

CHAPTER VIII

WHY IS INDIA POOR?

ONLY TWO hundred years ago India was the richest country in the world. Today it is the poorest. The gorgeous palaces of its kings with their enormous treasures were the objects of admiration and wonder for the other nations of the world. Its flourishing industries and its highly lucrative trade excited the greed and envy of the merchant classes everywhere. Its merchant ships laden with cargoes of valuable spices, silken and cotton manufactures, and precious jewels sailed into the harbors of England and other countries of Europe. How the maritime nations of the world vied with each other to possess the trade of the East Indies and fought over concessions in the Empire of the mighty Moghuls is a matter of common knowledge to all students of history. It was the fame of India that excited the imagination of Columbus when he set out westward on his historic voyage; it was only by accident that he discovered America. He had undertaken his voyage in search for a new route to the fabulous riches of India, so that America really owes her discovery to the fame of that ancient land. Pick up any standard work on mediæval history or classical literature and you will find that the riches of India and the splendor of the courts of its kings had become proverbial among the nations of Europe.

That fame of East Indian wealth which had inspired the careers of many a European explorer, mili-

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tary commander, and financial genius had totally disappeared long before the end of the nineteenth century; with the disappearing of the Indian kings the splendor of their courts had also vanished; with the extinction of the Indian fabric industries her flourishing trade had ceased; and simultaneously with the loss of its handicrafts and independence the prestige and prosperity of the nation had come to an end. As early as the year 1900 A.D. India had begun to be regarded by the historians as the poorest country in the world. Her daily per capita income was fixed at three quarters of a penny (equivalent to one and nine-sixteenths cents), and it was estimated that the dawn of the twentieth century found among the inhabitants of India one hundred and sixty million people who did not know what it was to have one square meal a day. The percentage of literacy, which included a knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, had dropped from thirty-three per cent in 1757 to less than four per cent in 1900.

What is the cause of this astounding change in the condition of an ancient people like the East Indians? How did it happen that the same period which witnessed a sudden rise in the prosperity of most other nations of the world found in the Hindu nation an equal or even more sudden fall? What was the cause of the ruin of India's famous silk and cotton industries and of the loss of its political and economic independence? How did India drop from the highest rank to the lowest, from the proudest position to the humblest?

For this state of things in India writers have of-

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ferred different explanations, several of which are so weak in nature that they would not stand even a superficial examination. The downfall of the country has been variously attributed to the low, immoral character of its populace and the selfishness and cowardice of their leaders, to a large increase in its population, to the inertia and extravagance of its agricultural class, to the rigorous caste system, and to the hatred and animosity which separates the different classes of its people. Some of these evils were responsible in some measure for the political downfall of India, but the reason for India's economic ruin must be sought for elsewhere. I maintain that the political subjugation of the country by England, and the pursuance by the latter of a fiscal policy dictated exclusively by the interests of British industries at the expense of the native claims, forms the basis of India's poverty and of its consequent "ills and woes."

We shall first examine, in order, the various reasons for the country's poverty which have been given by others, and which I believe to be unsatisfactory. Later I shall attempt to prove the truth of my thesis, that the cupidity of English financial and industrial lords has been the direct cause of India's ruin.

In the preceding pages much has been said concerning the moral character of the people of India. Those who have lived among them and have studied their habits and ideals at first hand know what heights of moral and spiritual purity the inhabitants of that ancient land once attained. Even in their present condition after generations of political subjection and economic poverty, both of which have a tendency to

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degrade the character of a people, it can be confidently said that the people of India, when measured by any moral, ethical, or cultural standard, will equal if not surpass any other people throughout the entire world. In order to judge the moral condition of this race at the time when their prosperity began to disappear, we shall let those speak who knew them at first hand.

Warren Hastings, whose name has been immortalized through his impeachment by Edmund Burke, had spent the best part of his life in India. Starting his career as a low-paid assistant of the East India Company, he had risen to the position of Governor-General of India. No one knew the people of that country better than did Warren Hastings, because of all foreigners he had the best opportunity to come in close contact with them. Yet he was no unqualified friend of India, as was fully disclosed during his impeachment by the House of Commons in England. Twenty-eight years after his retirement from India, Warren Hastings gave the following testimony before the British Parliament:

"I affirm by the oath I have taken that this description of them [that the people of India were in a state of moral turpitude] is untrue and wholly unfounded. . . . They are gentle, benevolent, more susceptible of gratitude for kindness shown them than prompted to vengeance for wrongs inflicted, and as exempt from the worst properties of human passion as any people on the face of the earth." *

It has been affirmed that overpopulation is the

* Quoted from R. C. Dutt, *Economic History of British India*.

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great cause of India's backwardness. But is India really over-populated? Has its population increased very largely during the last two hundred years? When we compare the census reports of the various countries of Europe, we find that several of them, England included, are more densely populated than India. If we compare England and India, we shall find that the increase in population in the latter has been no greater than that in the former since their political connection. In fact, since the beginning of the twentieth century the population of India has actually decreased, while that of England and several other countries of Europe has increased.

That the agricultural class of India is a race of thrifty, hard-working, abstemious, and experienced farmers who understand thoroughly the art of tilling the soil, has been attested by many foreigners, who had the opportunity to study their habits at close range. The quality of their knowledge of the farming profession and the extent of their initiative and perseverance may be judged from the achievements of Hindu farmers in California. Here was a class of agricultural people who had found it hard to make a decent living in the "land of five rivers," the Punjab. The Punjab is famous for its fertile soil and has an irrigation system which is regarded as the best in the world. Yet its agricultural population is in a state of semi-starvation because of top-heavy taxation and other unprogressive features of the country's administration. The moment these farmers from the Punjab were settled in the favorable environment of California they made a success of farming which is

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acknowledged by friends and foes alike. At the present time the anti-Asiatic laws of California prohibit Hindus from farming, but it is a matter of common knowledge that Hindu farm labor is paid higher wages in most sections than is American labor, because the Hindus are "steady," "hardworking," "informed," and "dependable."

Ignorance and sluggishness do not keep the Hindu farmer in a worse condition than is his own class in other countries; the small area of his holdings, excessive taxation, and lack of capital are continually dragging him backward. Eighty per cent of the people of India depend upon agriculture for their sole support. They live on the soil and by the soil. In former times India was also the home of flourishing cottage industries, that helped to increase the income of its enormous rural population. The invasion by English manufactures, caused by the selfish English fiscal policy for India, has completely uprooted the fabric industries of the Indian villages, a change which in turn has driven the entire people to the land for their livelihood, thereby bringing the total ruin of their economic prosperity.

Lack of moral stamina in the people, overpopulation, ignorance or sluggishness of the agricultural class are thus not the real causes of India's poverty. The economist who wishes to determine the cause of any country's poverty will have to ask himself the same questions which the Hindu historian, R. C. Dutt, asked in regard to India a quarter of century ago. "Does agriculture flourish? Are the finances properly administered, so as to bring back to the people an

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adequate return for the taxes paid by them? Are the sources of national wealth widened by a Government anxious for the welfare of the people?"

If it is true that in the same ratio as English power advanced in India economic prosperity of the country began to decline, we might as well inquire into the nature of British rule in India. We shall restrict our inquiry to the answers of the following two questions: "Why England acquired India?" and "Why England holds India?" It is a fact that England first came in contact with India through the medium of a trading company, whose object in establishing its trade stations in the Eastern country was profit-making. It is asserted that the British rulers of India have been guided in their work of governing the country by altruistic and humanitarian motives of a high quality. To what extent this claim of the English nation is founded on facts we shall examine presently. In any case such humanitarian principles as may have inspired the English rule in India, were of a much later origin. The primary reason for which England established its connections with its Eastern dependency was one of pure commercial greed. At the time when the East India Company was organized in England the people of Europe had not been trained in the use of such terms as "altruism" and "civilizing the backward peoples." These high-sounding epithets are products of much later times. The minds of the Directors of the East India Company were ruled by thoughts of large dividends and big profits.

The simple facts of the case are that the British went over to India as traders in order to make profit

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out of India. They found the people of that vast and prosperous country divided among themselves, and scenting the favorable opportunity, they set out cleverly to capitalize the weakness of the natives for their own gain. Yet according to the standards of the times nothing in their behavior was unusual or wrong. The world had never actually been ruled by altruism. The East India Company set the greedy, but innocent and confiding princes and peoples of India one against the other, and using the natives as their tools, became masters of the land. They have ever since held them under the lash as chattels and slaves, "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for Mother England. "Divide and rule" has been their constant motto. "Teach and liberate" has never crossed their minds. Such phrases have been invented by shrewd politicians merely to amuse and satisfy a class of idealistic people in England and abroad who fall innocent victims to artfully told lies. Such slogans were never intended as rules of state policy. Study carefully the tragic result of this long and laborious process of "liberating" a traditionally cultured and civilized people, and you will be convinced of the truth. The motto of "Divide and rule," on the other hand, they used mercilessly to emasculate a nation of helpless people, whom they made the innocent victims of their lust and greed. For the details of this early exploitation and "treading under foot" of the people of India read Edmund Burke's impeachment of Warren Hastings. Thus he closed his immortal condemnation of the barbarities of his own people on the soil of India:

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“I impeach Warren Hastings to high crimes and misdemeanors. I impeach him in the name of the Commons’ House of Parliament, whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation, whose ancient honor he has sullied. I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose rights he has trodden underfoot, and whose country he has turned into a desert. Lastly, in the name of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all!”

Mr. Wm. Digby, another Englishman, who lived in India for over twenty years as a member of the Indian Civil Service, gives valuable historical and economic data on the subject of English Imperialism in India, in his book ironically entitled *Prosperous British India*. The book is a scholarly work on history and economics and deserves the perusal of all thoughtful students. Mr. Digby shows that

1. Since the beginning of the English rule in the country the per capita income of the people of India has been gradually diminishing. The daily per capita income was

in 1850	2 pence
in 1880	1½ pence
in 1900	¾ pence.

2. That in 1900, proportionately to income, the Indian subject of the British Crown was taxed more than four times higher than was his Scottish fellow-subject, and three times higher than his English compeer. He quotes the following figures from the *Statesman’s Yearbook*, 1900-1:

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Proportion of Taxation to Income

Scotland with £45 per head as average, one-seventeenth.	India (outside 1,- 000,000 well-to-do peo- ple) with 12s. per head as average, near- ly one-fourth.
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3. In 1900 thirty-four and one-fifth days' income of every inhabitant of India was carried to England in the form of home charges. "Was ever such a crushing tribute exacted by any conqueror at any period of history?"

4. Since the British have been in the country famines have been more frequent, more widespread, and more deadly. "In the first quarter of the nineteenth century there were reported only four famines in the country, all of which were local. In the last quarter of the same century there occurred twenty-two famines which were general and spread all over the land."

A great nation was held a slave, was looted and routed, and yet the world never heard of such a thing as British injustice in India. But, let us ask, how was this great injustice perpetrated, this huge exploitation continued? This question is eminently sane and pertinent, and should be truthfully answered.

The English people were too intelligent not to profit by the experience of past conquerors and rulers over foreign races. As a result, they did not evidently hold India down, but they kept her down. First, they disarmed the natives totally. This procedure prevented armed rebellion, and the world was saved the news of consequent repressions. In other words, the English did not kill the people of India; they killed their spirit. They robbed them of their land and of their daily

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meals, and made them submissive and weak. The English novelist, Thackeray, described as follows the early stages of English rule in India :

“It is very proper that, in England, a great share of the produce of the earth should be appropriated to support certain families in affluence, to produce senators, sages, and heroes for the service and the defense of the State, or, in other words, that great part of the rent should go to an opulent nobility and gentry, who are to serve their country in Parliament, in the army and navy, in the departments of science and liberal professions. The leisure, independence, and high ideas, which the enjoyment of this rent affords has enabled them to raise Britain to the pinnacle of glory. Long may they enjoy it;— but in India, that haughty spirit, independence, and deep thought, which the possession of great wealth sometimes gives, ought to be suppressed. They are directly adverse to our power and interest. The nature of things, the past experience of all governments, renders it unnecessary to enlarge on this subject. We do not want generals, statesmen, and legislators; we want industrious husbandmen. . . .

“Considered politically, therefore, the general distribution of land, among a number of small proprietors, who cannot easily combine against Government, is an object of importance.”

This policy was followed in India with unwavering resolution and fatal success.

It is an unfortunate fact of recorded history which no well-informed person may ignore, that under British rule the sources of national wealth in India have been narrowed in many ways. In the eighteenth cen-

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ture India was a great manufacturing as well as a great agricultural country. How its greatness disappeared totally, and it was left as a very poor agricultural country only, has been explained by many English and Indian writers. The decline of Indian industries has been attributed to the pursuance of a policy of commercial greed on the part of the British manufacturers. The English historian, H. H. Wilson, remarks:

“The British manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms.” *

We shall not tax the patience of our readers with irritating details of the ways in which this arm of political power was actually employed. But as a specimen we shall relate some of the incidents which helped to build the cotton fabric industry of England at the expense of India. It was the time of the home and cottage industries, when individuals or small groups of hand weavers owned their establishments and worked their business on a coöperative plan. The English merchants found they could not compete with the highly skilled and efficient Indian weavers; so they resolved to eliminate them altogether. This is what they did. The agents of the East India Company went to the village with the county magistrate (himself an employee of the Company, because the Company was then the Government), and called together all the weavers of the village. The agent offered loans and advances to those weavers who would work for the

* Quoted from R. C. Dutt.

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Company. When the weavers refused to accept their offers, the agents of the Company forcibly tied the money in the napkins of the weavers, as a sign of their acceptance. The agents then drove the workers back to their homes until such time as the Company should demand their services. Thus they were forced to leave their own looms and to work in the Company's factories. There they were paid such low wages that many of them fled from their homes, and hundreds and thousands of others cut their thumbs and forefingers in order to render themselves immune from this forced labor.

By such means and others equally unfair "the prosperous class of Indian weavers was made tradeless and homeless, and many were driven into the jungle to starve and die." At the same time England completed the process of ruining the trade of India by charging an excise duty of 65% to 75% on Indian manufactures imported into England and admitting English-made goods into British India free of duty. These statements are not exaggerated. This procedure actually happened, and data gathered by the English themselves is freely available. But should the account be doubted when such and worse things happen in our own day everywhere?

All the high offices of governmental control, civil and military, were given over to Englishmen, and Indians were employed as menials and clerks. To be explicit: during the first one hundred and twenty-five years of British rule in India not one Indian sat on the provincial or national executive councils of the country. Until after the World War no Indian held

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the commission of a lieutenant colonel in the British army of India. If during this period India was not governed for the good of the Indians, it is no wonder. How full of meaning are the words of John Stuart Mill:

“The government of a people by itself has a meaning and a reality; but such a thing as government of one people by another does not, and cannot exist. One people may keep another for its own use, a place to make money in, a human cattle-farm to be worked for the profits of its own inhabitants.

“It is an inherent condition of human affairs that no intention, however sincere, of protecting the interests of others, can make it safe or salutary to tie up their hands. By their own hands only can any positive and durable improvement of their circumstances in life be worked out.” *

Mr. Wm. Digby remarks on this account:

“Thus England’s unbounded prosperity owes its origin to her connection with India, whilst it has, largely, been maintained—disguisedly—from the same source, from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present time. ‘Possibly, since the world began, no investment has ever yielded the profits reaped from the Indian plunder’ (Brooks Adams).

“What was the extent of the wealth thus wrung from the East Indies? No one has been able to reckon adequately, as no one has been in a position to make a correct tally of the treasure exported from India. Estimates have been made which vary from five hundred million pounds sterling to nearly one billion pounds sterling.

* Quoted from R. C. Dutt.

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Probably between Plassey (1757) and Waterloo the last-mentioned sum was transferred from Indian hoards to English banks. . . . Modern England has been made great by Indian wealth, wealth never proffered by its possessor, but always taken by the might and skill of the stronger. The difference between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries is simply that the amount received now is immensely larger and is obtained 'according to law'. . . . " *

Let me quote Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the "nightingale of India," as to the effect of British rule in India: "Our arts have degenerated, our literatures are dead, our beautiful industries have perished, our valor is done, our fires are dim, our soul is sinking."

All this has actually happened. Yet the world believes that England's mission in India is unselfish and holy, that she is there to save the souls of a demoralized people and to educate an ignorant and unprogressive nation. The nations have been made to believe that without her influence there would be social and religious tyranny in India, and that the weak would be left without a champion. The facts, however, read differently. The people are poor and weak. They are to a degree fanatic, and local conflicts occur occasionally between religious groups. But do the English rulers of India prevent these divisions or do they foster them? This is the important question.

The English are our masters. They make their laws as stringent as they please; they hold their grip as tight as they wish. They say to us: "People of India, you are weak. Weakness is recognized in our

* *Prosperous British India.*

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system as a crime. Therefore you are doomed." So they show the power in their hands and use it as they will. But when they say to us: "People of India, cease to quarrel and live in peace," they are not only cruel but unjust and hypocritical, for the quarrels are their own creation, and our divisions they recognize as their main support. Says the Premier of England, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald:

"As the red patches advanced over the map of India, sections pulled themselves together to resist, but no power then existing could develop that Indian cohesion which was necessary if the new trading invader was to be hurled back. We were not accepted, but we could not be resisted. India challenged, but could not make her challenge good. . . . Moreover, we were not a military conquering power imposing tribute and hastening hither and thither in our minds. The invasion was not of hordes of men seeking new settlements, nor of military captains seeking spoil, but of capital seeking investment, of merchants seeking profit. It was necessarily slow; it divided to rule, and enlisted Indians to subdue India." *

Perhaps the reader will now be ready to concede that England acquired control over India and has succeeded in holding her mastery over the country through the policy of "Divide and rule." He may grant also that the existing fabric industries of India have been destroyed by the unfair use of political power in the interest of the growing British manufactures. Then followed the invasion of the power loom in Europe which completed the ruin of India's cotton industry. In the first place India had been impoverished

* From *The Government of India*.

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to such an extent that she could not find the necessary capital to utilize the latest inventions; and when at last she did succeed in setting up steam mills their progress was nipped in the bud through the imposition of an excise duty on all home manufactures. Here was an evident inversion of the natural order of things. When machinery began to be introduced into the country, a protective tariff was required to assist the infant industries. Instead, the foreign rulers of India imposed an excise duty on cotton fabrics, while foreign fabrics continued to be admitted free of duty.

A similar mischievous policy was adopted in regard to the agricultural industries of India. A government which has the welfare of the nation in mind tries in every way to improve the condition of the governed by increasing their sources of income. It grants its farmers subsidies, helps them to improve the quality of their crops, and extends their markets. What it exacts from them in the form of taxes is expended in the improvement of their general condition. "It identifies itself with the nation, and grows richer with it."

In India from the time when the East India Company became the rulers of the country, this natural process has been reversed. These foreign rulers of India regarded their possessions as a "human plantation," and their policy was to extract from the people all that was possible in order to swell the profits of the Company's stockholders in England. Taxes on agricultural land were placed at the highest possible point in the beginning, and were then increased at every successive revenue settlement. The over-assessment

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and collection of taxes with the most callous disregard for the material condition of the farmers, plunged the country into misery. Soon they began to flee from their houses into the jungles, leaving the country desolate. India was visited by the most horrible famines, and while natives died in the streets from hunger, the Company's agents had the gratification of reporting an increased collection from land taxes. It is estimated that the famine of 1770 carried away with it one-third of the entire population of Bengal, and yet in the following year the land revenue of Bengal was raised and actually collected in cash.

The two letters which were written from the Company's Government in India to its directors in England in the years 1771 and 1772 are of peculiar interest in this matter.

Dated 12th February, 1771: "Notwithstanding the great severity of the late famine and the great reduction of people thereby, some increase has been made in the settlements both of the Bengal and the Behar Provinces for the present year." *

Dated 10th January, 1772: "The collections in each department of revenue are as successfully carried on for the present year as we could have wished." *

It is needless to say that in making a collection of an increased revenue, following a devastating famine, a great deal more ingenuity was needed. Every sort of advantage was taken of the distress of the people. Their crops were monopolized, and in most cases the

* Quoted from R. C. Dutt.

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seed for their next year's crops was sold to realize the Company's revenue. The hereditary owners of the lands were driven away from their holding, and their properties were transferred to the highest bidders for the land revenue collection.

A comparison between the land taxes claimed by the previous rulers of India and by the East India Company may be made from the following figures:

The total land revenue collected by the last Moham-medan ruler of Bengal in 1764, the last year of his administration, was £817,533; within thirty years the British rulers collected an annual land revenue of £2,680,000 in the same province. During this interval the country had been visited by two of the most terrible famines of its history. Colonel Briggs wrote in 1830: "A land tax like that which now exists in India, professing to absorb the whole of the landlord's rent, was never known under any Government in Europe or Asia." *

Aside from the heavy assessment of the Government there were, more disastrous still, the extortions and premiums of the Company's servants. Besides serving in the pay of the Company, each young clerk or old veteran officer was ambitious to make a sudden fortune to be carried with him to England. Nearly everyone of the Company's servants carried on his private trade. This evil was stopped, however, by Clive in later years. English traders used all the tools at hand to take improper advantage of their customers and of rival native traders.

* Quoted from R. C. Dutt.

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A typical case of this injustice occurred during the controversy over excise duty in the Province of Bengal between its Nawab, Mir Kasam, and the Company's servants. The English victory at Plassey (1757) had greatly enhanced the prestige of the Company. In exchange for its protection, the Nawab of Bengal granted to the East India Company the right to carry on its export and import trade, free of duty, within his territory. This right the Nawab granted to the trade of the Company and not to the private trade of the officials of the Company. In spite of the repeated complaints from the Nawab, however, the Company's servants continued to carry on their private business without the payment of any duties into the treasury of the Nawab. This arrangement, of course, helped the private traders to rear colossal fortunes in a very short period, but the Nawab's treasury soon felt severely the loss of its revenue. Moreover, the suffering of the native merchants who had to pay heavy duties on their goods and thus found it difficult to compete with these law-breaking traders, reached a critical state. Overwhelmed from all sides, and finding his complaints to the Company's agents unheeded, the generous Nawab in a moment of noble and royal indignation abolished all inland duties. By this act he personally lost a large income from his revenues, but he placed his subjects on equal terms with the employees of the East India Company. What followed will be scarcely believed by our readers. The Executive Council of the Company at Calcutta protested against this action of the Nawab as a breach of faith towards the English nation. "The conduct of the

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Company's servants upon this occasion," says James Mill in his history of India, "furnishes one of the most remarkable instances upon record of the power of interest to extinguish all sense of justice, and even of shame." "There can be no difference of opinion," writes another English historian, H. H. Wilson, "on the proceedings. The narrow-minded selfishness of commercial cupidity had rendered all members of the council, with the two honorable exceptions of Vansittart and Hastings, obstinately inaccessible to the plainest dictates of reason, justice and policy." * More comment upon this is unnecessary.

Here was a class of officials in India who regarded the country, which they had been called upon to govern in the name of God Almighty, as no other than a fishing pool. They declared that the purpose of their government was to restore order in place of chaos, and justice instead of corruption. But when one of the native princes, inspired by nobility of heart, ordered a cancellation of his own revenues in order to benefit his subjects, the government of the Company flared up in a rage and called his act of unselfish benevolence a breach of faith against the English nation. Edmund Burke was after all right when he spoke about the East India Company's officials thus:

" . . . The Tartar invasion was mischievous, but it is our protection that destroys India. It was their enmity, but it is our friendship. Our conquest there, after twenty years, is as crude as it was the first day. The natives scarcely know what it is to see the grey head of an Englishman;

* Quoted from R. C. Dutt.

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young men, boys almost, govern there without society, and without sympathy with the natives. They have no more social habits with the people than if they still resided in England; nor, indeed, any species of intercourse but that which is necessary to making a sudden fortune, with a view to a remote settlement. Animated with all the avarice of age, and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another, wave after wave, and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is continually wasting. Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is lost forever to India" (Edmund Burke in a speech made in the House of Commons in 1783).

After Plassey (1757) the English control over India began to expand rapidly, and the East India Company acquired the real nature of a government instead of a mere trading company. Gradually as the political power of the Company grew in India and abuses crept in, the English Parliament undertook to control all Indian affairs through appointed representatives. This policy was carried out in so far that on the eve of the Sepoy Mutiny (1857), which led to the transfer of the Government of India to the British Sovereign, the English Parliament already supervised the India affair through a cabinet minister and a council board in England, and a governor-general appointed by the British cabinet in India.

The resentment of the people of India against the British rule and its consequent political and economic humiliations found its tragic expression in the re-

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bellion of 1857, commonly known as the Sepoy Mutiny. The masses of the country led by the native army burst forth in mad fury against the yoke of their foreign rulers. The rebellion started in the United Provinces and at once spread like wildfire throughout the British territories. Once again the British played the natives against each other. The rebellion, which at one time threatened the complete overthrow of the British power in the country, was crushed with the assistance of Sikh regiments from Punjab. The suppression of the rebellion involved a terrible loss of life, and some of the deeds of horror which were committed by the infuriated English soldiery remain as fresh in the minds of the Indian people to this day as they were in 1857. The last of the Moghul emperors was deposed and all of his heirs were fired from the mouths of cannon. Thousands of rebels were hung, and their dead bodies were left hanging from the branches of trees in order to excite terror in the minds of the populace. Kaye and Malleeson's *History of the Mutiny* gives the most horrible account of the butchery which the English officers carried on during the bloody days after the Mutiny in the most indiscriminate and barbarous fashion. The authors of this memorable account of the Mutiny state: "Already our military officers were hunting down the criminals of all kinds, and hanging them up with as little compunction as though they had been pariah-dogs, or jackals, or vermin of a baser kind." So ferocious was the temper of the white soldiers, and so strongly had the fierce hatred against all "who wore the dusky livery of the East" possessed them, that on one occasion in the ab-

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sence of tangible enemies they turned on their own camp-followers and murdered a large number of their loyal and unoffending servants. Sir Charles Ball writes: "Every day we had expeditions to burn and destroy disaffected villages and we had taken our revenge. We have the power of life in our hands and I assure you, we spare not." Innocent old men and helpless women with sucking infants at their breasts felt the weight of the white man's vengeance just as much as the vilest malefactors. It is recorded that in several places cow's flesh was forced by spears and bayonets into the mouths of Hindu prisoners because the English knew that the Hindu so abhors cow's flesh that he will rather die than eat it. Kaye and Malle-son write:

"Afterwards the thirst for blood grew stronger still. It is on the records of our British Parliament, in papers sent home by the Governor-General of India in Council, that the aged, women and children, are sacrificed, as well as those guilty of rebellion. They were not deliberately hanged, but burnt to death in their villages—perhaps now and then accidentally shot. Englishmen did not hesitate to boast, or to record their boastings in writings, that they had 'spared no one', and that 'peppering away the niggers' was very pleasant pastime, 'enjoyed amazingly'. It has been stated in a book patronized by high class authorities, that 'for three months eight dead-carts daily went their rounds from sunrise to sunset to take down the corpses which hung at crossroads and market-places', and that 'six

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thousand beings' had been thus summarily disposed of and launched into eternity." *

Following the Sepoy Mutiny an act was passed in the British Parliament by virtue of which the government of India was transferred from the East India Company to the British Crown. The English King thus became the ruler of India, but the people of India paid the price of purchase. The shareholders of the Company were recompensed for this change, and the amount paid to them was added to the national debt of India. The government of the country changed hands, but virtually no change was made in the policy. Even in the times of peace that followed the public debt of India continued to increase. The new rulers were determined to promote English industries at the expense of Indian manufacturers just as had been done under the rule of the Company. India remained henceforth a colony of the Empire for the production of raw materials at very low prices in the English factories. The manufactured goods were afterwards re-shipped to India for the native consumption. The posts of dignity and high emolument in the government service continued to be regarded by the Englishman as his sole monopoly. No confidence was placed in the natives; they were given no positions of authority, and were excluded from offices of responsibility as much as possible. In other words, the interests of Indians were completely subordinated to those of the Englishmen. "The roads to wealth and honor were closed to the natives. The highest among them were considered unworthy of those places of

* Quoted from Lajpat Rai.

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trust in the state employments which were held by young English boys fresh from school. The springs of Indian industry were stopped, and the sources of the country's wealth were dried up."

As a result of the direct British rule over India the public debt of the country rose from £51,000,000 in 1857 to £200,000,000 in 1901. The agricultural class of India, moreover, the backbone of national prosperity in a country whose main occupation is agriculture, had become so poor that in one district in 1900 85% of the land revenue was directly paid to the Government officials by money-lenders, the landowners being wholly unable to meet their obligations. It was estimated by the leading medical journal of the world (*The Lancet*, June, 1901) that during the last decimium of the nineteenth century nineteen millions of British Indian subjects had died of starvation, and one million from plague. And yet at the beginning of the twentieth century according to the financial arrangements of the country half of its total revenue was sent out of India to England each year. This included the upkeep of the India office in London, pensions to retired officials residing in England, and interest on public debts. *

With these facts in mind the reader will not wonder that India is poor. Place any other country in the world under the same conditions. Let her government be carried on by a foreign power with the complete exclusion of the sons of the soil from positions of responsibility; let her fiscal policy be determined by

* Digby.

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the parliament of a rival commercial nation without a single representative of the governed nation sitting in its councils; let its industry be crippled or destroyed by a malicious use of political power by its foreign rulers; let its agriculture be subjected to a heavy and uncertain land tax; let half its total revenue be carried away annually to a foreign land; and you will not be surprised if the most prosperous nation in the world sinks in the course of a few years to the lowest depths of poverty and degradation. *

A nation prospers if its government is wisely administered in the interest of the people, if the sources of wealth are widened, and if the proceeds from taxation are spent for the uplift of the people and among the people. It is impoverished if its government is carried on by an outside power for the purpose of exploitation; if the sources of its wealth are narrowed from the crippling of its industries, and if its revenues are largely remitted out of the country without an economic return. Americans stand in awe before the single monopoly of the Standard Oil Company. They are appalled by the magnitude and tyranny of its power. They should remember that the Standard Oil monopoly is a pigmy before the British monopoly of India. England has exercised for nearly two hundred years exclusive and undivided control over the affairs of India. She has had power to shape the destinies of three hundred million people according to her will, being responsible to no one but herself. She

* Digby.

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has held not only the government of India, but its commerce, its finances, and its industry. In conclusion let us repeat the poignant remark quoted earlier, "The national wealth of India did not sprout wings and fly away. It had to be carried away."