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ENGLISH RULE

AND

NATIVE OPINION IN INDIA.

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ENGLISH RULE

AND

NATIVE OPINION IN INDIA.

FROM NOTES TAKEN 1870-74.

BY

JAMES ROUTLEDGE.

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1878.

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PREFACE.

My object in this work is to try to depict some phases of Indian life as they actually are, and to make them as clear as possible to readers who know nothing practically of India. I can honestly affirm that I could with far less labour have made a work of a much more pretentious character than it has cost me to weave together this simple narrative of facts. The Indian Administration Reports alone are a mine of figures, which, with very little trouble, may be adapted to any subject, and used by any writer. No report, however, would have given me the material for the pictures which it has been my aim and wish to present. If the reader is interested with those pictures, I shall rejoice. I shall rejoice still more if I am fortunate enough to contribute anything tending to the solution of the great problems—many of them more social than political—involved in the relations of India to England.

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ERRATA.

- Page 103, line 4, for "Patna" read "Pubna."*
- ,, 174, ,, 21, ,, "had told you that."
- ,, 178, ,, 14, ,, "the tow-rope."
- ,, 195, ,, 13, ,, "one other subject" read "There was one other subject which."
- ,, 214, ,, 5, ,, "may" read "might."
- ,, 235, ,, 6, ,, "they" ,, "were."
- ,, 259, ,, 1, } ,, "Greathead" ,, "Greaded."
- ,, 266, ,, 22, }
- ,, 265, ,, 4, ,, "cut off the."
- ,, 267, ,, 32, ,, "Gwalior's men" ,, "Gwalior men."
- ,, 268, ,, 21, ,, "overpouring, then" ,, "overpouring. Then."
- ,, 271, ,, 13, ,, "a quiet future" ,, "a great future."
- ,, 285, ,, 6, Quotation ends at "crops."
- ,, 292, ,, 24, read "as affording one of the best."

APPENDIX.

No. I.—Page 43.

THE identity of the gates recovered with those removed from Somnâth was questioned at the time in the sharp satire directed against Lord Ellenborough, but I do not know any sound reason for doubting that the gates I saw at Agra were those taken away by Mahmoud of Ghuznee.

No. II.—Page 46.

It should not be forgotten that the passes of Afghanistan and the co-operation of the Afghans were essential to Napoleon's scheme for the invasion of India ; and that when Lord Wellesley in the year 1800 sent Captain Malcolm on the famous embassy to Teheran—the first marked indication of the new frontier policy—it was with especial view to Napoleon's designs. A little earlier Lord Wellesley had planned an attack on the Mauritius, and in 1800 he carried out that memorable invasion of Egypt by a force from India ; an event which may perhaps rank in political importance with the battle of the Nile as proving to Napoleon that the invasion of India, while India was governed by a man like Lord Wellesley, would be a desperate enterprise. The French had assailed England in several different directions with a view to India ;—by means of Tippoo, whom in 1799 we conquered ; by invading Egypt, which was even then (without either a Suez Canal or an Overland Route) the key to the operations of a ruler who, powerful on land, was impotent on sea ; and finally, by a very subtle influence, directed to Persia and Afghanistan. There can hardly be a doubt that with Lord Wellesley at Calcutta we should

have defied and defeated even Napoleon. How thoroughly he grasped the whole question with the intuition of genius, and provided for every possible chance, and even for what he deemed impossibilities, his recently published dispatches show. Instead of waiting for Napoleon to attempt the march from Egypt to Afghanistan, Lord Wellesley, with a daring equal to Napoleon's own, sent the force referred to above to dispute the first step of the invasion in Egypt, and he provided for failure there by influencing Persia and Afghanistan. He said: "This French state actually holds possession of the person and nominal authority of the Mogul; maintains the most efficient army of regular native infantry, and the most powerful artillery now existing in India, with the exception of the Company's troops, and exercises a considerable influence on the neighbouring states, from the banks of the Indus to the confluence of the Jumna and the Ganges. . . . Nor could an instrument of destruction more skilfully adapted to wound the heart of the British Empire in India be presented to the vindictive hand of the first Consul of France." That both Lord Wellesley and his brother, the future Duke of Wellington, were impressed with a belief that the invasion of India from the north west was practicable, cannot be disputed; and though they would have met it with high hearts and every hope of success, we must bear in mind that the rule of England at that time was in exceptionally able hands, and that if Lord Auckland had been in the place of Lord Wellesley, the entire conditions would have been different. That Napoleon could have marched from the Caspian to the Khyber we may deem impossible if the march had of necessity been through enemies, and with Nelson triumphant on sea. If, however, France could have held the Mediterranean, and Persia and Afghanistan had been conciliated, and the Indian princes influenced by the able and skilful French officers employed for that purpose, and, above all, if Lord Auckland, and not Lord Wellesley, had been Governor General, the face of the world might, as Napoleon delighted to say of many of his operations, have been changed from the day the French landed in Alexandria. Wellesley in India and Nelson on the Mediterranean destroyed Napoleon's chance of attempting to repeat for France the splendid drama that Clive had achieved for England. It will be perceived, however, that a "frontier policy" was necessary, and that the invasion of India was by no means the chimera that some people would have us suppose. To defy the danger is one thing. To deny the existence of the danger is to increase it many fold.

No. III.—Page 63.

The rumour of Yakoob Beg's death was afterwards contradicted, but incorrectly so. The latest intelligence up to the time these lines go to press is that the late Ameer's son, Beg Kuli Beg, has been defeated, the Dadkhwah's son killed, and the Dadkhwah himself taken prisoner.

No. IV.—Page 108.

I was much struck by the way in which some officers, whose memories went back for as long as perhaps thirty years, and were continuations of other memories, spoke of these frontier soldiers of adventure. Of Avitabile, and his unscrupulous seizure of any person, male or female, or any property necessary to his interest or personal gratification, there are many, and I should say, authentic stories.

No. V.—Page 134.

Mr Fawcett made this strong statement at Salisbury (September 9) this year :—"Our present income-tax of 2d. in the pound yields an annual revenue of about four millions ; an income-tax of the same amount when imposed in India did not produce more than £400,000. Not only, therefore, is the income-tax a most feeble resource for adding to the revenue of India, but there are such manifold abuses connected with its collection, and the tax is so entirely unsuited to the Indian people, that nothing but extreme necessity can justify a resort to it. So strongly was this felt by Lord Canning, one of the best Governor Generals that India ever had, that he once declared he would far sooner run the risk of reducing the European army in India by one half than incur the danger which might result from the discontent which the imposition of an income-tax would produce." Mr Fawcett also said :—"In a volume issued by the India Office in 1873 it is said, 'In the 14 districts of Madras there are said to be 43 000 tanks, all of native origin, with probably 30,000 miles of embankments and 300,000 separate masonry works. The revenue

dependent on tanks was £1,500,000, yet in 1853 not one new one had been made in Madras by the English, though many had been allowed to fall into disrepair.' Again, it is stated that under native rule, by well and canal irrigation, 'the district of Mooltan, between the Sutlej and Chenab, where rain hardly ever falls, is converted into a succession of beautiful gardens, shaded by date palms.'"

No. VI.—Page 218.

Mr Eden recently said of Lord Northbrook : "Some little time antecedent to Lord Northbrook's arrival, there had arisen from some cause or other a condition of coldness and restraint in the relations between Europeans and natives, and a general want of mutual confidence and good feeling, which was much deplored and regretted by thinking men of both classes. But I observed that year by year after Lord Northbrook's arrival this state of things vanished away ; and I believe that this was mainly due to the personal example of courtesy and consideration which Lord Northbrook set in all matters of communication and intercourse with natives. I know, and I can say it most confidently, that the educated native gentlemen of Bengal were much impressed and influenced by the unvarying courtesy with which he treated them, and with the calm, patient justice with which he considered all matters connected with them."

No. VII.—Page 293.

After this chapter was in type I fortunately mentioned it to Mr Wilson, proprietor and editor of the *Indian Daily News* (now in England), who kindly sent me a note, referring to an Indian worker, Baboo Sasipada Banerjee. Mr Wilson wrote : "Baboo Sasipada Banerjee is, I believe, or rather I should say was, a Brahmin by birth, and resides at Baranagore, a village a few miles north of Calcutta. He is yet a young man. When I first became acquainted with him, he was engaged in earnest endeavours to improve the character of his neighbours

and benefit the village. The jute-mill of the Borneo Company had brought to the village numbers of men who were rapidly becoming 'mill hands,' but who were very ignorant. Sasipada was, I think, at this time a member of the so-called reformers of the Brahma Samaj, of which Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen is the recognised leader. But he is not a man to be held in iron-bound creeds. In opposition to the feelings and traditions of his race, he had the sagacity to perceive that future generations must be affected for good through their mothers. His means were limited. He was only a clerk in a magistrate's court; but he resolved to employ the hours not required for official duty in useful work. He laid his plans before the managers of the mills and other friends who sympathised with him. Schools were started for infants and for adults. To the latter he devoted his evenings, frequently not reaching home till near midnight. He started girls' schools, and the idea of girls' schools is, or was, a very revolutionary one in India. He established an improvement committee in the village, and was laying the axe so vigorously, albeit very unostentatiously, to the root of many long-standing evils, that some of his fellow-villagers, including members of his own family—taking that term in a wider sense than our English one of his own household—began to take alarm. He became subject to all sorts of opposition and persecution. He was put out of caste, intercourse with his fellows was denied him. His house was defiled at the instigation of men who professed to be not only gentlemen but religious. He showed no resentment. Greater trials were in store for him. His wife, devotedly attached to him, and taught by him the difference between real religion and ignorant idolatry and worse sham, sympathised with and encouraged him. The time of dire necessity was coming upon his wife, when she must experience the sorrow that precedes the compensating joy of maternity. The village doctor would not, or dare not, attend the wife of an out-caste; no midwife would or dare render her mercenary aid any more than she dare assist from sympathy. Here, it was said, we shall touch Sasipada to the quick, and bring him to bend beneath the yoke of Hindooism. Sasipada felt that in this extremity, as in others, he must trust in God and the intelligence which He had given him. He made the best use of his time in the study of a few physiological and medical works, and performed most satisfactorily the duties of family *accoucheur*. One day while he was at his daily duty some seven or eight miles away, his wife was taken from his house at Baranagore, he knew not whither or by

whom ; and of course none of the villagers likely to be concerned in the affair would give him any information. However, he was not to be baffled ; and love, which laughs at locksmiths, somehow in this case opened a communication. Sasipada found that his wife had been spirited 500 miles away to Benares. He found her and brought her home. Some of these facts became known to European gentlemen in Calcutta, and one of the papers expressed itself in a style that was not calculated to flatter the self-love of Sasipada's persecutors. But he had almost beaten or wearied them out himself, and after this they modified their animosity. Sasipada had conversed with English gentlemen of institutions in England for working men. He had also read of various organisations of labour, &c. He wished to visit England to see these in operation. His work attracted the notice of Miss Carpenter on her first visit to India, and one of the results was an arrangement that Baboo Sasipada should pay a visit to England. There was some difficulty about it. Native gentlemen—even Brahmins—had been known to commit the iniquity of crossing the sea against the injunctions of their Shasters. He went, however, and Mrs Banerjee accompanied him. They were the guests of Miss Carpenter, and a son was born at Bristol and was named 'Albion.' Though this visit was not regarded with favour, the 'enemy' had seen sufficient. Some thought he might perhaps return a Christian ; but I am not aware that he has ever been considered one, or has professed to be so. He is a Brahminist, and most assuredly a 'reformer.' Though he belongs to the 'Progressive Brahmos,' he does not accept implicitly the doctrines of Keshub Baboo ; nor do I suppose he will accept those of any sect, of whatever denomination. Amongst other things resulting from his visit to England was the publication of a little work in the Bengalee language, upon the model of the *British Workman*, though, of course, at an infinite distance. The circulation has reached 8000 or 10,000 copies. Two or three years ago, the great sorrow of his life fell upon Sasipada. His wife, who had been the faithful partner of his sufferings and persecutions, whose devotion and affection sustained him in the most trying periods of his life, was taken from him. The management of the little paper for working men necessarily devolves largely upon him, but he has occasionally to be absent on duty, and on one such occasion a letter or paragraph based on a fact, though the fact was not accurately expressed, was inserted. His opponents charged him with criminal defamation, their object being to put upon him the indignity of imprisonment. They

managed to get him convicted, and the native magistrate sentenced him to a heavy fine and to three months' imprisonment. Notice of appeal was given, but bail was refused, an act of malice that was defeated by a prompt representation to the sessions judge—an Englishman. On appeal the sentence as to imprisonment was reversed, and the fine was reduced to a comparatively small sum."

No. VIII.—Page 330.

Mr Wilson, in the course of conversation also said, with reference to the advantages and disadvantages of the English occupation of India: "Yes, the very same subject arose in conversation at Delhi on the occasion of the proclamation of the Empire. One of those present said it was true that some men made fortunes; that many received high pay and gained distinction; but we also gave to India some of our noblest blood, and paid for our occupation in lives that could ill be spared. 'The graveyards of India,' he said, 'sufficiently attest that.' Whenever I visit Delhi, I never seem to have done my duty without going to the Cashmere Gate and to the cemetery outside, where lie the bones of John Nicholson and of many who fell with him. But it is not alone with the lives of the strong that we pay the price of our occupation. The other day I did my usual pilgrimage to the tomb of Nicholson, and what else did I see? On every side of the grave of the great man there were melancholy memorials of many who might have become great also under other conditions. Within a yard or two of Nicholson's tomb there is a newly erected stone with the inscription 'Sacred to the memory of our Sonny Boy' (a native phrase = "bright" or "golden"), 'who died —— aged two years.' Again not more distant, 'In affectionate remembrance of —— ——, daughter of Captain and Mrs —— ——, aged one year and seven months.' These and many more very recent monuments of similar purport, attest in suitable inscriptions how parental hopes have been blighted, how passionate sorrow bewails the exactions of an Indian career. The young blossoms of hope scarcely bloom ere they droop and die: the young tendrils just learn to twine themselves round the hearts which they lacerate on being torn away. The

bereaved parents leave a sad memorial over the graves which the instability of their position often forbids the possibility of their ever visiting again. These leave sad memories ; and are a part of the price we pay for the occupation of India.' A medical gentleman present said : ' I am glad to hear you say that. It has been before me often in my experience, but I have never heard it so expressed before. I thank you much for saying that.' "

THE END.