Romesh Chunder Dutt

Indian Famines: Their Causes and Prevention

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About this edition

Indian Famines: Their Causes and Prevention

Romesh Chunder Dutt

EDITION BASIS

The complete standalone 1901 pamphlet, London: P. S. King & Son. The University of California copy supplies the title and all sixteen printed body pages. Both statistical tables, historical quotations and the final printer line are retained; library furniture and publisher advertisements are omitted.

PAMPHLETS EDITION

Pamphlets reading edition, November 2026. New typography and pagination.

TEXT AND REUSE

The exact historical text is reviewed for the United States and Mexico under the documented historical publication and contributor-term rules. No worldwide clearance is claimed.

EDITORIAL TREATMENT

Every printed body page and both statistical tables were visually collated against the 1901 scan. Three clear original misprints are emended: dur- to during on p2, the stray full stop in and.Lord on p4, and safegarded to safeguarded on p16; the exact printed readings and images are preserved in the audit. Line-break hyphenation is joined, original page anchors retained, and typography and pagination are new. This is the complete short pamphlet, distinct from Dutt’s longer Economic History.

SOURCE

University of California Libraries copy, London: P. S. King & Son, 1901; new transcription fully proofed against all sixteen body pages
https://archive.org/details/indianfaminesthe00duttrich

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Ten Famines within Forty Years, 1860 to 1900.

The Reports of the Indian Famine Commissions of 1880 and 1898 tell us a melancholy tale. For excluding severe scarcities, often confined to limited areas, there have been ten wide-spread famines in India within the last forty years; and in spite of relief operations, the loss of life has been enormous.

I.—Famine of 1860 in Northern India.

It was a wide-spread famine, and the loss of life was estimated at 200,000, but was probably very much larger.

II.—Famine of 1866 in Orissa.

One-third of the population of Orissa, or about a million people, died of this famine.

III.—Famine of 1869 in Northern India.

The loss of life was estimated at 1,200,000.

IV.—Famine of 1874 in Bengal.

The Land Tax of Bengal is light, and is *permanently settled*. The people are therefore comparatively prosperous and resourceful, and there was no loss of life from this famine.

V.—Famine of 1877 in Madras.

The Land Tax of Madras is heavy, and is enhanced from time to time, and the people are poor and resourceless. *Five millions* of them perished from this famine.

VI.—Famine of 1878 in Northern India.

The loss of life was estimated at 1,250,000.

VII.—Famine of 1889 in Madras and Orissa.

The loss of life was very severe, but no official figures are available.

VIII.—Famine of 1892 in Madras, Bengal, Burma, and Rajputana.

The loss of life was heavy in Madras, while there was no loss of life in Bengal.

IX.—Famine of 1897 in Northern India, Bengal, Burma, Madras, and Bombay.

The number of people on relief works rose to three millions in the worst months. Deaths were prevented in Bengal and elsewhere, but in the Central Provinces the death rate rose from an average of thirty-three per *mille* to sixty-nine per *mille* during the year.

X.—Famine of 1900 in the Punjab, Rajputana, the Central Provinces, and Bombay.

The most wide-spread famine ever known in India. The number of persons relieved rose to six millions in the worst months. In Bombay the sufferers in the famine camps “died like flies,” as was remarked by Sir A. P. Macdonnell, President of the Famine Commission.

Results of the Census of 1901.

The results of the three famines within the last ten years, and of the increasing poverty of the people, are shewn in the census taken in March, 1901. The population of India has remained stationary during the last ten years. There is a slight increase in Bengal, Madras, and Northern India, while there is an actual decrease of some millions in Bombay, the Central Provinces, and the Native States affected by recent famines. In other words, the population of India to-day is less by

some thirty millions than it would have been if the nominal increase of one per cent. per annum had taken place during these ten years.

Resolution on Indian Famines

Passed at the Conference of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation at Rugby, 27th February, 1901.

Mr. Romesh Dutt, who attended as a delegate from Lewisham, moved the following Resolution:

> "That this meeting deplores the succession of severe famines which have caused the deaths of millions of people in India in recent years, and considers it necessary to prevent the recurrence of such severe calamities by moderating the Land Tax, extending irrigation works, and relieving as far as possible the annual burdensome drain on the financial resources of India which impoverishes the people of that country."

In moving this resolution, Mr. Dutt said that although the subjects which had been discussed by the meeting that afternoon were of the gravest importance, there was none among them which was of a higher importance in the interests of the British Empire than that which formed the subject of his resolution. They had to deplore the deaths of twenty or thirty thousand Englishmen in the South African War; but the loss of lives from the present famine in India could scarcely be much under a million; while the loss of lives from the succession of famines which had occurred in India within the present generation, or rather within the forty-two years since India had passed under the direct administration of the Crown, could scarcely be less than fifteen millions. English Liberals would ask themselves the cause of these disastrous and frequent famines in a time of profound and uninterrupted peace within the natural frontiers of India. India at present was not a great manufacturing country, nor a great commercial country, but a great agricultural country; and four-fifths of the vast population of India depended upon agriculture. If the Government demand from the produce of the soil was moderate, and placed within definite and intelligible limits, as had been done in Bengal, the people could be prosperous. But the Government demand was being increased elsewhere at recurring settlements every twenty or thirty years; the people could save nothing; and every year of drought was a year of famine. After the great famine of 1860, Lord Canning, then Viceroy of India, had recommended that limits should be placed on the Government demand, and Lord Lawrence, who succeeded as Viceroy of India a few years after, had supported this recommendation; but nevertheless it

was rejected by the India Office in London. The Marquis of Ripon, who was Viceroy of India from 1880 to 1884, had recommended certain other limitations to the Government demand, but even his very moderate recommendation had been rejected by the India Office in London. Thus it happened that the agricultural people of India, except in Bengal, were in a state of chronic poverty and indebtedness, and would continue to be subject to repeated and fatal famines, till the Land Tax was moderated and strictly limited. His second recommendation was the extension of irrigation works. On this point there was no difference of opinion, because irrigation works—tanks and wells as well as canals—were the only possible means of saving crops in years of drought. His last recommendation was to decrease as far as possible the annual drain from India. While taxation had increased both in England and in India, there was an essential difference between the two countries. In England, the proceeds of taxation were spent in the country, and thus flowed back to the people in one shape or another to fructify their industries and help their trade. In India, an amount equal to about one-half of the net revenues was annually taken away from the country, and thus rendered the people hopelessly poor. It was a drain unexampled in any country on earth at the present day; and if England herself had to send out one-half of her annual revenues to be spent annually in Germany or France or Russia, there would be famines in England before long." Therefore he proposed that this annual drain should be reduced, as far as possible, from year to year, by the employment of the people of India in the administration of their own country, and by the cost of the Imperial army in India being shared to some extent by England herself.

Miss Alison Garland rose to second the Resolution and was received with cheers. She said that she had probably been asked to second it because she had been to India in 1899-1900, and had visited several famine centres, and knew what the Indian famine meant. She depicted in vivid colours the scenes she had witnessed, and concluded her description by stating that in the midst of these horrors the Government had refused to make a Parliamentary grant to India—not because the British nation were averse to such a grant, not because such a grant was not needed, but because the Indian Government and the India Office did not ask for it. The Indian Government did not ask for it because they knew that a Parliamentary grant would be followed by an inconvenient Parliamentary enquiry.

The Resolution was put to the vote and carried.

First Remedy: Moderating the Land Tax.

As has been stated before, the Land Tax in Bengal is moderate, and is *permanently settled*. As far back as 1793 the British Government fixed the Land Tax of Bengal, and gave its word of promise never to enhance it afterwards. The result is that the people have a strong motive for extending cultivation and making improvements, they are resourceful and able to save for bad years, and *there has been no loss of life from famines for over a hundred years in permanently settled Bengal*.

Lord Canning was Viceroy of India from 1856 to 1862, and Lord Lawrence from 1864 to 1869. These great rulers had saved India during the dark days of the Mutiny, and they wished to save India from the greater danger of recurring famines and starvation. And both these Viceroys recommended a *permanent settlement* of the Land Tax for all Provinces of India. A Liberal Secretary of State for India, Sir Charles Wood, and a Conservative Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Northcote, strongly supported this beneficent recommendation. And if this proposal had been adopted, famines would have been less frequent and less fatal in India since.

But that generation passed away, and was succeeded by the less sympathetic administrators of the present generation. And the India Office in London rejected in 1883 the benevolent proposal made by Canning and Lawrence, and supported by Wood and Northcote!

The Marquis of Ripon, who was the Viceroy of India from 1880 to 1884, was a sympathetic ruler of the old type, and a worthy successor of Canning and Lawrence. He made a fresh proposal to place certain limitations on the increase of the Land Tax. He laid down that in Counties, which had been once surveyed and settled, there should be no further increase in the Land Tax except on the equitable ground of increase in prices. But the India Office in London rejected even this moderate proposal in 1885.

Thus the proposals to place clear and intelligible limits to the Land Tax were rejected one after another, and the continuous increase of that Tax paralyses agriculture and impoverishes the people of India. The uncertainty of the State demand hangs like the sword of Damocles over the heads of Indian agriculturists, deadens their energy, and withdraws all motives for improvement. Retired Indian officials feel this as well as the people of India, and on the 20th December, 1900, a number of experienced Indian administrators submitted a Memorial to the Secretary of State for India, once more suggesting some equitable limitations to the Land Tax in India. Their suggestions may be briefly described under three heads.

I. Where the Land Tax is paid by landlords, as in Northern India, it should not exceed one-half the rental.

II. Where the Land Tax is paid by tenants and cultivators direct, as in Madras and Bombay, it should not exceed one-fifth of the produce of the field, and it should not be enhanced in the future, except on the ground of a rise in prices or of irrigation works made by the Government.

III. The Land Tax should not be revised oftener than once in thirty years, and local cesses imposed on the land should not exceed ten per cent. of the Land Tax.

This Memorial was signed by the retired officers named below, some of whom are among the highest living authorities on questions of Indian administration:

The Right Hon. Sir Richard Garth, K.C., Late Chief Justice of Bengal.

Mr. H. J. Reynolds, C.S.I., Late Revenue Secretary of Bengal.

Mr. Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E., Late Officiating Commissioner of Burdwan and Orissa Divisions in Bengal.

Mr. C. J. O'Donnell, Late Commissioner of Bhagalpur and Rajshahi Divisions in Bengal.

Sir John Jardine, K.C.I.E., Late Judge of Bombay High Court.

Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., Late Acting Chief Secretary of Bombay.

Mr. A. Rogers, Late Member of Council in Bombay.

Mr. R. K. Puckle, C.S.I., Late Director of Revenue Settlement in Madras.

Mr. J. H. Garstin, C.S.I., Late Member of Council in Madras.

Mr. J. B. Pennington, Late Collector of Tanjore in Madras.

Mr. J. P. Goodridge, Late Officiating Settlement Commissioner in the Central Provinces of India.

As stated before, the Memorial was submitted on the 20th December, 1900, and it is hoped that it will meet with a better fate than the proposal of Lord Canning and Lord Lawrence did in 1883, or the proposal of Lord Ripon did in 1885.

To limit the Land Tax in the manner proposed in the Memorial would bring relief to agriculturists, not only in British territory, but also in the Native States. The Native States of India copy British administration, and the Land Tax in Native States at the present time is, generally speaking, just as uncertain and oppressive as in British territory. Any equitable limits placed on the Land Tax in British territory are likely to be copied in all Native States of India.

Second Remedy: Irrigation Works.

The following passages are quoted from my work on *Famines in India* (Kegan Paul, 1900), pp. 81—93.

> "The total length of railways in India up to the end of 1898-99 was 26,059¼ miles, of which 22,491 miles were open for traffic. The net loss to the State, *i.e.* to the people of India, from these railways, after deducting all their earning and returns, was Rx. 57,734,761 up to the end of 1898-99. It is apparent from these figures that railways have been overdone in India—overdone in consideration of the resources of the country. Nearly all the lines needed for famine protective purposes have been completed, and it is reasonable, therefore, to hope that no future lines shall be undertaken by the State either as protective works or as productive works, and that the profits of no future lines shall be guaranteed out of the public revenues. If there is a reasonable chance of profits from new lines in any part of India, private capital and private enterprise will undertake them. If there is no reasonable chance of profits from fresh lines, to construct them out of Indian revenues, or to guarantee profits out of the proceeds of taxes, is to sacrifice the interests of the people of India to the interests of speculators and capitalists.
>
> "What India wants now is an extensive system of irrigation, and we have already suggested that a crore of rupees, out of the crore and a-half of the famine grant, may be annually spent on protective irrigation works. 'It appears to us,' write the members of the Famine Commission of 1898, 'that most of the necessary protective railways have now been constructed, that there is a possibility of others being constructed on their merits as productive works or as feeders to the trunk lines of railway without assistance from the famine grant, and that under existing circumstances greater protection will be afforded by the extension of irrigation works.'
>
> "Irrigation works are now classed into three classes:

I.—Productive Works.

II.—Protective Works.

III.—Minor Works.

> "*Productive Irrigation Works.*—The capital outlay on productive irrigation works up to the end of 1879-80 was Rx. 20,298,000. The capital outlay up to the end of 1896-97 (including one purely navigation work) was Rx. 31,252,948. The capital expenditure during seventeen years was, therefore, only eleven million tens of rupees, but, deducting from this sum paid by the

Government to the Madras Irrigation Company, the actual capital outlay during the seventeen years has been only Rx. 540,000 per annum. The area irrigated in 1878-79 was 5,171,497 acres. The area irrigated in 1896-97 was 9,448,692 acres. The net return on the capital outlay in the year 1896-97 was 6·35 per cent., showing that, financially, the productive irrigation works have been a success.

"*Protective Irrigation Works.*—The capital outlay on protective irrigation works up to the end of 1896-97 was Rx. 2,099,253, out of which Rx. 1,698,424 has been charged against the Famine Insurance Grant. The total area irrigated by these works in 1896-97 was 200,733 acres, not including 123,087 acres irrigated by the Swat River Canal. Interest is not charged against protective irrigation works, as the cost of construction is met from revenues.

"*Minor Irrigation Works.*—The irrigation effected by what are called minor works is of the very greatest importance. Many of them are old irrigation works constructed by Hindu and Mahomedan rulers, or more recently by district boards or public-spirited individuals, and have been taken over by the State. Some of the old works are of great size, irrigating several hundred thousand acres; others are small works, which are numerous in Madras; and about one-half the total irrigated area in that province is irrigated from such works.

"Not only are these minor works exceedingly beneficial to the country, but their financial returns, too, are also very satisfactory, because the British Government did not spend any capital on the construction of most of them. The total expenditure incurred on these minor works during the seventeen years ending 1896-97 was over eight crores. The revenue attributable to works of this class exceeded the expenditure by over six crores. The total area irrigated by minor works in 1896-97 was 7,442,990.

"Taking all the three classes of works together, the total area irrigated in India in 1896-97 is shown below:

	Acres.
By Productive Works	9,448,692
By Protective Works	323,820
By Minor Works	7,442,990
Total area irrigated	17,215,502

"The figures given above, which have been taken from the Report of the Famine Commission of 1898, show the area of land now under irrigation and

the satisfactory financial results of the irrigation works hitherto undertaken. But the figures do not represent the entire financial value of these works. They show the direct proceeds of water rates collected, either separately or with the land revenue, as in Madras, but they do not indicate the extent to which the land revenue itself is made stable by irrigation works ensuring the prosperity of agriculture. The Famine Commissioners very rightly urge 'that the value of these works should not be judged too strictly by the financial results, and that due credit should be given to the works, even if it cannot be reduced to a quantitative form, not only for the stability of the revenue assessed on the lands dependent on them, which may be small, but also for their great value in such a country, in all seasons of drought, to the people of the neighbourhood, as well as to those whose crops are actually secured.'

"Far above financial considerations should be reckoned the duty of the State to protect agriculture and to save the lives of the people in a country so dependent on water as India. The painful experience through which we are passing in the present year must convince the Government of India of the necessity of storing water in every part of the country for the saving of crops in years of drought, for the saving of cattle, and for the saving of human lives. The canal system may not be practicable on high table-lands and in hilly country, but embankments and *bunds* constructed across slopes would convert large dry areas in the surrounding country. This was very clearly explained by Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., in his speech in a recent debate in the House of Commons, and this was also forcibly urged by the Hon. Rai Bahadur B. K. Bose in his recent speech in the Viceroy's Council.

"Besides such artificial lakes, it is possible to multiply wells for irrigation purposes throughout the country. 'Whatever field there may be,' says the Famine Commission of '1898, for many years to come for the construction of protective irrigation works of the ordinary kind, *i.e.*, canals or storage works, there are probably more tracts liable to periodical drought in which the desired protection may be afforded with greater certainty or at less financial risk by the construction of wells, by means of State advances which would be only partially recoverable, the irrecoverable portion of the advance being a final charge against the Famine Insurance Grant. . . . . It is open to consideration whether, when wells have to be sunk through rock with uncertain results, it might not be worth while for the State to share part of the cost, in view of the protection afforded, if water is eventually found. It is also open to consideration whether the State might not bear the cost of scientific aid in the shape of boring operations to ascertain whether or not a supply of water will be forthcoming if the well is sunk.'

"'As the State in India,' they say, 'is generally in the position of superior landlord, there are special reasons why the Government should undertake without expectation of direct return works peculiarly protective of agriculture, such as irrigation works.'

"The most recent instance in which this mandate has been violated is the imposition of a compulsory water rate within all wet areas by an Act passed by the Madras Government in the present year. For the last forty years or more water rates have been optional; the cultivator who chooses to use canal water pays for it, and the cultivator who does not use it does not pay.

"This method has answered well enough in practice; the mass of cultivators voluntarily use canal water for the protection of their crops, and the financial returns from irrigation works have been satisfactory, as has been shown before. But local governments have, in their anxiety to secure financial profits, needlessly endeavoured from time to time to make that compulsory which is voluntarily paid without objection, to make that an irritating tax on the people which the people have regarded and paid as a fair return for benefits obtained. As long ago as 1869 the Government of India submitted the "Northern India Canal and Drainage Bill" to the Secretary of State for India, and proposed to make the irrigation rate compulsory. The late Duke of Argyll, then the Secretary of State for India, declined to accord his sanction to the measure.

"Another proposal made in 1879, in connection with the Bombay Irrigation Act, that all lands commanded by the water of canals should be taxed was similarly rejected by the then Secretary of State for India. And now, in a year of distress and famine in India, the Government of Madras has thought it fit to pass an Act which, in the opinion of the late Duke of Argyll, would either throw on the cultivators the loss consequent on unsuccessful speculations undertaken by the Government, or would force them to pay for water for which they have no use, or would lead to excessive expenditure under the vicious system of guaranteed profits.

"No reason exists for making the water rate compulsory in Madras, for productive irrigation works are paying at the rate of 6·35 per cent. on the capital sunk in all India, and at the higher rate of 7·14 in the Province of Madras. No object is gained by forcing on the people the benefits of a system of which they have availed themselves voluntarily as a blessing, and which they will detest as a curse when it is needlessly forced on them. No increase in the total revenue can be expected, for in Madras lands are already over-assessed, and responsible administrators will find it necessary before long to lighten the burden in that province and not to add to it. And no endeavours to

> make the system of irrigation works really useful to the cultivators are likely to be made when the canal officers are sure of their returns in the shape of a compulsory tax over the entire area supposed to be benefited by those works. The blunder made in Madras is likely to spread in other parts of India, and instead of a voluntary rate, which the people are willingly paying everywhere in India, they will find that irrigation means another and an odious tax on their limited savings."

It is only necessary to add here that if a compulsory rate is imposed in British territory, the practice is likely to be followed in Native States also. It has been stated already that the rules of administration introduced in British Provinces are generally copied in those States; and it would be a misfortune if the extension of irrigation works is accompanied all over India by a compulsory water rate on all lands supposed to be benefited.

Third Remedy: Reduction of Expenditure and the Annual Drain from India.

The people of India have no votes, and are not even represented in the Executive Councils of India. They have no voice in the matter of taxation or of expenditure. They have no share in the work of adjusting the finances of India. Taxation exceeds all reasonable limits in India; and the proceeds of the taxation are not all spent in India. A large sum, estimated between twenty and thirty millions in English money, is annually drained from India to this country. The disastrous results of this annual drain have been described by many English writers and administrators throughout the century which has just closed. A few extracts are given below.

Sir Thomas Munro, one of the great builders of the British Empire in India, wrote thus in 1824, as Governor of Madras, after an experience of forty years' work in India:

> "They (natives of India) have no share in making laws for themselves, little in administering them, except in very subordinate offices; they can rise to no high station, civil or military; they are everywhere regarded as an inferior race, and often as vassals or servants than as the ancient owners and masters of the country. . . . All the civil and military offices of any importance are now held by Europeans, whose savings go to their own country."

Sir John Malcolm, an equally eminent builder of the Indian Empire, and afterwards Governor of Bombay, wrote thus of the Mahratta administrators of Western India with whom he came in contact:

> "If these men exact money at times in an arbitrary manner, all their expenditure as well as all they receive, is limited to their own provinces; but, above all causes which promote prosperity is the invariable support given to the village and other native institutions, and to the employment, far beyond what our system admits, of all classes of the population."

Mr. Frederick John Shore, of the Bengal Civil Service, wrote thus in 1837:

> "The halcyon days of India are over; she has been drained of a large proportion of the wealth she once possessed, and her energies have been cramped by a sordid system of misrule, to which the interests of millions have been sacrificed for the benefit of the few."

Mr. Montgomery Martin, Historian of the British Colonies, wrote thus in 1838:

> "So constant and accumulating a drain even on England would soon impoverish her; how severe, then, must be its effects on India, where the wages of a labourer is from twopence to threepence a day"?—*History, &c. of Eastern India* (1838, Vol. II, p. xii).

Professor H. H. Wilson, Historian of India, wrote thus of the annual drain from India:

> "Its transfer to England is an abstraction of Indian capital for which no equivalent is given; it is an exhausting drain upon the country, the issue of which is replaced by no reflux; it is an extraction of the life-blood from the veins of national industry which no subsequent introduction of nourishment is furnished to restore."—*History of British India* (Ed. 1858, Vol. VI, p. 671).

Sir George Wingate, sometimes called the Father of the Land Revenue System of Bombay, wrote in 1859, thus:

> "Taxes collected from the population at large, are paid away to the portion of the population engaged in the service of the Government, through whose expenditure they are again returned to the industrious classes. They occasion a different distribution, but no loss of national income . . . . But the case is wholly different when the taxes are not spent in the country from which they are raised. In this case they constitute no mere transfer of a portion of the national income from one set of citizens to another, but an absolute loss and extinction of the whole account withdrawn from the taxed country. As regards its effects on national production, the whole amount might as well be thrown into the sea as transferred to another country, for no portion of it will return from the latter to the taxed country in any shape whatever. Such is the nature of the tribute we have so long exacted from India . . . . From this explanation, some faint

> conception may be formed of the cruel crushing effect of the tribute upon India."—*A Few Words on our Financial Relations with India* (London, 1859).

In the petition of the East India Company presented to the Parliament in 1858, and prepared by John Stuart Mill, that great philosopher, said:

> "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 profit of its own inhabitants."

The same Philosopher said in his work on *Representative Government*:

> "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 own hands. By their own hands only can any positive and durable improvement of their circumstances in life be worked out."

John Bright spoke thus in his memorable speech of the 24th June, 1858, on the India Bill:

> "There are but two modes of gaining anything by our connexion with India. The one is by plundering the people of India, and the other by trading with them. I prefer to do it by trading with them; but in order that England may become rich by trading with India, India itself must become rich."

Lord Salisbury, then Secretary of State for India, wrote in his Minute of the 26th April, 1875, thus:

> "So far as it is possible to change the Indian fiscal system, it is desirable that the cultivator should pay a smaller proportion of the whole charge. It is not in itself a thrifty policy to draw the mass of revenue from the rural districts, where capital is scarce, sparing the towns where it is often redundant and runs to waste in luxury. The injury is exaggerated in the case of India, where so much of the revenue is exported without a direct equivalent."

Mr. A. J. Wilson, in an article in the *Fortnightly Review* of March, 1884, wrote thus:

> "In one form or another we draw fully £30,000,000 a year from that unhappy country, and there the average wages of the natives is about £5 per annum—less rather than more in many parts. Our Indian tribute, therefore, represents the entire earnings of upwards of six millions heads of families—say of thirty millions of the people. It means the abstraction of more than one-tenth of the entire sustenance of India every year."

The Rev. J. T. Sunderland, in an article in the *New England Magazine* for September, 1900, writes thus:

> "We denounce ancient Rome for impoverishing Gaul, and Egypt, and Sicily, and Palestine, and her other conquered provinces, by drawing away her wealth to enrich herself. We denounce Spain for robbing the New World in the same way. But England is doing exactly the same thing in India . . . . Probe down through the surface of fine words and legal forms to what lies below, and we have the same hideous business that Rome and Spain were engaged in so long, and for which in the end they paid so dear. Called by its right name, what is this treatment of India by England? It is national parasitism. It is the stronger nation sucking the blood of the weaker."

These dozen extracts are enough. A hundred more might be made from the writings of thoughtful men, who have carefully considered the effects of this annual economic drain from India. It is clear that if famines and deaths from starvation are to be prevented in India, this annual drain, representing the food of thirty millions of people, should be reduced.

This annual drain can be gradually reduced:

(1) By reducing public debt and public expenditure in India.

(2) By England's sharing with India the cost of the army maintained in India largely for Imperial purposes.

(3) By giving effect to Queen Victoria's Royal Proclamation of 1858, and admitting the people of India to all offices in India without distinction of race or creed.

(1) Public Debt and Home Charges.

In 1875 the debt of the Indian Government was £48,600,000, *plus* Rx. 69,850,000, making a total of about 118½ million pounds sterling, taking ten rupees for a pound. In 1895 the debt rose to £116,005,000, *plus* Rx. 104,373,000, making a total of about 220½ million pounds sterling. In other words, while the public debt was steadily reduced in England, mainly under Mr. Gladstone's influence, the public debt was nearly doubled in India within these twenty years!

The *nett* "Home charges," or the portion of the annual drain from India which is effected officially through the India Office, rose from Rx. 12,501,000 in 1875 to Rx. 15,681,000, exclusive of the charge involved in exchange. The India Office is

not interested in effecting a reduction; the people of India, with whom it is a question of life and death, have no voice in the matter!

(2) Cost of the Army.

A vast army is maintained in India, and at the cost of India, as a reservoir from which England can draw troops for her Imperial wars in China, or South Africa, and other parts of the world! In October, 1899, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman spoke thus in the House of Commons:

> "If we are to begin to use India on a large scale as a reservoir from which to draw troops for our own purposes the argument shifts materially, and I am afraid the case for some greater consideration for India will be greatly strengthened. . . . There has always been a strong opinion among well-informed men acquainted with India that the military expenditure of India is too great, and that the force maintained there is larger than is required for Indian purposes."

Justice demands that England should pay a portion of the cost of the great Indian army maintained in India for Imperial rather than Indian purposes. This has not yet been done, and famine-stricken India is being bled for the maintenance of England's world-wide empire.

(3) Queen's Proclamation of 1858 and the Appointment of Indians to Offices in India.

When the East India Company was abolished and Her Majesty the late Queen assumed the direct government of the Indian Empire in 1858, she issued a gracious Proclamation in which she gave the following pledge to the people of India:

> "And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge."

This Proclamation has been treated practically as a dead letter for over forty years. All the higher services in India are recruited under rules which virtually make them a monopoly for Englishmen who draw their pay from India, send their savings to Europe, and on retirement draw their pensions from Indian revenues. Three generations of Indians have been educated in English schools and colleges; they have proved their "ability and integrity" in all offices which they have been

permitted to hold; but they are virtually excluded to this day from the higher posts in their own country!

A Parliamentary Return was submitted in 1892, showing all allowances in the form of salaries and pensions not less than a thousand rupees for each person per annum. Taking 10 rupees for the pound the totals are these:—

	To Europeans and Eurasians.	**To Natives of India.**
	£	**£**
To Officers on Active Service	9,491,045	2,555,431
To Officers on Leave in India	495,843	121,874
Pensions in India	232,888	598,182
Amounts paid in England	3,710,778	8,676
Total	13,930,554	3,284,163

Thus, reckoning all appointments in India of the annual value of £100 and upwards, nearly fourteen millions sterling are reserved for Europeans, and barely over three millions are given to the natives of India desirous of serving in their own country and under their own Sovereign! I do not believe such an exclusion of the people from higher services was ever known in any civilised country, ancient or modern.

Conclusion.

We have heard often of a Benevolent Despotism being suited to India. Facts and figures show that Benevolent Despotism has not worked satisfactorily for the people of India during a century and a-half. It has brought about famines once every four or five years, the latest famines being the most wide-spread and the worst. It has drained India of an annual tribute estimated to represent the food of thirty millions of people. It has increased the Land Tax of the country to a degree which alarms responsible English administrators, and which has reduced the cultivators to a chronic state of indebtedness. It has permitted the decline of most of the indigenous industries of India without any adequate endeavour to help the ruined industrial classes. It has thrown on India the burden of an army maintained largely for Imperial purposes. It has increased the public debt of India by leaps and bounds, even during years of profound peace within the natural boundaries of India. And it has excluded the people of India from 80 per cent. of the salaries and pensions of £100 a year or more, reserving them for English boys wishing for a wealthy career among the starved people of India.

These are the legitimate and natural results of a Benevolent Despotism. Englishmen have not done worse, but have done better, than any other nation could have done in India under any form of absolute rule. The British administrators of India are not incompetent men, they are competent and able administrators, but they have failed because a system of absolute rule *must fail* to secure the interests of the people. It is not in human nature for one set of people to work for the interests of another, and without some sort of representation the people of India can only be held, in the words of John Stuart Mill, as "a human cattle farm," worked for the benefit of England. Even as a farm India has not prospered; the "human cattle" are dying, and England's trade with a famine-stricken nation is declining!

Let us rise above the idea of a "human cattle farm," and devise methods which are needed for the prosperity and the protection of the Indian people. We do not propose any new departure; we do not approve of any bold experiments; we suggest only improvements on the lines already laid down. There is a *Legislative Council* in every large Province of India, and a few members in this Council are elected by the people; what we suggest is that this system of election be extended, and that each Indian County be represented by its own elected member in the Council. There is also an *Executive Council* in Madras as well as in Bombay; what we suggest is that there should be an Executive Council for each large Province, and one-half the members should be natives of India. Lastly, there are the Executive Council of the Viceroy and the Council of the Secretary of State; what we suggest is that one-half the members of these Councils should be natives of India, representing the different Provinces of India.

We suggest these exceedingly modest reforms because they are in keeping with the present administrative arrangements; because they will help British administrators with the experience and local knowledge possessed by Indians; because they will safeguard the interests of the people of India which have not been, and cannot be, safeguarded under a purely absolute rule; because they will secure a more thorough consideration, from the people's point of view, of those great questions relating to trade, industries, and agriculture, which are intimately connected with the well-being of the people; because they will make the people of India responsible, jointly with Englishmen, for the prevention of famines and disasters and disturbances; because they will associate the people of India with Englishmen in the control of Indian finance and Indian administration; because they will make the Government more popular and well-informed and national; and because they will strengthen British rule in India by enlisting in favour of that rule the co-operation of the people themselves.

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