

THE CRISIS IN INDIA

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WHEN, after the great Mutiny, it was proposed to take over the government of India there were some who demurred to that measure, holding that Oriental Empire was a field apart, one which ought to be administered to some extent on principles of its own, and any intrusion of British politics into which would be dangerous. Such of those who took that view as are still alive will probably now think that their forebodings have proved true. Anything like an incursion of English Radicalism into an Oriental population is startling and may be dangerous to an Empire of which, as of Empires in general properly so called, the soul is loyalty on the side of the ruled with beneficence on the side of the ruler.

The part of the danger, however, which is strictly speaking political, whether it be native or imported, is probably the smallest part. Political discontent and aspiration must be almost entirely confined to that very limited class which, having received a European education, has imbibed European sentiment and learned to aim at place and power. The idea of a political revolution like those of Europe must be foreign to the native mind. In Indian history we have changes of dynasty or master, not a few; but apparently nothing like a popular rising for liberty or for a change of political institutions. A series of mutinies in the native army there has been; but these, including, as it seems to be now ascertained, the last and most terrible of them, have been caused not by political discon-

tent or intrigue, though intrigue may have taken advantage of them, but by supposed aggression on caste. One of them was caused by the substitution of hats for turbans; the turban being, it seems, the external sign of the Sepoy's religion. On the present occasion we hear as yet of no disposition to mutiny. The last conquered and enlisted, the Sikh and Ghoorka, seem to be perfectly faithful. The camp appears to be the Sepoy's country.

It is difficult to see how in the chaos of upstart and marauding tyrannies which followed the fall of the Mogul Empire, political sentiment of any kind could have been formed.

In religion there is a division between the two sections of the native population, Hindoo and Mahometan; a division so sharp as to form apparently a very strong security against any combination for the overthrow of the Imperial power.

The source of danger appears to be separation and antipathy of race between ruler and ruled. This showed itself on the side of the ruling race with terrible force at the time of the great Mutiny. Lord Elgin, on his expedition to China, touched at Calcutta and marked with horror the intensity of the race-feeling there:—

August 21st, [1857].—"It is a terrible business, however, this living among inferior races. I have seldom from man or woman since I came to the East heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world. Detestation, contempt, ferocity, vengeance, whether Chinamen or Indians be the ob-