

civilisation amongst any Asiatic race, much less amongst the Hindoos, but we believe they might be made a prosperous and thriving people if the whole race of zemindars, putindars, and other middlemen were swept from the face of the land, and the ryots left in possession of the fruit of their daily toil.

Wherever European capital has been introduced throughout the Mofussil, and brought in contact with the village population, there a marked improvement is to be seen in their condition. A good deal has been said about the oppression of English indigo-planters; possibly some part of the statements may be correct, but the tyranny of a European is mercy beside the moderation of a Bengalee landholder. Many a hard bargain is doubtless driven by the planter with his ryots, but no one supposes him capable of the cruelties practised by the native renters, to wring the last copper pice or cowrie from the helpless dependent.

In India, proof of guilt is at all times difficult to obtain, but doubly so against the wealthy; yet evidence has not been wanting of the most barbarous tortures inflicted by zemindars of the soil upon their dependents, even to the death, and that, too, for not more than copper coin—a few annas only, less than a sixpence due upon a balance of rent. So much is this the system amongst natives of Bengal, that we much doubt whether there be any zemindary in which torture is not employed in the collection of rents. We must not wonder at this, for Bengalees are proverbially cowards, and all cowards are cruel—and who such promising victims as the poor ryots?

There is no physical wretchedness nor abject misery within European limits that can in any way compare with the utter prostration and broken-down degradation of the great bulk of the Bengal ryots. The land how fertile, the climate how favourable, the rivers and canals how enriching for the production of the finest silks, the richest dyes, the most delicate fibres, the most valuable grain that nature has ever enabled man to produce for the markets of the world; and yet, amidst all this abundance of blessings, how miserable the condition of those who should be sharers in the general wealth! A stranger in the land might well mistake an ordinary ryot, in his pristine rags, and dirt, and squalor, for some wandering outcast from a jail, a hospital, or a lunatic asylum.

The oriental, of whatever grade, or caste, or calling, has an instinctive love for landed property. If it be but the most miserable corner of the poorest holding, the most wretched hovel that man could take shelter in, the Asiatic is still most anxious to be considered as the owner. It may be that the Indian tenant-farmer dwells in a place that might in Europe be deemed fit only for dogs; it may be that on the limited slip of soil encircling his hovel, a sickly mango-tree, a few date-palms, a cluster of plantains, or a knot of sugar-cane, may be seen; it may be that cultivated fields grace the environs in rich luxuriance; but be this as it may, the owner or renter is equally delighted, so that he may feel that he is the possessor of the homestead, the garden, or the field.

Of course, there are many grades of ryots, all differing as much in their material position as in their habits and inclinations. Besides the mere renter or the day-labourer, there are men who holding no land of their own, yet possess a pair of bullocks, a plough, and a *kaddie* or hoe, with which they undertake to plant and tend the land of others, who are either too idle,

or too busy to cultivate it themselves, receiving half of the produce for so doing. There are, besides these, many others who hold land either as members of a family in common, or in their individual right, and who hold some appointment or office, whilst they leave others to cultivate for them, receiving of course, their share of crops. It is scarcely too much to say, perhaps, that in Bengal, if not in the upper provinces, there are very few Hindoos, and not many Mussulmans, who have not a holding of some sort.

THE MONTHLY RECORD.

APRIL, 1858.

Collection for the Ministers' Widows' and Orphans' Scheme.

This scheme is now for the first time brought before the congregations connected with the Synod of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

The object of this scheme simply is, to provide a Fund from which a small annuity can be paid to the Widows and Orphans of Ministers connected with the Church of Scotland, who spend their days in the cause of Christ, in these Colonies. We need not inform our enlightened people that this is no new scheme in the history of our Church at home, though hitherto new to our people here as an effort of their bounty. This Fund has, indeed, long been regarded one of the most excellent Christian institutions of that Christian Country. In Scotland there is also a similar Fund for the benefit of the relics of dissenting Ministers, and for others, under certain restrictions. Our Church in Canada has had likewise a similar Fund for some years, which is steadily prospering under the management of some zealous lay members. This Fund already aids seventeen widows, who would otherwise have been in comparative destitution. Chiefly in consequence of the friendly urgency of our Canadian brethren, who see its desirableness, has our Synod been induced—with considerable reluctance—to lay its claims before our Christian people. These brethren, moreover, hold out to us the prospect of our becoming participators in their consolidated Fund; and the most feasible means for carrying out this generous purpose is under the consideration of their Synod. No terms have yet been proposed, but it would surely be unreasonable for us to expect to become sharers in their Fund, now amounting to upwards of £5,000, unless we make an effort to raise a sum somewhat proportional to the number of Clergymen in the Synod.

Since then, those distant and disinterested friends interest themselves so much in our welfare, ought not something to be expected of such as are directly benefitted by our ministrations? After the active and devoted services of the Ministers of our Church in this field, for the last thirty years and upwards, can it be regarded over parsimonious to expect to be placed on the same favorable footing with our neighbouring brethren? Nor need it be concealed, that if this Fund is a necessary provision for others, it is more so with us—for in no Colonial field is the

maximum salary so small, nor the average minimum so low as in our Synod; and in no field—owing to the paucity of ministers, and for other reasons—are the labours of many of our Ministers so numerous and so trying on the constitution.

These Ministers have also strong general claims on their people to contribute to this scheme. They give their best years to a long course of study, and must spend all their means in anxious preparation for their arduous labours. And after they enter on their sacred calling, the means placed at their disposal for the most part, afford them only a bare subsistence, while they require to struggle to maintain their position as Ministers of our Church. And during all this time other professions and trades are actively engaged securing property for themselves and families—so that the industrious farmer leaves a well cultivated farm—the careful mechanic leaves his house or property—the prudent Merchant accumulates a competency and to spare. And how is the Minister, who usually has the least remuneration of any profession or calling—considering what is expected of him—to provide for those of his own home, unless this is done by his people? God's ordinance is, that those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel, and that he should give himself wholly to this work. And is not the Minister expected to devote the whole energy of his mind and body—to spend and be spent, in unreserved consecration to his Master's service, and for the good of his flock? If then it be right for others to make a legitimate provision for their families, by honest and useful industry, is it not their duty to provide for the bereaved family of him whose life has been consecrated to their highest interests? If he imparts to you and yours spiritual things, God requires you to consider and *practically to answer*, whether it is much that you provide him and his with carnal things? Do not you and yours benefit more by the ministrations of the Gospel, even in a temporal point of view, then it has cost you? Are you not partakers in the peace, and order, and goodness inspired at home; and the sobriety, industry and honesty disseminated in society? But how infinitely greater is your gain, when as the commissioned ambassadors for Christ, we impart to you all the hopes and consolations of the Gospel—unfold to you the gracious plan of salvation—teach your children the fear of God and due submission to parents—direct to a blissful resurrection and glorious immortality—watch over you and yours, too, on your dying pillow—comfort and encourage those nearest and dearest to you, when they mourn because you are not—all this we are often required to do, at the expense of much anxious toil, mingled with sorrow, which is calculated to wear out the frame, and exhaust the mental faculties. Can it then be a question with you, whether these privileges and exalted hopes are of as much value to you, as dying men, as the small amount required to make provision for the necessities of those near to him by the ties of nature and of grace, who is the constituted Minister of God to impart these inestimable privileges? Should any hesitate—