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THOUGHTS

ON THE *Rare section*

POLICY OF THE CROWN

TOWARDS

INDIA.

BY

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MY DEAR LLOYD JONES,

To you, as Editor of the "Leeds Express," the letters out of which this book has grown were formally addressed ; to you personally I dedicate the book itself, in token of friendship and fellow-work.

Ever yours,

J. M. LUDLOW.

To Lloyd Jones, Esq., of Leeds.

P R E F A C E.

IN the beginning of last year, at the request of a friend, I wrote some letters on "the Indian Government question" in a provincial paper. Some interest was excited by them beyond the natural sphere of the Journal, and I was induced to give greater scope to them, and to treat in particular at some length of the effects of that policy of annexation and absorption of which the late Governor-General of India has been the main exponent. A desire was expressed for the republication of this portion of the series, and I had already prepared it, with considerable additions, for the press, when the appearance of the Queen's Proclamation came to render much of my argument against such a policy superfluous, by sanctioning its leading conclusions. In taking it as my text, I felt I should be best carrying out the purpose which I had in view.*

Many will indeed think, even if they do not say: "We are weary of this subject of India. The poignant interest of the outbreak has passed away. The suspense of the conflict is over. The Lucknow heroes are mostly recruiting their strength at home. There are no more victories to win that we care to hear of. Besides, we

* The form of letters has been retained, though more than half the volume consists of new matter.

have tried to understand the subject, and we cannot. It is so far, so foreign, so complex; we hear such different accounts of it. Where one says black and the other says white, each witness being, for aught we can discover, of equal authority, how can we decide between the two? The last session has seen the fate of a ministry hanged on an Indian proclamation and despatch; has seen an India bill passed, the time-honoured administration of the East India Company swept away, the government of India transferred to the Crown, a responsible ministry for India established. At the head of the new Council sits a young statesman, by almost general consent held most fit for his place, if not that to some he seems already fit for one still higher. Is not that enough? We have to think of the Reform Bill at home, of the ferment in Northern Italy, of Napoleonic intrigues, alliances, preparations for war, pacific denials soon denied; of quasi-slave trade complications; of Denmark and the Bund, of Villafranca and the Russians, of Turkey and its rayas, of Servia and her revolution, of the Ionian Isles and Mr. Gladstone abroad. Why cannot we be allowed to forget India, were it only for awhile?"

Much of what is thus said or thought is perfectly true,—all is perfectly natural. Little as I may think of the Derby Cabinet's India Act, I rejoice in the two momentous changes introduced into the Indian administration,—Crown Government and ministerial responsibility. I have hope in Lord Stanley, if not hounded down by his Council. I admire the boldness of self-devotion which induced him to undertake, in the midst of a crisis so difficult a task as that of an Indian

ministry ; I believe that his abilities and industry have hitherto gone far to justify that boldness ; I believe him to be actuated by just and generous feelings towards the people of India ; I hail with especial satisfaction, as an earnest of the policy of the present administration towards India, the appointment of Sir C. Trevelyan to the Government of Madras. Nor would I for a moment deny the importance of any of those questions of domestic or foreign policy which are alleged ; quite the contrary. But I say it is precisely the importance of those questions which makes our Indian policy, and the condition of our Indian empire, more important still. India disaffected is a palsy of England's right side ; India in rebellion is a devouring ulcer in her flank. For months now our best troops and our ablest general have been thousands of miles away. Months must yet elapse before one European soldier—even of the tried 78th—reaches England from India. The 50,000 men whom 1857 sent thither,—the 30,000 or so who have followed them in 1858—have in great part melted away already. Recruiting for the Indian service must yet go on ; the boys whom the recruiting sergeant is now picking up out of our vast courts and alleys will yet many of them perish like flies under the fierce Indian sun, in petty obscure partisan skirmishes with those who have been soldiers and will have to be hunted down as robbers, in the storming of small mudforts and fortified villages. Meanwhile, who at home is not conscious of feelings of vague distrust as to the future, latent in the minds even of the loudest declaimers for peace ? The armed despotism of Louis Napoleon weighs upon Europe. His warlike pre-

parations he no longer even takes the trouble to conceal. Even if we suppose his personal intentions towards us to be friendly, currents which he cannot control will always bring him round to a direction of opposition towards us. Freedom and despotism cannot stand long side by side. Freedom, however peaceable, is a standing warning against despotism; despotism, for very life, must be a perpetual threat against freedom. Few amongst us perhaps, during the Regina Coeli and Charles-Georges complications, could get rid of an uneasy suspicion that we were sacrificing the weak to the strong, pandering to a secret fear of a too-powerful ally, losing the opportunity of a mighty protest in favour of right. And the trial of M. de Montalembert, for the offence of having dared to speak well of England—even now that it has been sought to be wiped out by a hasty pardon—was an insult flung in the teeth not of England's Government, but of every individual Englishman. Our nation was lowered through his condemnation; by the police courts of a prince who yet called himself our ally. A score is thus being run up, which sooner or later, I fear, must be settled in blood. And M. de Montalambert himself has warned us as to the "common fund of animosity" existing against England on the Continent, as to the need of keeping up her military strength.

It is the condition of India that has made this state of things possible. With a happy, prosperous, and loyal India, England may safely bid defiance to the world. With Saxon thews and sinews in the West, and faithful Mussuhuan or Sikh sabres in the East, ready to be flung over the Indian Ocean, she would take Euro-

pean despotism in front and rear. And therefore I claim that nothing should tempt us to overlook the need of that large and distant empire, which is now, in reality, paralyzing our military strength, and must, sooner or later, tell weightily upon our financial resources. Therefore I say, that whilst any interval of rest and security is given to us at home, we should apply ourselves resolutely to the understanding of India's condition, to the setting it right as far as is humanly possible. Therefore I claim attention for fragments of contemporary history, relating to states in India of which many may never have heard before, or have heard with as little of vivid personal interest as they might have heard of the moon's mountains. In the problem, whether India, now and in future, is to be to us a hindrance or a help, a source of strength or a source of weakness, every English household is concerned, little as we may think it.

And the problem is one, be assured, which gathers interest as we enter more deeply into it. What more striking spectacle does this world afford than that of the oldest civilization in the world grappled by the newest?—of a heathenism, more ancient than that of which our school-books teach us, nay, apparently the fountain-head of that, placed face to face with Christianity? what stranger sight than that of the new everywhere permeating the old in resistless currents, driving away the false, and yet in the very process bringing out many a precious truth that is mixed up with it? To the seeing eye, the condition of India is as it were a synchronous picture of human development, all history, so to speak, made visible at once.

I need hardly say that I am no political partizan. I deemed Lord Palmerston prematurely hurled from power; I looked for a time to his re-instalment; I still deem his India bill to have been by far the preferable one of the three measures brought forward upon that subject, one of which has passed into law. And whilst heartily approving of the late Proclamation of the Queen's Government, and believing that every nerve should be strained by all well-wishers to India to carry it loyally and generously into effect,—that no punishment scarcely can be too great for those officials who should dare to disregard it or tamper with it,—I reserve to myself the fullest freedom of judgment as to the general policy of a Cabinet, for some members of which I have feelings of unfeigned respect,—but of thorough distrust towards one or two others.

I have, in this work, used proper names far more freely than I could have wished. But where I found them appended to state papers it seemed to me that it would have been affectation to avoid them. I have at least the satisfaction of thinking that I never have had the slightest communication with any of the gentlemen whose proceedings I have been led to criticize, and do not know one of them by sight; and therefore, that not a tinge of personal feeling can have influenced my judgments. There are those who may deem that the canvassing the past acts of the Indian government or of its officials can only have for its effect to embitter the minds of the natives against British rule, at a time when it seems most desirable that animosities should be allowed to subside. My answer is, that I believe the minds of the natives *are* embittered against me,

features of British rule; that animosities *have* been excited, which cannot subside by merely being overlooked. And all my experience hitherto has shewn me, that where a man does deem himself aggrieved, the two very worst things possible are, 1st.—to omit or refuse inquiring into his grievances, 2nd.—not to recognize them to the fullest extent where they are real. That such a grievance as the Inam Commission, for instance, is a real one, I cannot affect to doubt; and the longer it is left subsisting and unnoticed, I am convinced, the more harm will result. Of the folly in process of committal of forcing it upon the Madras Presidency it is difficult to speak in measured terms.

There remains for me but to add, that for the use of the greater part of the materials from which this book is written, I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. Dickinson, jun., Hon. Secretary to the India Reform Society.

Lincoln's Inn, January 31, 1859.

NOTE.—I find I have committed a grave error in my XIVth Letter, in speaking of the State of Dhar as restored. It is true that during the last session Lord Stanley, in answer to a question from Mr. J. B. Smith, stated that it was “the intention of the Government to disallow the policy of annexation as regards the territory of Dhar,” and that the occupation of that territory was provisional only, “subject as to its duration to further explanation which we hope to receive;”* nor is there, I believe, any reason to doubt that instructions for restoration were sent out accordingly. But

* Hansard's Debates, vol. 150 (3rd Series), pp. 1919-20.

the territory remains unrestored to this hour, and the very despatch for its restoration, if rumour speaks true, unreplied to. Letter XIV, must therefore be read as written under the delusion of supposing that the directions of the Queen's Government were obeyed by the Indian authorities.

It is well known that under the Double Government many a benevolent despatch from the Court of Directors remained waste paper in India. It is more than suspected that the practice had grown up latterly of writing such despatches—as our Transatlantic cousins would say, for Bunkum—without any intention of their being carried out, but solely to make a show before Parliament and through the press.* There remains to be seen whether the Queen's Government will submit to either disgrace in future.

* The Moturfa abolition despatch for instance?

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APPENDIX.

As a sample on the one hand of the mode in which the Proclamation could be dealt with in India by one really alive to its worth,—on the other of the feelings with which it was met by the people in a part of the country which has been wholly undisturbed by rebellion, I venture to annex the following report by a near relative of my own, a landholder in the South, to the authorities of his province.

“ Anjarakandy, 6 December, 1858.

“ To G. R. SHARPE, Esq.

“ Assistant Magistrate of Malabar.

“ SIR,—Yesterday, pursuant to public notice given several days previous, the native inhabitants of these and of the neighbouring aneshums were convened, and Her Majesty's Proclamation, assuming the government of her Indian dominions, was read and made known to them. A very large number of persons, relatively to the population, of all castes and creeds, attended. All manifested the greatest and most respectful interest in what they were assembled to hear; and as the occasion furnished me with the opportunity of arriving unsuspectingly at the inner sentiments prevailing among peaceful and respectable Hindoos and Mahomedans upon a very important subject, now of engrossing interest, it is my duty to make known to you and to Mr. Grant, the magistrate of the Province, what occurred.

To introduce what follows I must premise that on my return from England I learned with infinite pain and surprise, in conversation with both Hindoos and Mapillas, that it is a settled belief among the people that there exists a desire on the part of the Government to make them renounce caste and creed and adopt Christianity; not of course by any demonstration of force, but by gradual and covert

means, by prepossessing the minds of their children and offering temptations to their temporal interests. I state the naked fact. My individual assurances, repeated on every available occasion, have proved powerless in combating this erroneous and fatal impression. I therefore gladly availed myself of the occasion of the Proclamation, to shew to the people that the disclaimer they had heard from me was repeated in the most marked and emphatic language by the supreme head of the state, and was by her commanded to be published throughout the length and breadth of the land. Accordingly, after the Malayalim version of the proclamation, carefully adapted to the comprehension of the persons who were to hear it, had been slowly and deliberately read, I invited question and comment upon it, by asking whether all present clearly understood what they had just heard; if not, that I was ready to explain its meaning, and resolve any doubts. An ancient Mapilla in the midst of the crowd made response that some parts he understood, some he did not. I asked him forward, and on questioning him before all as to what he did not understand, I perceived plainly that his doubts were fixed upon the real meaning of that passage of the Proclamation, in which Her Majesty declares in the clearest language that no proselytism of the natives is designed, that no interference with their religion or usages will be suffered without punishment, and no bar be raised, by reason of creed or caste, to the right of all to public state employ. I saw unmistakably, in surveying the faces and the attitude of the listening crowd, that they participated in the doubt expressed by the Mapilla. I saw, in short, that they did not trust their own ears, and that on the bare mention of their religion and usages, so strong were their prepossessions running in the opposite direction, they feared nothing less was intended than a proclaimed interference with both. I therefore caused the Queen's disclaimer to be again twice read over, and assured the people that Her Majesty's commands would be the rigid rule of her Government. Not till then were they thoroughly satisfied as to what was intended. 'If that be so,' said a Hindoo, 'then the Padres will no longer be suffered to come to the festivals of our Pagodas, when we are peaceably met together, and hold forth and abuse our religion and usages to our very faces, provoking us to break forth into violence.'

But whatever the hopes of future good to themselves and their

country, raised and encouraged by other parts of the Proclamation, whatever the approval, and it was a hearty approval, bestowed upon them, the touchstone of the merit of the whole paper was in the minds of the assembly the treatment to be dealt out by the new Government to their caste and religion. I record the fact as undeniable evidence of their sensitiveness upon these subjects, and as proof that the feeling is sunk to the depth of their hearts. Sensitiveness to his faith is not held to be a disparagement to a Christian. The true Christian will never hold it to be a disparagement in a Mahomedan or a Hindoo.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

F. C. BROWN.

P.S.—A Bramin present asked for a copy of the Proclamation. I have sent another to the Mapilla sheikh of Kalye.

“F. C. BROWN.”

I add the following details from a private letter from the same writer :—

“One Mapilla said, they had had scores of Proclamations upon every conceivable subject, but never one so wise and sensible as this. ‘That is true,’ rejoined another, ‘but the Maharanee is in England, a very long way off; who will see to the execution in India?’ The very same feeling as here was manifested by all classes at Tellicherry. ‘That is an admirable clause, the toleration clause,’ said to me the *Protestant* moonsiff. ‘What an excellent passage that is in the Proclamation,’ said the *Roman Catholic* sheristadar of the Sessions Court. As for the natives, there was among them but one burst of satisfaction. . . . By the way, the Government Malayalim version of the Proclamation would have been so much Greek to my neighbours. I had to prepare a corrected one of my own.”

ERRATA.

Page 186, line 10 from bottom, *for* "the Sepoys," *read* "our Sepoys."

Page 190, line 6 from bottom, *for* "heirs," *read* "heirs male."

NOTE.

IN considering, at pp. 41 and foll., the legal value of the word "successor," the use of that word for fiscal purposes by the Succession Duties Act, 17 and 18 Vict. c. 51, should perhaps have been referred to. The positions laid down remain however wholly unaffected by the omission; for on the one hand, it is as true now as in Sir E. Coke's time, that the word "successor" creates no fee-simple (*Co. Litt. 8 b.*), and on the other, the sense in which the word is taken by the Act goes far beyond the construction of it by annexationist officials, and approximates closely to its use as a term of international law.