

years ago was generally accepted had been greatly overcharged. The history of Warren Hastings and his companions has been recently studied with great knowledge and ability, and with the result that the more serious opinions on the subject have been considerably modified. Much exaggeration undoubtedly grew up in the last century, partly through ignorance of Oriental affairs, and partly also through the eloquence of Burke. There is no figure in English political history for which I at least entertain a greater reverence than Edmund Burke. I believe him to have been a man of transparent honesty, as well as of transcendent genius, but his politics were too apt to be steeped in passion, and he was often carried away by the irresistible force of his own imagination and feelings. Misrepresentations were greatly consolidated by the *Indian History* of James Mill which was for a long time the main, and, indeed, almost the only source from which Englishmen obtained their knowledge of Indian history. It was written, as might be expected, with the strongest bias of hostility to the English in India, yet I suspect that many superficial readers imagined that a history which was so unquestionably dull must be at least impartial and philosophical. Unfortunately Macaulay relied greatly on it and without having made any serious independent studies on the subject, he invested some of its misrepresentations with all the splendour of his eloquence. I believe all competent authorities are now agreed that his essay on Warren Hastings, though it is one of the most brilliant of his writings, is also one of the most seriously misleading. I am not prepared to say that the reaction of opinion produced by the new school of Indian historians has not been sometimes carried too far; but these writers have certainly dispelled much

exaggeration and some positive falsehood. They have shown that, although under circumstances of extreme difficulty and extraordinary temptation some very bad things were done by Englishmen in India, these things were neither as numerous nor as grave as has been alleged.

On the whole, too, it may be truly said that English colonial policy in its broad lines has to a remarkable degree avoided grave errors. The chief exception is to be found in the series of mistakes which produced the American Revolution and ended in the loss of our chief American colonies. Yet even in this instance it is, I believe, coming to be perceived that there is much more to be said for the English case than the historians of the last generation were apt to imagine. In imposing commercial restrictions on the colonies we merely acted upon ideas that were then almost universally received, and our commercial code was on the whole less illiberal than that of other nations. This has been clearly shown by more than one writer on our side of the Atlantic, but the subject has never been treated with more exhaustive knowledge and more perfect impartiality than by an American writer—Mr. George Beer—whose work on the commercial policy of England has recently been published by Columbia College, in New York. No one will now altogether defend Grenville's policy taxing America by the Imperial Parliament, but it ought not to be forgotten that it was expressly provided that every farthing of this taxation was to be expended in America and devoted to colonial defence. England had just terminated a great war, which, by expelling the French from Canada had been of inestimable advantage to her colonies, but which had left the mother country almost crushed by debt. All that Grenville desired was that the Ameri-