

ment may not be loved by the people; but neither was the government of the Mahratta and of the Mogul. It is simply endured. If the people do not recognise the fact that it is better than that of our predecessors, at all events they do not feel that it is worse.

Whatever else, therefore, this outbreak may be, we may safely assume that it has not its origin in the resentment of a misgoverned people. But a movement which has nothing of the popular element in it, may yet have something of a national character and a political significance. We may have administered the country fairly enough, have dealt unfairly towards the princes and chiefs of India, and from the animosity of these men, whom we are said to have over-reached or despoiled, may have proceeded this furious raging of the heathen. Some, indeed, profess to see an intimate connexion between certain recent measures, which have resulted in a further diminution of the diminished native sovereignties of India, and the sudden outburst of military excitement which has had such perilous results. Our system of unrighteous annexation, it is said, culminated in the spoliation of Oude. This was the last straw on the camel's back. The long-outraged nationalities of India rose against the despoiler, when his work of spoliation was completed by the absorption of the last independent Mahomedan state of Hindostan (1) (*).

This point of inquiry will require further consideration hereafter; but, in the mean-while, we shall better guide our readers to a right understanding of the general question, by taking a brief preliminary survey of the political state of India at the commencement of Lord Canning's government. On the 29th of February, 1856, after a long and prosperous administration, Lord Dalhousie resigned into the hands of his successor the portfolio of the Governor-General of India. During eight eventful years the retiring Vice-Roy had toiled with unremitting assiduity, regardless of the warnings of failing health and physical decay, and had become the author or the agent of a series of great political and administrative measures, which, confident in the verdict of posterity, he proudly recorded in a farewell minute. He appeared to have both extended and consolidated the British empire in the East; and under no former administration of India had the country benefited more by the enlightened and progressive views of an English statesman. Seen by human eyes, the prospect which opened before Lord Canning was that of a reign of unbroken peace. Neither in our old provinces nor in our new, were there any elements of disquiet; and the native states, though in some instances perhaps rendered restless by alarm, evinced no signs of hostility or disaffection. Under the wise administration of the Lawrences, the Punjab had become as tranquil as Bengal. Pegu was rapidly settling down into a well-ordered province of the empire. In Nagpore there were no signs of trouble. The Ranees, in the assured belief that the British Government were resolute to revive neither the rule nor the title of Boonslah, were fast withdrawing themselves for the affairs of public life, and subsiding into the quiet enjoyment of their luxurious pensions. Even Oude promised a large increase of revenue under the equitable rule of its new masters. Some of the most difficult problems suggested by the sudden change of government seemed to be in course of satisfactory solution. All the new provinces, indeed, which had been added to our empire, although they might impose much additional labour on the Government, did not threaten to increase the burden of its cares.

In the independent or the semi-independent states, there was nothing to awaken the anxiety of the new Governor-General. On the hills of Nepal, our old friend, Jung Behaudur, who had learnt in England the real character and extent of our resources, directed the councils of the state; and, moved by friendship or restrained by discretion, performed well the duties of a faithful ally. In Rajpootana, a cluster of princes of ancient lineage, whose independence had always been respected by the British Government, were, in spite of shamelessly mendacious rumours regarding our designs, true to their allegiance, and professedly mindful of the exhortations of the paramount state. In Central India, the Mahratta princess, Sciendiah and Holkar, young and well-disposed, were profiting by our instructions, and endeavouring to win the approbation of the Governor-General and his representatives, by promoting the improvement of their territory and the prosperity of their people. In the Deccan, an effete and expiring prince, incapable of good government, and utterly regardless of the welfare of his country, was held in restraint by the wise and moderate counsels of a young and energetic minister, who knew the true interests of the state far better than his master.

There was much work to be done, but it was the quiet business of internal administration; and Lord Canning addressed himself to

(1) We shall, of course, be understood to speak here of Indostan Proper, from which the Deccan is distinguished.

(*) Mr. Joly in his letter states it to be the principal cause. (Ed. J. E.)

it with no apprehensions of a coming disaster. Intent on the extension of those great reproductive works from which an unprecedented development of the resources of the country and, with it, unexampled domestic prosperity were to be anticipated, and on a corresponding improvement in the moral and intellectual condition of the people, he had good reason to hope that he would be permitted to pass, in these gratifying tasks, his allotted time of office. Public works and education were to be the distinguishing features of his administration; and for many months it seemed that there would be little to distract from these beneficent objects of enlightened rule.

In Oude alone, of all our newly acquired possessions, was there much to engage the attention of the Government; and the reports from that country were of the most satisfactory kind. The administration of the province was carried on under the same system of a mixed commission, composed partly of civilians and partly of soldiers, as had proved so successful in the Punjab. The officers who were employed in this work were among the best in the country; men, in most cases, of equal judgment and energy, and in some, of ripe experience and approved ability. The old army was quietly disbanded. Its arrears of pay were discharged by the British Government, and many of the soldiers were enlisted into a new irregular force. The question of disarming the people was debated. The Punjab had been disarmed by Henry Lawrence, and the happiest results had attended the measure. But in Oude there was no indication of discontent to render a popular rising a probable event; and it was believed that, under a new penal system, the addiction of the people to internal broils and affrays would gradually subside. There seemed, therefore, to be no necessity for so extreme a measure, and an obvious reason against it. It was not thought expedient wholly to suppress the military habits of a people from whom the very pith of our own army was drawn. The zemindars, however, who occupied fortified places, from which they had been accustomed to resist the authority of the native government, were called upon to give up their guns; and the carrying of arms in the cities of Lucknow and Fysabad—the modern and the ancient capital of Oude—was interdicted. The result of the latter order was said to be magical. The citizens became suddenly a new class of men, and it was believed that a permanent change in their habits would be accomplished. How the revenue settlement was going on we have little knowledge. It was hardly possible that any systematic operations should have been carried on without injury to the prospects of many, who had profited by want of system, or that any investigation into existing rights should not have been prejudicial to those privileges and immunities which had been usurped or unjustly acquired. But the popular discontent, if any, was not demonstrative; and the internal condition of the country was so tranquil that an English lady might travel through it in her palanquin without an emotion of transient alarm.

There was nothing in all this to raise any apprehension that the vice-royalty of Lord Canning would embrace a troublous period of Indian history. But Governor-General after Governor-General has entertained the same hopes of a tranquil administration only to find them delusions; and no man knew better than Lord Canning that at any moment, and from any quarter, a cloud might arise, at first no larger than a man's hand, to cover, in time, the entire firmament. Still it may be doubted whether, when, in the early part of the present year, some mutterings of dissatisfaction arose from the native army of Bengal, he believed that a storm was brewing in that quarter, which, in the course of a few months, nay of a few weeks, would convulse the whole of Northern India, shake the entire fabric of government, and carry desolation to hundreds of English homes. It cannot be denied that the pacific policy of the Indian Government during the last ten years had directed the attention of the rulers of India more closely to civil improvements than to military organisation,—that the absence of any foreign enemy had begotten excessive confidence,—that the administration had less of a military character than had been given to it by Lord Ellenborough and Lord Hardinge,—and that the perils which Lord Canning has now to encounter are perils which the oldest and ablest members of the Company's service were least disposed to anticipate or even to credit.

The regular native army of Bengal consisted, at the time of the outbreak, of seventy-four regiments of Infantry, ten regiments of Cavalry, nine battalions of Foot and three brigades of Horse Artillery. To every regiment of Native Infantry were nominally attached twenty-five European officers; to every regiment of Cavalry, twenty-two. A comparatively small number of these, however, were ordinarily present with their corps; furlough and the staff making a perennial demand upon all ranks from field officers to ensigns. Besides this regular army, there were numerous irregular and local corps, commanded by European Officers. To the majority of these corps were attached a commanding officer, a second in