

during the progress of the inquiry, have they been even taxed with attempting to intimidate ryots, or with obstructing evidence. We have all been struck, too, with the fulness, lucidity, and openness with which several of them delivered their testimony, and we have had reason to admire the thorough knowledge which they evinced of all the principles and details of the planter's profession; nor can we doubt that such qualities would be calculated to shine conspicuously in any other profession or line of life which they might adopt.

84. We now turn to those distinct and specific charges which, either by one party or other, of natives or of officials, have been brought against the planters, before or during our sittings.

85. Commencing with the gravest, we shall go through the list *seriatim*. Of actual destruction of human life comparatively few cases of late years have been brought to our knowledge, as proved, and we have no wish to lay great stress on a list of forty-nine serious cases which are shown to have occurred over a period of thirty years in different parts of the country; because violent affrays, ending in homicide or wounding, are, we are happy to say, of not nearly such frequent occurrence as they used to be, and affrays are not peculiar to indigo planting. They occur equally where the plant is not grown.

86. *From the returns supplied by the Magistrates of some of the most important districts for the last five years, some of which are entirely blank, it is quite clear that investigations into those fights between the adherents of zemindar and planter which used to carry desolation, terror, and demoralization into a dozen villages at a time, no longer disfigure our criminal annals to the extent they used to do. Even in Nuddea, as will be seen from the return, the cases were few in the years preceding 1859 and 1860. Some of this good result is, no doubt, due to the working of Act IV of 1840, for giving summary possession of lands; to the law for the exaction of recognizances and security against apprehended breaches of the peace, namely Act V of 1848; and to the establishment of Sub-Divisions with convenient circles of jurisdiction. A good deal is owing also to the acquisition by planters of rights in lands, and to the peace and quiet which usually follow such acquisition, as far as affrays and fights are concerned; but something also is due to the better skill and management of factories generally, and, we doubt not, to the good sense and good feeling of the most influential planters.

87. Affrays carried out with premeditation, on a large scale, by means of hired clubmen, we are thus happy to pronounce rare in some districts, and in others unknown.

88. Then as to the burning of bazaars and houses, we have a clear admission from a gentleman whose character entitles him to great respect (A. 670) that he "has known of such acts," but no well proved instance of this sort has been brought to our notice in any oral evidence. In one or two instances mentioned to us, when a fire took place, it was a matter of doubt whether its origin was not accidental, and we cannot therefore but acquit the planters, as a body, of any practice of the sort, though we do not mean to say that cases of arson do not occur in lower Bengal, in consequence of indigo disputes. A crime of this kind would, from its very openness, attract attention and should be susceptible of the clearest proof.

89. As regards the knocking down of houses, gentlemen of undoubted veracity have seen places where houses had been, and have known indigo growing on deserted homesteads, understanding that the ryots had absconded after some dispute, and that their houses had been demolished. We have the clear evidence of Mr. Blumhardt (A. 1287-1288) to an outrage of this kind, which came under his observation. It is to be noticed, however, that in this case a sentence imposed at the Sessions was reversed by the Sudder Court. Unless we could fathom the origin of all desertions, we could not take on ourselves to pronounce that houses had been wantonly knocked down by the planter, to intimidate the ryot. In one case, particularly, the

*Note.—See Appendix.

A. 2134 manager of the Bengal Indigo Company distinctly denied having caused a house to be knocked down, and gave a totally different version to the alleged outrage: and as, whenever a ryot deserts his homestead and settles in another village, the land thrown up, both by law and custom, reverts to the zemindars, we are still less able to pronounce that for any piece of indigo seen growing within a cluster of ryots' houses, or on an abandoned homestead or *beeta*, a house or houses must have been first knocked to pieces.

90. Still, the demolition of houses, either with the direct or indirect order of the planter, does occasionally, we fear, occur; and it is quite certain that four respectable *gamtidars* of the village of Goaltolli had complained, three of the destruction of their property, and all four of their valuable *ganti* tenures having been taken from them; nor did the manager deny that those tenures were no longer enjoyed by their rightful owners.

91. As to outrages on women, which, more than any other act, might offend the prejudice and arouse the vindictiveness of a people notoriously sensitive as to the honor of their families, we are happy to declare that our most rigid inquiries could bring to light only one case of the kind. And when we came to examine into its foundation, as seriously affecting the character of one planter and, through him, the body of the planters in a whole district, or as affording any clue to the excitement of the past season, we discovered that there were very reasonable grounds for supposing that no outrage on the person of the woman had ever taken place.

92. For this, we rest on the full report of the Magistrate of Nuddea on the charge as preferred before him, which is given in the Appendix.

93. That the woman, in this case, was taken away by the servants of the factory, is a fact beyond dispute, but as the Magistrate has disbelieved the evidence to further outrage, and as the manager of the factory has satisfactorily shown to us that he was absent from home until the very day the abduction took place, and that he no sooner became aware of the fact than he ordered the woman to be returned to her friends, and as he also declares on oath that he subsequently saw the uncle of the woman at the factory, but heard nothing further on the subject, we cannot, on all this, but consider even this one single charge, in its heinous aspect and as affecting the manager, to be disproved. Still, that the servants of any factory should have dared to commit such an act as the abduction of a woman in open day, speaks strongly for the absence of all restraint and the lawlessness of the offenders.

A. 613 94. There remain, then, of serious charges, those of kidnapping men, carrying off cattle and rooting up gardens and other offences; these practices being said to be habitual whenever ryots disobey orders issued from the factory. Here, we regret to say, the cases brought to our notice are so numerous and so well authenticated as to make us apprehend that the practice of imprisoning individuals in the factory or its out-houses is of common occurrence. As regards the seizure of cattle, the cases are not so numerous, but Mr. Sage, speaks of it as a "general custom," and he was, no doubt, speaking from facts within his own knowledge.

95. As regards gardens, ryots have made numerous complaints as to date gardens and plants being uprooted to make room for indigo, and we are afraid that, in some instances, such injuries have been inflicted.

96. Discarding all cases resting on vague hearsay, questionable authority, or mere general rumour, we think that the following array of facts which are put in evidence either by the sufferers themselves or by gentlemen of undoubted credibility, as facts brought to their own personal knowledge, prove the undeniable prevalence of seizing cattle and more especially of kidnapping. We would refer, then, to the three distinct cases of abducting cattle mentioned by Mr. Schurr in answer 779, all three within his own cognizance, and two happening under his very eyes; to the case mentioned by Mr. Eden in answer 3576, in which he states that he caused the release of 200 or 300 head of cattle; to the first case mentioned by Mr. Lincke in answer 891, and to the case of abduction of two men for more than two months mentioned

in the same answer, referred to by Mr. Bomwetesh in answer 956, and explained further before us by one of the sufferers with the marks of violence still visible on his head and person; to the cases mentioned by Mr. Bomwetesh in answer 958 and answer 962, as within his own knowledge, and told him by the very sufferers themselves; to the case of oppression mentioned by the same gentleman in answers 985 to 987, when a garden of plantains and vegetables was cut down close to the witness's house in order to make way for indigo; to the narrative of Gunni Duffadar in page 96 showing that he and his father were wounded and taken away by force, the latter simply for having done his duty, and that, after confinement for some months, they complained to the Magistrate on their release, but were persuaded to let the matter drop: to the narrative of Faquir Mohammed, showing that only last year he was confined in a godown for eight days, because he would not act as the people of the factory would have had him act; to that of Ishwar Chunder Chowdari, a highly respectable and substantial *gantidar*, showing that he was confined for three days in a godown but got away by giving some money to his keeper; to the statements of Sabir Biswas, Adam Mandal, and Bhubataran Halodhur; to the case mentioned by Mr. 2373 Herschel in which he released two men who had been taken out of his own 2317 Sub-Division in Moorshedabad to the district of Malda; to the cases reported 1381 by Mr. Eden, one of which is mentioned by Grihish Bose, first class Darogah, 2809 namely those in which Mr. Tripp and Mr. Laidly were severally fined for kidnapping, which cases have been fully laid before the public within the last three years; to the two of which the narrative is given by Mr. Lautour in his evidence *viz.* of Mr. Forde and Mr. Tissendie, and the judicial sentences therein passed on the planters are filed and printed in the Appendix; to the case of Shital Turrufdar mentioned in page 295 of the Blue Book, Part I, and finally reported on by the Commissioner of Nuddea in his letter of the 5th July 1860; to that discovered by the activity of Mr. A. J. Bainbridge and judicially recorded in pages 124 and following of Part I of the same Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal; and to the *recent* kidnapping of a boy named Arman, reported in the letter of the Commissioner of the 3rd of July last, wherein it is shown that this offence had been compromised by the Deputy Magistrate in opposition to the orders of the Magistrate of Pubna.

97. Of all cases in this country, those of kidnapping are the most difficult of discovery and proof, and those in which conviction rarely follows. But in some of the above instances the ends of justice have been actually attained. In one, there was a positive failure of justice, even when the facts were shown and the means for redress were available. We allude to the case of Abadi Mandal, and though it is some satisfaction to us to find that the Head of the Concern was absent in England during the time of the man's confinement, and is therefore blameless in the matter, yet looking at the whole facts, we must record our opinion that one such case of violent and unlawful confinement spreads alarm throughout the whole neighbourhood, reflects discredit, by its results, on the administration of justice, and lowers the estimation in which, for legality and fair dealing the European character ought to be held.

98. That a man of the respectability of Ishwar Chowdari, one of those small proprietors to whom, as a body, so much of the improvement in the actual prosperity of the country is owing, should be subjected to the mere indignity of confinement for three days, is also a fact which speaks for itself.

99. Nor did this man tell his story with any exaggeration or emphasis. Being of good family, and having an hereditary and inalienable lease, liable to no enhancement, he merely objected to have his rent raised, and confinement was the natural consequence of his refusal.

100. Indeed, this practice of confining recusant or obstructive parties in the interior of the country, is so common as to be spoken of without the least reserve. A most respectable witness in answer to a question put as to what would be done, supposing a silk contractor were to refuse to take advances, replies "we should have demanded instant payment of his balances,

or we should doubtless have *confined the man in one of the godowns* if there was no possibility of getting speedy justice."

101. We are fully aware that the delay and difficulties of the law, the corruption of the Police, the venality of the native clerks of Courts, and the opposition, direct or indirect, which the European may encounter, are repeatedly put forward as excuses for planters thus, as it is termed, taking the law into their own hands. But no code of law that we are aware of would visit any offence of which any of the above sufferers could, on the broadest supposition, have been guilty with the penalties which, without form of justice, they have been compelled to pay. We could understand a man forcibly cutting a few acres of plant, claimed by a rival planter or zemindar in anticipation of a decree of Court, and urging, in excuse of his conduct, that he had no resource but to cut the crop or suffer grievous injury for which the law would not sufficiently reimburse him. But it would be puerile to put forward this excuse to cloke the abduction of cattle, on the scale witnessed by Mr. Schurr, or the habitual practice of confining helpless individuals in godowns until they submit to the will or caprice of the planter. Again, it is said, and doubtless with more or less of truth, that men who are regarded by the planters as troublesome characters, who might lay complaints, or incite others to resistance, or otherwise increase difficulties, are thus confined and kept out of the way. This, while it may account for the practice, is no real justification. Then it may be urged, unfortunately with truth, that the practice was not invented by the planters, but was previously practised and is still practised by others. But obviously it is to be expected that, as before remarked, European gentlemen in the position of planters will rather by good example discountenance the evil practices which already exist. It may be further said that there are some planters who would not habitually act thus, but still the frequency of the instances is calculated to cast a reflection on the entire body.

102. In short, when we hear of and thus see cases of kidnapping happening in different years, and many of them recent, and extending over a large tract of country, and when we consider how impossible it is that many similar cases should not occur, but never see the light, we can only look on them as proceeding habitually from a determined and headstrong spirit, which, at all risks, will have its own way.

103. There was really more to be pleaded in excuse for affrays, when affrays did happen. An affray was caused by the meeting of two bodies of armed men, supplied with funds, probably, by two equal, rich, and influential antagonists.

104. The police were weak; the chief authority was at a distance; there were, as we have already stated, rights in jeopardy, or valuable property at stake, which it was imperative for one party or the other to defend or to place at once in security. But, for this practice of carrying off individuals, and taking them, sometimes in a wounded condition, from place to place, in order to elude research and detection, we can make no extenuation.

105. On the contrary, we deem it our duty to mark it with our deliberate reproof as alien to the British character; and while we earnestly call on all unofficial Englishmen henceforth to discountenance it by precept, authority, and by the dismissal from their service of any of their subordinates, European or native, who resort to the same, we also think that no means ought to be left untried on the part of the authorities to check and eradicate a practice which must, more than any other species of illegality, tend to make the ryot chary of complaining, hopeless of redress, and inclined to cherish the belief that Europeans are placed above the law.

106. The consideration of this point leads us further to the various oppressions and extortions stated to be practised by the *amla* or servants of the factory. On this head minute inquiries were made, but nearly all planters unite in deposing that all payments, on whatever account, are made to the ryot in the presence of the Manager or of his European Assistant.

107. We accept these statements without question, but as this does not quite meet the complaint of many ryots, or the belief entertained by other parties of the exactions to which the cultivators are often subjected, we can only reconcile this discrepancy by inferring that the prevalence or the reverse of such a practice must depend very much on the character of the planter, his knowledge of the language, his accessibility and readiness to hear and to afford redress, and his general good management. It is not pretended that *dustoori*, or perquisites, are not taken by the servants of the factory, when not under the planter's eye; this is done unfortunately in all establishments, public or private, official or unofficial, whenever cash passes through the hands of native subordinates. And thus if the planter is unusually careless, and the servants more than ordinarily rapacious and exacting, the extortion becomes habitual. Looking to the pay of the lower class of the factory servants, and to the many instances in which witnesses have detailed to us the items of their just dues of which they have been mulcted by the *dewan*, *gomashta*, *amin*, and *takidgir*, we feel warranted in saying that we do not think a sufficiently strict hand is kept over the servants in all factories, and that a ryot may be afraid of complaining against a man who may have the opportunity, the next week, of seizing his cattle on pretext of damage done to the growing plant; a complaint to which, from its nature, a willing ear might be lent. At this point we must observe, that instances have been specified to us of servants of factories having built brick-houses for themselves, probably by the profits which their situations afforded them; and though there is exaggeration in the numbers of bamboos, babul, mangoe and other trees, as well as in the amount of thatching grass which several ryots state to have been cut and carried away by the servants, for the use of the manager or assistant, the same not being adequately paid for, or even paid for at all; yet that ill-paid servants in the interior, responsible to no one but their master, and with the Courts and police at some distance, are too apt to take goods without payment, when they can find an opportunity, is a fact we cannot question. At the same time we admit that charges of taking such articles without paying for them are justly brought against the lower native officials of many public departments. Our finding on this head, then, can only be general. We see the facilities for oppression, the only safeguard in which lies in the vigilance of the planter; we cannot take on ourselves to define its extent; but from the evident temper and exasperation of the ryots, we fear, that in some instances, the amount was considerable.

108. On the whole, we must sum up these cases between planter and ryot, by declaring our conviction that the relations between the two, even in the largest concerns, managed by the most kind and experienced planters, are in a much more unsatisfactory condition than are the relations between planter and zemindar. The latter has power and wealth, and if he has lost anything, he has got some equivalent.

109. It matters little whether the ryot took his original advances with reluctance or cheerfulness, the result in either case is the same; he is never afterwards a free man. Of all those who have appeared before us, we remember but two or three who had thrown off their connection with indigo before the commencement of this season. And no man has been brought before us who had cultivated, cleared himself, and had not re-engaged. When we look at the very form and letter of the contract, the large array of bad balances which are neither cleared off nor attempted to be claimed by course of law, the length of time most cultivators have been under engagement, the avowal of one planter that to encourage any ryot to pay off his balances would be virtually to close the factory, the strict supervision which the very necessities of his position and the instinct of self-preservation impose on the planter, the defective measurement of the bundles, and the extra measurement of the standard indigo beegah, the number of the factory servants, their character, salaries, and their opportunities, and the avowedly small return in cash to all but the

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most fortunate and substantial ryots; looking at all this, we feel conscientiously that with all the alleviations of loans, kindness, or protection, to mitigate the compulsory character of the cultivation, with every allowance for the late rise in prices, for six consecutive bad seasons, for the failings of the Bengali character, for the imperfections of the law, and for the particular trials of the planter, the whole discloses a state of things greatly to be lamented, and requiring the earliest and most vigorous reform. In fact, violent individuals can only work such a system by oppression and ill-usage, and the best and most considerate can gain credit only by the fact of their having worked it, not merely without producing any open manifestation of discontent, but even with some appearance of contentment and satisfaction on the part of the ryots.

110. While thus condemning the system as it now exists in many places, we are anxious to give due weight to all the points which may be alleged in defence or extenuation. Doubtless the planters have, as a body, suffered much from bad seasons, and have not thought themselves in a position to afford liberal terms to the ryots. If they have pressed on the ryots, which we do not justify, they have themselves been under a pressure of circumstances, and in some cases have only been able to maintain their position. The administration of civil justice has been defective. The evils admitted to exist in the system of planting are not universal wherever indigo is grown, nor are the offences committed by the planters or their servants altogether peculiar to indigo. Some of the plant is grown on a fair system, though much is grown on a bad one; while in some districts discontent is rife, in others no complaint is made as yet.*

111. There are advances given under other systems and for the purchase of other kinds of produce on a large scale, and in the Opium and Salt monopolies there is a supervision exercised by the officials of Government, some of whom are not highly remunerated. It is quite possible that even in those systems, and under the closest superintendence, there may be fraud or extortion practised on the cultivators and manufacturers, though we have no direct evidence to this effect. We argue only from the general laws of native society. But take the case of opium; the regular adjustment of accounts, the refusal to allow the smallest item of bad balances to remain clogging the cultivator, the reluctance to allow careless cultivators to remain under engagements at all, and the perfect freedom of the engagement, which is thrown up by any single ryot who finds the same no longer profitable; these are prominent discrepancies, which we cannot pass over. For many years, the poppy was the crop that paid the ryot best in Benares and Behar; and it gave higher returns to a larger number of ryots than probably indigo ever did, even in a prosperous season. As the returns from other crops crept up gradually to those of the poppy, there was seen the perfect freedom and fairness of the engagements into which the Behar cultivator had entered. The yearly licence to cultivate was not renewed; no questions were asked by the Sub-Deputy Agent; and the course of a few years, more than *thirty thousand cultivators* in the Behar Agency threw up altogether the cultivation of the poppy. Seeing this, the Government, during the present year, considerably raised the price payable to the ryot. No one pretends that the same rise of prices has not been felt throughout Lower Bengal, during the same period, and probably owing to the same causes; nor does any one tell us, in all Bengal, whether any number of ryots, or if any, how many, were allowed to abandon the production of indigo. The inference is plain; while the *assamis* of Behar and Benares have been free agents in their choice; the ryots of Bengal, from the causes already enumerated, have, practically, had no choice at all.

112. As regards the conduct of the police, it is not denied that up to this time, as a body, they are liable to the charge of venality and corruption, and there can be no question that indigo, like every agricultural or mercantile pursuit, may suffer from the want of a really good police. At the same time we observe that the police do not interfere, and are not authorized to

*NOTE.—While these sheets are passing through the Press, we have numerous applications sent in from different *zillahs* praying for relief and inquiry on the spot.

†NOTE.—Appendix.

interfere, in ordinary transactions between planter and ryot. No planter is either hindered or thwarted by the police, when he offers his advances, makes his engagements, or visits the lands. The cases in which the assistance of the police is most sought for, are when lands are said to be sown or occupied forcibly. And when this interference is asked for, there can be little doubt with which party the advantage will ordinarily be. The frankest admissions have been made before us by planters as to the way in which money is given to officers of the police to ensure their doing their duty, or to prevent them acting or reporting unfairly. When matters come to this, that the assistance or support of the police can be purchased, like any other article, it is quite clear that the advantage will remain with the party who has the freest hand and the fullest purse. And it is surely not contended that, in this respect, the planter is at a disadvantage with the ryot, or lies at his mercy.

113. On the other hand, some exceptions must be made to the universal venality of the police. The bare prospect of attaining the office of a Deputy Magistrate tends to keep a Darogah honest. Some witnesses have been emboldened to declare, that even now, clean-handed, impartial, and intelligent Darogahs are to be found. And we can have little doubt that the late raising the salaries of the subordinate grades will gradually attract a better class of natives, and ameliorate all ranks of the department.

114. As regards any special spite or dislike to indigo or indigo planters, on the part of the police, no evidence fully establishing this point has been laid before us. The Darogah will naturally look to his immediate superior; and this leads us to consider the charge so often brought against the members of the covenanted and uncovenanted services, especially the former, that they favour the native zemindar and ryot, out of dislike to their countrymen, and with a view to keep them out of the country.

115. We are bound to state, that after inviting the freest communications on this head, we find the whole charge to fall to the ground. One Magistrate, as we have remarked, threatened a large zemindar, during some disputes, with penal consequences if he did not make arrangements for giving a lease to a planter. Mr. Larmour, with two exceptions up to this year, has never received anything but, "support and counsel" from members of the Civil Service. Mr. Clarke, even this year, has had nothing to complain of. Mr. Forlong, up to this year, "had received in every instance both friendly advice and aid from a Magistrate that his official position warranted him in giving." Mr. de Dombal had only to complain of the conduct of one Deputy Magistrate. His explanation was attended to, and since that time he has had "no cause of complaint." Other planters have not had any but the most trifling cases for some years. Putting, for the moment, the past season out of the question, there is no evidence to show in what the alleged dislike on the part of Magistrates to planters consists, or by what course of policy, series of acts, or orders unfavorable to indigo, it has ever been manifested.

116. As regards the usual course of action taken by the executive authorities and by the police in disputes arising between planters and ryots, we have diligently perused the papers bearing on this point in the Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal (No. 33) Part I, pages 140 to 207.

117. The style of order which is held to be unfavorable to the planters, and which they object to as showing a regard for the protection of the ryot, and excluding any consideration of the contract he may have entered into, is best illustrated by the following proceeding of the Hon'ble Ashley Eden, the Magistrate of Baraset. The orders we allude to are the following: "Since the ryots can sow on their lands whatever crop they like, no one can without their consent and by violence sow any other crop; ordered therefore, that the original petition be sent to the Deputy Magistrate of Mitterhaut, in order that he may send policemen to the ryots' land to prevent any disturbances that are likely to ensue from any compulsory cultivation of their lands, and instruct them that, if the land is really that of the ryots, not to allow any one to interfere with it. *If the ryots wish to sow indigo or anything else, the policemen will see that there is no disturbance.*"

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118. Now these orders are strictly in accordance with the law, which never intended that an executive authority, Magistrate or Darogah, should prematurely decide on the fact of a contract; they were approved of by the Lieutenant Governor; and inasmuch as they were the subject of much comment at the time, and were considered unusual, we must naturally infer that contrary orders, more favorable to the planters, had usually been issued by other Magistrates; the more so as we find that an able and experienced Commissioner, Mr. Grote, had disapproved of the above order, and had amended it by the introduction of a provision to the effect that, it was not the intention of the order "that police protection should be given to such ryots as had entered into engagements with the factory, and were now on any pretext, holding back from their performance." If this has been the practice, as we understand and believe it to have been; if the planter in any part of the country (page 188) was in the habit of sending his own people with indigo seed to see that the ryot performed his part of the contract; and if any ryot who held back on pleas not examined into, nor capable of examination, was not deemed entitled to "police protection," (page 189,) we do not see how such a practice and such orders could ever have been thought unfavorable to the interests of the planters. And, on this showing, namely, that the order of the Joint Magistrate of Baraset, though strictly legal, was of a novel kind, and not in accordance with the usual practice, it is impossible for us to pronounce that any unfairness or ill-will to planters was habitually shown by the authorities; on the contrary, their practice, as shown above, was favorable to the planters and hardly fair to the ryot.

119. So far from the charge of discountenancing and disliking the planters being true, we believe the facts to be that Magistrates have not been sufficiently alive to the position of the ryots, and have not accorded to them a due share of protection and support. It is not too much to say, that had all Magistrates held the scales in even balance, a cultivation of the character which we have clearly shown indigo to be would not have gone on for such a length of time. The real truth we take to be that, if anything, the bias of the English Magistrate has been unconsciously towards his countrymen, whom he has asked to his own table, or met in the hunting field, or whose houses he has personally visited. In any case, the supporters of a system which, with such defects, has been allowed to go on so long under the eyes of the authorities, have hardly a right to complain of unfair treatment.

120. We come now to the last point of our inquiry under the first great head, *viz*, the conduct of the Missionaries and the crisis of the past season. A great deal of indignation has been evinced at Reverend gentlemen, whose errand is to proclaim peace and good will, taking on themselves the character of political agitators; certainly, if to express dislike of what they deem oppression, when forced on their notice, and to stand up for the rights of those who have had no tongue to plead for them, be to carry on agitation, the Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society have done this. But, in so doing, they had no private interests to advance, and no political object to gain, except the contentment and well-being of the agricultural population; objects which, if political, any man, however sacred his calling, may fairly exert himself to forward.

121. That ryots should ask these gentlemen for advice or even assistance, is, in our opinion, perfectly natural. They, the Missionaries, are thoroughly conversant with the languages. They mix freely with the people. They hold converse with them on their highest interests, and they are not distracted, like other Europeans are seen to be, by the accumulation of business, by the speculations of commerce, or by the pursuit of trade. It would have been ungenerous and even unmanly for Mr. Blumhardt and his colleagues to turn a deaf ear to the complaints of such ryots, especially when these very complaints appeared to them to form some hindrance to the attainment of the avowed objects of the Missionary calling.

122. We have, too, the distinct denial of these Reverend gentlemen, that they have, by words or deeds, added any fuel to the excitement. On the con-

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A. trary they have advised the ryots to obey the laws, to commit no illegalities, to
 783 sow indigo this year, and, if oppressed, to appeal to the higher authorities.
 1007 What more Christian or straightforward course could have been taken by men
 1644 in their situation, it is not easy to conceive. Indeed, the assertion that the
 refusal of the ryots to sow indigo has been produced by the preaching of
 Missionaries, is one entirely without foundation of truth.

123. From the foregoing remarks, as well as from our study of the rela-
 tions between ryot and planter, we have come to the deliberate conclusion that
 the late extensive refusal to sow, manifested by ryots in Nuddea and in
 other districts, might have been manifested at any time, on any opportunity.
 There was every element ripe and ready for such an outburst of popular
 feeling. The cultivation was virtually compulsory, in that no ryot could
 get free. The ryots, denied the opportunity of benefitting to the fullest
 extent by the generally increasing prosperity, suddenly discover that ideas
 spread abroad, that Government had a direct interest in the manufacture of
 A. 1413 indigo, are unfounded; that it is quite optional with any man to take advan-
 2525 ces or to refuse them; that they are free agents; that no more force
 3533 is to be used; and that in these respects the Government had decided to give
 them fair support. We must not be surprised if they proceed at once
 to act upon this discovery; nor is there anything to be wondered at if in
 their anxiety to complete their social freedom, they should sometimes have
 extracted that part of the orders and notifications which best suited their
 A. purpose, or sometimes wilfully misapprehended and misinterpreted their
 2823 intent altogether, or even if they have exhibited a spirit of resistance, a de-
 termination, and a power to act together, in contrast to their previous
 condition of apathy and inability to help themselves.

124. Nor again have we any reason to believe that the discontent was ge-
 nerally fostered either by zemindars themselves resident on the spot, or by emis-
 saries from Calcutta. Mr. Forlong thought, certainly, that his difficulties had
 A. 2835 been aggravated by two zemindars, but their influence was purely local; and
 Brindabun Sircar is said to have offered opposition. Several zemindars, however,
 have denied having instigated the ryots; one or two have suffered slightly them-
 selves in the same way as the planters. Haranath Rai, of Nurrail in Jessore,
 A. has given such orders to his local agents, as would lessen and not increase
 3118 the difficulties of the factories. Mr. Hills assures us that he had
 friendly assistance tendered by two zemindars to whom he applied, one of whom
 was the said Haranath Rai. And we are of opinion that all zemindars are
 A. much too fearful of any general combination of ryots, as well as too jealous
 1645 of any signs of independence as likely to affect themselves, to have given
 any secret impulse or instigation to the peasantry.

A. 125. The Editor of the "Hindoo Patriot", who has naturally taken a
 3879 great interest in the crisis, has emphatically denied before us the truth
 of a rumour which charged him with having sent emissaries into the
 districts: and the British Indian Association repudiates any connection with
mooktyars or legal agents, who took up the ryots' cases under Act XI of
 this year, and gave them legal advice.

126. But these agents, some of whom did proceed to Nuddea to take up
 cases on behalf of the ryots, acted in a perfectly legal, open, and fair way,
 and are a very different class of persons from the supposed agents of
 sedition.

A. 127. The strongest point of all against the existence of emissaries is,
 2821 that no formal complaints against any individuals designated as such, were ever
 3071 brought to the notice of any of the officials of Nuddea. No planter could
 tell us the name of a single emissary supposed to have come from Calcutta.
 A. Once Mr. Larmour had heard that a person had come thence and had lived
 2175 in one of his villages, but the information was vague, and the name of this
 person, Ramdhun Biswas, has only been ascertained by Mr. Larmour, since he
 gave his deposition. A person named Mohesh Chatterjee, a man of some pro-
 perty, taxed with giving evil advice, proved to us that he had been down in

Calcutta from March to July. In fact there is no real evidence to show that the
 A. ryots were acting at the bidding of stronger and more influential parties, or that
 3072 they had combined together *in villages*, as they certainly did combine, under
 2831 the guidance of any but the head ryots of each place, or with any ulterior
 2832 political object than that of vindicating their own rights. It is quite true
 however, that men of one village went to another village, keeping up the
 general excitement.

128. The village chowkidars no doubt sympathised with the movement :
 but these watchmen are not part of the regularly organized police. They
 are men of the same class and pursuits as the ryots, and such sympathy
 would be quite natural. In the opinion of the officials of Nuddea there was
 A. no general bias against indigo planting visible in the conduct of the Darogahs.
 3073 The Joint Magistrate of Damurhuda was not quite satisfied with their conduct,
 as inconsistent, but the Magistrate had occasion to punish Darogahs in-
 differently for favoring one party or the other.

129. The Magistrates appear to us to have spared no personal exer-
 tions in the performance of their duties, and in the preservation of order. If
 their efforts during the sowing season were not crowned with complete suc-
 cess, allowance must be made for the changes which took place in the office of
 chief Magistrate during the end of the last and the commencement of this
 year, and for the arrival in February of an officer entirely new to the district,
 at the time when the difficulties were daily increasing and when the ryots were
 in a state of excitement. If these ryots rejoiced in new ideas of their position
 and rights, or in some cases acted under a sense of irritation or without fore-
 thought, this was just what might have been expected from an intelligent
 and excitable population suddenly roused from torpor to think and act for
 themselves.

130. In our opinion it is extremely unreasonable to attribute the sudden
 failure of an unsound system, which had grown up silently for years, to the
 officials or Missionaries who told the people that they were free agents. If it
 could be said with truth that greased cartridges were only the proximate cause of
 a rebellion which had been silently gathering for years, it may be said with
 even more truth that written or spoken words widely circulated, and only point-
 ing out to the ryot what was perfectly correct in all essentials, namely, that it was
 optional with them to take advances or to refuse them, to sow indigo or not to sow
 it, were only the proximate cause of the extensive refusal to cultivate during
 this season.

131. Besides, the dislike to this particular kind of cultivation was so
 strongly manifested, and appeared to be so deeply seated, that we could not mis-
 take the reality of the feeling. It is not easy to possess those who have not
 witnessed the demeanour, and heard the language of the ryot, as we have
 done, with a just appreciation of this intense dislike. Ryots of different Con-
 cerns, at miles distance from each other, have expressed to us the same
 idea in language, clear, emphatic, and pointed, and striking as coming from
 the mouths of persons in their rank of life, namely, that indigo and its
 attendant evils had been the bane of their lives. But we must observe
 that in no instance did we hear a single expression betokening ill-will
 to the authorities or to the Government of the country, nor, except as connec-
 ted with the grievances of which they were actually complaining, did we
 trace any feeling of hatred against European planters either as a body or
 as individuals. The crisis, which unhappily has overtaken the planters
 in 1860, was one, we may pronounce emphatically, which might have arisen
 in any one other year.

132. We have been thus particular in explaining our views as to the late
 crisis, because we have had every opportunity of forming a fair judgment, and
 because undue comments have been made on the conduct of others therewith
 connected, and much misapprehension is prevalent. Our object henceforth is,
 to see what we can suggest in the way of anticipating such a crisis in the dis-
 tricts where indigo is still being cultivated without a change, or of re-establish-