

all be subordinate to Parliament, which alone, he contended, must therefore be supreme, without, however, destroying the equality of privileges enjoyed by all its people. And hence Americans instead of being held tributary should be placed on the same footing with Englishmen. "Deny them this sole participation of freedom," said Burke to Parliament, "and you break that sole bond which originally made and must still preserve the unity of the empire."

The wise advice offered by Burke at this critical period fell on obstinate ears, and he was powerless to prevent the disaster he prophesied. His words lived nevertheless, and they, together with the object lesson of the American secession have doubtless done much toward the amelioration of British rule and a loftier conception of its duties toward dependencies.

The second great political enterprise to absorb Burke's energies was the correction of abuses in the government of India, a cause to which he was most ardently devoted and which gave him more toil than any other of the herculean labors to which his life was devoted. It was a deep-seated evil and required consummate courage. There were few men in Parliament at the time who dared mention a matter so intimately affecting the personal interests of almost every family in England. Burke, however, had a passion for law and order, and nothing so deeply touched him or provoked mightier efforts from him than the sight of suffering and wrong. He always looked at a question largely; he was a legislator for humanity, and he sought to make the interests of humanity the aim of the constitution. He had a noble conception of the responsibility of power, and the oppression of great power towards a weak people roused his uncontrollable indignation. Here was a great portion of the human race inhabiting the richest land on the globe, once happy, prosperous and free, now plundered and despoiled, degraded and enslaved, naked and in want, subjected to most cruel tyranny, and that at the hands of a government claiming to be the exponent of civilization and humanity. The cause was one just suited to touch Burke's strongest sensibilities and he devoted himself to it passionately. Again

he took the side of outraged liberty against arrogant royalty.

His first effort in this cause was in support of a bill introduced into the Commons by Fox, proposing to place the concerns of the East India Company in the hands of a committee appointed by the Commons, and relieving the Directors and proprietors of all control. It was a hard drive at the crown since it relieved it of a large amount of patronage which would henceforth be vested in the ministry. Burke commanded an immense stock of knowledge of Indian affairs, and was able to afford a deep insight into the abuses in India. He presented in such an odious light the indignities heaped upon the natives, and gave such cogent arguments for the measure proposed, that only the selfish interests of his hearers prevented its passing. The task was impossible. The treasures of India were too widely disseminated among the English aristocracy to allow the East India Company to suffer any ingratitude. In 1784 he brought the matter before Parliament with renewed vehemence and determination. He now began the greatest undertaking of his whole career—the impeachment of Warren Hastings. The leading prosecutor in that trial, it cost him fourteen years tedious work, and was considered by himself his greatest service to his country.

The crimes committed in the East, under the name of British power were enormous. Princes were robbed of their magnificent estates, governments ruthlessly overthrown, whole races exterminated, women and children degraded and outraged, religion abolished, and nothing was inviolate before the rapacity of the usurpers. As an instance of the extortion practiced, Hastings had at one time two hundred and fifty young Englishmen under his patronage, who were expecting soon to return to England with princely fortunes. Hastings himself, having been accused of some abuse by an Indian prince, had the accuser tried for forgery, convicted and hanged. The recital of such monstrosities fairly exasperated Burke. He declared that the wrongs done to the natives in India should be avenged on the perpetrators of them, and denounced the nation that sheltered such outrages. He pleaded in the name of