable

success. Is there any good reason against our following the example of the Dutch in Netherlands India, and inviting the personal aid of "General H. H. the Maharaja of Gwalior" in our next difficulty beyond the frontiers? There is reason to believe that he would respond readily to such an invitation, and he might at the same time be permitted to reoccupy the fortress of which he has been deprived without any apparent pretext. The protected princes have sufficiently proved that in time of peril they identify their interests with those of the British Government. By a policy of conciliation and confidence we might secure their ungrudging and hearty support against all enemies of the Empire.

But while the princes are remembered the peasants must not be forgotten, as is apt to be the case in all countries, and particularly in India. While Rajas were feasting at Delhi raiyats were famishing in the Deccan. It is unfortunate that upon this occasion the responsibility must rest upon English shoulders, and that the reckless emulation in extravagance, to which orientals are naturally so prone, was in a great measure forced upon the Rajas by superior order. When in the Nizam's dominions, shortly after the Delhi assemblage, and just as the famine in those regions was beginning to assume alarming proportions, I found that various useful and ornamental works undertaken by Sir Salar Jung had been recently discontinued. Upon inquiring the reason I was informed that it would not do to burn the candle at both ends, and that the expenses of the young Nizam's involuntary expedition to northern India had been enormous.

At a later date, when the famine in the Deccan was at its height, Baroda, the Gaekwar's capital, was the scene of prolonged festivities, for which the British authorities must be held responsible, as well as their nominee Sir T. Madava Rao, and which were calculated to set a pernicious example of ill-timed extravagance.

Native Opinion, a newspaper published in English and Marathi, on the 11th of March, 1877, thus alludes to these proceedings, affording a good specimen of the intelligent and vigorous criticism to be found in the columns of the native press:—

It has passed into a proverb in India, "As is the king, so are

his subjects." The great moulders of fashion and elevators of ideas and notions about good and bad, proper and improper, are now the high dignitaries of the British Empire. But since there is little community of feeling as well as social intercourse between the rulers and the ruled, any lâches and failings of theirs do not exercise such a pernicious influence upon the Indian masses as do those of the leaders of Indian societies. Whatever their faults, our princes, chiefs, and nobles must for a long time to come continue to wield a very great influence either for good or for evil. They are at present relieved of all care for the existence of their rank and possessions. If they were, therefore, to apply themselves to raising up the Indian masses socially, morally, and materially, they would keep up their positions and prove the greatest benefactors of the country. Unfortunately, however, this is not the case. The security which our princes and nobles now enjoy seems to have done them harm rather than good. Few of them know ambition or enjoyment except what their animal nature dictates to them. Therefore, when a well-trained and brought-up prince succeeds his father, or when a gentleman of ability and education is appointed to a Dewanship, the event is hailed with joy by the people and particularly by the educated classes.

We have been led into these remarks by the festivities which have just now come to an end at Baroda. Notwithstanding the injustice done to Malharrao, we thought the new order of things at Baroda would do good not only to that State, but also to other native sovereignties in India; that the name of Rajah Sir T. Madhavrao was a guarantee that a manly and vigorous tone would be imparted to the administration. But what do we find instead? Worship of the powerful seems to be cultivated at Baroda with as much assiduity as elsewhere. A honeyed tongue and anxiety to please the great, is the bane of Indian populations.

It is remarkable to read in a native journal of the present day words almost identical in effect with those used by Sir John Malcolm, who was Governor of Bombay about half a century ago. He says of the Rajput chiefs in the peninsula of Kutch:—

Secure in our protection, and freed by it from all supervision or responsibility in the management of their estates, the Jârejâ chiefs have become indolent and indifferent to all matters that do not affect their personal interest. Lost in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, they neglect all improvement, and endeavour to supply funds for such a course of life by every means of oppression and outrage they can venture upon without the hazard of their property.

This is the dark side of the picture, and illustrates the evils which may result, and in many cases undoubtedly have resulted, from the British protectorate; but the case of

Kutch is somewhat peculiar, both geographically and politically.

This province is rather an island than a peninsula during that large portion of the year when the Runn, a great salt lake, is flooded, and is at other seasons almost as completely insulated by the desert as by the sea. The British Government in 1819 undertook by treaty to maintain the peace in Kutch against foreign and domestic foes, and thereby released the inferior feudatory chiefs from the burden of military service due by them to the Rao, their suzerain. At the same time the entire cost of British intervention was thrown upon the Rao in the form of tribute, and the maintenance of a military contingent, while he was also obliged to defray, with the aid of a few insignificant pecuniary contributions from his numerous Bháyád or kindred chiefs, all the expenses of administering the country. Thus, to compare small things with great, the Rao of Kutch holds towards his Bháyád a position resembling that of the British Government towards the protected princes throughout the Empire, but he is only the intermediate superior, and he bears the military expenses without wielding any military power, so that his position is less favourable than that of native chiefs in general.

Very serious difficulties have resulted in Indian politics from the incautious use of words, and the impossibility of accurately translating into English such terms as: Bháyád, Khálsa, Girásiá, Zamindár, Tálukdár, Ráiyat, and Darbár, etc.

Frerage, kindred, feudatory, vassal, sub-vassal, subject, suzerain, seignorial, superior, paramount, and similar feudal or legal terms have been used as translations, conveying at least approximately correct ideas. Such terms are of course useful, if employed with care, but grave practical blunders have been the consequence of acting upon notions of European Feudalism, altogether foreign to the social conditions of India.

The natives of India hardly appreciate the new-fangled merits of British rule; they are genuine conservatives, and seem to prefer an ancient evil to a modern reform, liking to be misgoverned by their own people in the old-fashioned

style. Of a wilful desire to oppress they are ready to acquit the Sahebs themselves, but not the Saheb's "native subordinates," and they dislike intensely the expensive and cumbrous machinery for administering what we consider to be justice. Our "Civil Courts" are regarded as institutions for enabling the rich to grind the faces of the poor, and many are fain to seek a refuge from their jurisdiction within native territory. The very acts on which we rely for securing popular goodwill are frequently productive of bitter discontent, because we are out of sympathy with native feelings, customs, and modes of thought. At the same time our temperament and our motives of action are inscrutable to the natives, and the great gulf fixed between the two races remains unbridged. Then the costliness of our Government involves the necessity of perpetually trying to discover or invent new methods for raising money, and the inhabitants of the British provinces are kept in constant dread of some new turn of the fiscal screw. Looking back upon the good old times previous to annexation, they are apt to think of a former ruler as "a tyrant—but our masters then were still at least our countrymen." Even the capricious tyranny of a native chief is less galling to a native community, however severely it may strike individuals, than the even, unrelaxing pressure of our rule. At this time, moreover, the native States enjoy exemption from those reactionary and vexatious measures, in the conception of which the Government of the present Viceroy have been so prolific, and of which the enactment against the press furnishes the latest example. In a letter recently received from India a native gentleman of very high distinction gives expression to the prevalent dissatisfaction by saying: "I see no hope of improvement here so long as Government is bent on endless legislation; in the present state of the Council at Calcutta anything may pass." The most urgent reform in India, indeed, appears to be reform of the Legislative Councils.

DAVID WEDDERBURN.