

ENGLISH LIBELS ON ENGLAND.

It is nothing less than amazing that any number of Englishmen or Englishwomen of average understanding or self-respect could have been found in any part of England to listen with patience to the "perilous stuff" which Mr. Layard delivered himself to last week at St. James's Hall, in the form of a lecture on India. We should have thought that the extraordinary presumption of the discourse, although its least reprehensible feature, must have struck the most stolid of the audience. A man takes a few weeks gallop through the theatre of the Indian disturbances, and returns to assure the public that they are utterly in the dark as to their origin and character; not one syllable is to be depended on of all that has been heard or read for the last twelve months in speeches, journals, books, pamphlets, reports, despatches, or private letters; there has been a general conspiracy to deceive the people of England: Mr. Layard has providentially detected it; he alone is competent to speak on the Indian difficulties; to his pure eyes has the truth been revealed;—by what honours and rewards may we ever hope to acquit ourselves of the debt of gratitude we owe the man who, imitating the gracious sun himself, has rushed from orient to occident to enlighten and direct us?

The first subject illuminated by Mr. Layard was the mutiny; he shed such a flood of light upon the subject that he extinguished it altogether. We have been dreaming all this time of mutiny, and it has not been a mutiny at all. Our star of the east informs us that "rebellion" is the word—"wide-spread rebellion." It was scarcely necessary to add that he spoke "advisedly," for where is there to be found so "advised" a speaker as Mr. Layard? Who that recollects the scrupulous accuracy of the reports he sent home from the Crimea, the last time he went abroad a self-appointed commissioner of inquiry, could have needed to be told that "he spoke advisedly"? In fact he was only too measured in his language at St. James's Hall. "Widespread" was a feeble epithet for a rebellion whose geographical range in the next sentence he described, as follows: "It reached from the Himalayas to the southernmost part of the Mahratta country; in other words, from the extreme north to the south of India there was 'disturbance and revolt.'" This amounts to the intelligence, equally novel and alarming, that the flame, which the public hitherto believed to be confined, with the exception of a very few spots, to the Presidency of Bengal, embraces the entire vast peninsula. Having never heard the faintest rumour of anything bordering on a popular movement either in Bombay or Madras, we fondly believed that these Presidencies were loyal and tranquil; but there is an end of our fool's paradise, and obviously no alternative left us but to lose our Indian empire, or immediately submit to a treble income-tax, and reinforce Sir Colin Campbell with half-a-million of men. In the presence of such fearful dangers we are scarcely composed enough for criticism, or we might observe that Mr. Layard's proofs were feeble columns to support such an edifice of assertion. After the lofty sentence we have quoted, beginning with the Himalayas and ending with the Mahrattas, it looks like a fall, it was rather an abrupt and some what illogical descent, to observe—"A letter from Colonel Milman, published a few days ago, showed that the whole kingdom of Oude was disaffected." Indeed! We should have thought it needed neither ghost, Layard, or Colonel Milman to tell us that Oude is not all Hindostan, let alone the whole of India. Something more in the shade of argument was necessary even for the simpletons of St. James's Hall. Accordingly Mr. Layard proceeded to say—"It was true, that Holkar and Scindiah, had not risen, but their troops had, and they themselves were in danger of being sacrificed because of their fidelity." Surely the defection of the troops of Holkar and Scindiah, without drawing the populations with them, is the most cogent of all conceivable demonstrations that those military movements were utterly unsupported by popular sympathy. There was nothing to keep the people of those states down, had they had the slightest disposition to rise. The chiefs, after their troops deserted them, were altogether at the mercy of their subjects, and were only enabled to stand by the fortunes of England, because their subjects had the like peaceful inclination.

We shall not be so rude as to contradict a single story in Mr. Layard's Indian budget; let it suffice to observe that he has been transcendently unlucky in his choice of facts to establish his assertions. Presenting himself to the English public as an eye-witness of events in India, and declaring that from the furthest north to the utmost south he found it all in insurrection, it is curious, and not a little consolatory to discover that his only reasons are the rebellion in Oude and the revolt of the troops of Scindiah and Holkar! As to the Sikhs, he gets over them by pronouncing that they are not Indians at all. The Goorkhas and our war like friends of Nepal he disposes of by not naming them. He tells us that "the heroism with which the Sepoys met death showed that the outbreak was not a simple mutiny;" he tells us, in flat opposition to General Jacob, among other contemptible authorities, that "the mutiny did not arise from military causes;"—what imports what he tells us?—a million of the like opinions or statements, even were they made by a man of established reputation for sober judgment and cautious speech, would not displace the one broad truth that the movement, whatever may have been its character, has scarcely been felt in at least two-thirds of our Indian empire.

Mr. Layard was entitled to communicate his Indian impressions to the public: but the question is, where did he receive them, in India, or in England? It is hard to avoid suspecting that he carried out with him to India the principal conclusions which he offered the other night to his hearers as the fruit of experience gathered on the banks of the Ganges. It is well we have the monument at the British Museum to testify to the reality of his Nineveh experiences; only for the human-headed bulls, his Indian researches would go far to discredit his Assyrian discoveries. Certainly Mr. Layard's facts fall into the Indian theories of a certain school in England as admirably as if they had been made to fit them. He seems to have seen everything in India through that peculiar Manchester medium, which has such wonderful power of distorting political truths of every kind. And it is observable, accordingly, that the Manchester school mustered strong on the platform in St. James's Hall, Mr. Bright and Milner Gibson being particularly conspicuous.

In fact, we suspect the whole assembly must have been composed of patriots of the same stamp, or the portion of Mr. Layard's lecture to which we are now about to allude would have been received with as cordial an expression of disgust as ever compelled a speaker to retire, or drove a performer from the stage.

This, which was far the most reprehensible part of Mr. Layard's discourse, he introduced with these observations.

"There were some in this country who had been taunted because they wished the truth to be spoken; they had been taunted by those who arrogated to themselves the character of representative of their holy religion, because they endeavoured to find out whether or not certain cruelties and horrors had been perpetrated. Now, on this subject he must remark that while he was in India, considering it desirable that that question should be settled, he endeavoured with the utmost conscientiousness to find out whether or not there had been any case of mutilation, and he had been assured by men who had been employed by the Government to make inquiries, and men who, he was sorry to say, would have joyfully pounced on any case of cruelty on the part of the natives, that they had not found one case of mutilation."

But let this pass; mark what follows. The man who is so anxious to acquit the demons and monsters, whose deeds have filled a hundred English homes with mourning, charges the most revolting enormities on his own countrymen without a scruple.

"On the other hand, there had been numerous cases of fearful revenge on the part of their own army. At Jhansi persons whom the Ranees sent out to treat were hanged. No doubt she was a great monster, but that was no reason why her ambassador should have been hanged. Again, he heard an educated English gentleman declare, in the presence of a large assembly, that he had watched for two days a Sepoy who was wounded so that he could not get away, when the crows and the eagles had begun their horrible repast, on his eyes and his vitals."

Mr. Layard brings back with him from India only one tale of atrocity, and the principal actor in it is an Englishman! He sought in vain for evidence of a single horror committed by a Sepoy, but he was not so unsuccessful in his researches after the brutalities of his countrymen! And an English audience endured this! Fie, we say, upon both orator and audience!

We hesitate to accept the story of "the educated Englishmen;" we have a weakness in favour of our own blood and kindred to which Mr. Layard is superior. Did he hear it correctly, or hear the whole of it? At all events, what shall we say of the man who thus blackens the character of his country in the same breath with which he defends and advocates the most savage foe she ever encountered? Mr. Layard has no tears but for the butchers whose crimes have lately filled seventy pages of the *Gazette*. His reflections at the tragic well of Cawnpore would be incredible were we to give them in any words but his own:

"Recollecting such things as these, when he stood over the well at Cawnpore, over come by feelings which every Englishman could imagine, if there were one feeling in his mind more bitter than the rest, it was that possibly their own acts might justify that deed of hell." He appealed to the members of parliament whom he saw around him to raise their voices against deeds of blood on our own part, and above all, he appealed to the ladies of England to call upon their countrymen to imitate God's attribute of mercy.

Why, if our acts justified it, how could it have been a deed of hell? It was only natural retaliation, if libels are under responsibilities to logic. The deeds of hell were the horrors that begat horrors; the crimes of Englishmen, saith Mr. Layard! We were the original hell-dogs; from us Nana Sahib learned his trade of blood. From us he received his bloody instructions, and he scarcely bettered them! The everlasting infamy of Cawnpore is ours, not his, English, not Indian;—here comes Mr. Layard trooping from the Ganges to proclaim it, and Englishmen and Englishwomen were found to applaud and cheer the dishonour of their name and nation.

It was said of a celebrated heartless sentimentalist that the death of an ass would wring his bosom, though he had no tears to drop on his mother's grave. The man who meditated as we have just seen at Cawnpore, poring into the abyss out of which the innocent blood of nearly three hundred women and children, the wives and offspring of Englishmen, is still crying to earth and heaven; was thus powerfully moved by the fallen fortunes of the King of Delhi?

Forsitan et Priami fuerint quæ fata requiras!

"Many persons regretted that the King of Delhi had not fallen. He saw the King of Delhi and he would leave the meeting to judge when they had heard him whether he was punished; he would not give any opinion as to whether the manner in which they were treating him was worthy of a great nation. He saw that broken-down old man, not in a room; but in a miscreant hole of his palace, lying on a bedstead with nothing to cover him but a miserable tattered coverlet. As he beheld him, some remembrance of his former greatness seemed to arise in his mind. He rose with difficulty from his couch, showed him his arms, which were eaten into by disease and by flies, partly from want of water, and he said in a lamentable voice that he had not enough to eat. Was that a way in which, as Christians, they ought to treat a king?"

Our patience is exhausted, as no doubt is that of our readers. It was in perfect harmony with the false philanthropy of the whole discourse to conclude with the beauties of Ellenborough, and pronounce them worthy of being recorded in letters of gold. They are worthy, assuredly, of being written in whatever characters Mr. Layard's statements deserve to be written in. Next to the destroyers of our race abroad, the honest people of England will not fail to give the place of unenviable distinction to the assassins of our reputation at home. (*Examiner*.)

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Continued from page 187.

the Montreal Rifles what they now are. Colonel Dyde himself was also to be thanked for the zeal he had displayed in putting the militia in a state of efficiency. He had often occasion to mention his name to the Governor. If God spared his [the Baron's] life, he hoped to return to this country, and that he should once more meet his old friends and see again the faces that surrounded him. He need hardly add that all the men under his command might always expect support and assistance from him.

Two or three months before the Recruiting commenced for the 100th Regiment, he had heard of the intention of the British Government to raise a regiment in this country. Holding his position in the Canadian Militia he thought it was his duty to tender his services to the Queen in raising the regiment, which being done, Her Majesty had thought fit to appoint him to the command of it, and he would do his utmost for the well-being and interests of the men of that regiment. It was his opinion that any vacancies in the regiment would be recruited for in Canada, and that the officers also would likely be taken from Canada. Therefore, in the course of a few years, the regiment would be entirely Canadian. He reiterated his wish that he might see this country and his friends once more, and after again expressing his thanks for the kindness with which he had been received, he sat down amid great applause.

Lt. Col. Thorndike—Song.

The next toast was:

"Our Brethren of the Militia Force of Canada."

The Chairman, in proposing it, said he recollected the father of their distinguished guest, Col. Dyde, was then a volunteer in the Town of Quebec. The Baron's father took great interest in the Provincial militia. During the war of 1812, the Baroness, the present Baron's mother, presented a stand of colors to the Regiment of Canadian Fencibles, raised immediately after the breaking out of the American war, charging them to keep them in honor. The presentation of the colors came off on the esplanade at Quebec, and a Canadian soldier here present, then an ensign in that regiment [Col. Delisle, Batt had the honor of receiving them from the hands of the Baroness. Shortly after this Col. Delisle's then Ensign Delisle, company with several others, were sent to Montreal. They did not lie here long idle, as they then were sent to repulse the advance of the Americans under General Macomb. The battle of Chateaugay was the glorious result of the campaign, where the brave DeSalaberry gained for himself and the Provincial militia an enviable renown.

"Our Brethren of the Militia Force of Canada" was drunk with great enthusiasm.

Colonel Delisle rose to reply, and thanked the Chairman for the (he feared) over-drawn narrative of his services. He remembered well receiving the colors of the Canadian Fencibles from the hands of the present Baron DeRottenbourg's mother. As for the affair at Chateaugay, every militiaman there present had done his duty, and he was certain that if any trouble arose once more, the militiamen of the present time would do theirs as well, if not better. The gallant Col sat down amidst much applause.

Lt. Col. Wily rose and said that he did not know whether he was glad or sorry in proposing the health of a gentleman present, soon about to leave us for a command in the 100th Regiment. He alluded to Lieut. Fletcher, a gentleman well known to the Militia of the Province for his knowledge and practice of things military. It was well known that his company of Rifles were second to none in the Province, through the constant endeavors of Major Fletcher to bring them to an efficient state of discipline. Everything was in order, everything was regular, and never gave him [Lt. Col. W.] any trouble. He would take with him the best wishes of them all. He commenced by playing soldier, as it was said, and ended in becoming a real one. He had no doubt that he would earn credit wherever he went. He then proposed the health of "Lieut. Fletcher, of the 100th Regiment" which was drunk with enthusiasm.

Rifle Band—"Montreal Rifles March."

Lieut. Fletcher, in responding to the toast, said he could not find words to express himself, but he begged to thank them for the kindness and courtesy displayed towards him that evening. The pleasure he felt was,