

A. wondered that, for the gratification of that object, they should exact a high price. This is the law of buying and selling all over the world.

2570 55. On the whole, then, we cannot subscribe to the opinion that there is anything in the conduct of native zemindars which evinces hostility to the cultivation of indigo, or which places a bar to the investment of European capital. And the tenure of *putni*, so often purchased by Englishmen, has lately been rendered more secure. Formerly they were liable to be cancelled on the sale of the superior or zemindary tenure for arrears of revenue. Now, they can be registered under Act XI of 1859. For all purposes of power and influence over ryots, and security of cultivation, the *putni* tenure can be made equal to that of the zemindar or talookdar, whose connection with the estates ceases whenever a *putni* has been created.

56. As regards the next two heads of this part of our enquiry, *viz.*, the case between the planter and the ryot, and the oppressions which the former is said to practise, it is obvious that in this lies the gist of our inquiry, and our remarks on this part of our subject must occupy some space.

57. We have endeavoured to find out how, exactly, advances were first taken by the ryot, but without much success, because most of the witnesses of that station in life who appeared before us, instead of throwing any light on this point, have generally maintained that the original advances were first given many years ago, in their youth, or that they were taken by their father or grandfather. From the evidence of the planters, however, as well as from that of others, we are led to conclude that advances being offered at a season of the year when the ryot is in want of money for rent and for the annual festival of Doorga, they are in some instances willingly and even greedily accepted; some men are in debt; others want to spend money; and *all* like money without interest. Still, as it is asserted by ryots, and admitted by planters, that many of the ryots are not allowed to clear their account and are as it were hereditary cultivators, working *under* old advances, and that the practical effect of the system is "that the son sows because he believes that he is responsible for his father's debt," we are fairly warranted in concluding that cases of advances, given for the first time to fresh parties, are, of late years, not very numerous in any part of the country. We have reason to think that the son, when he succeeds to the *jumma* of the father, and becomes liable for his father's debts, conceives the impression that he is also liable for his father's engagements, and so is persuaded into continuing the cultivation.

A. 674  
3001 58. We are far from drawing the sweeping conclusion that all advances are, or have been, necessarily made under strong compulsion. To ryots of estates not held by the planter, of whom in some large Concerns there are a considerable number, it is obvious that strong compulsion could not be applied without producing disturbances; and in such case the ryots were probably willing at first to receive advances in cash; or persuasion or the influence of the zemindar, if friendly, were doubtless the means applied.

A. 493  
504 59. The planters all urge that strict supervision over each successive agricultural operation is rendered necessary by the indolence, supineness, procrastination, and faithless character of the Bengali; that the European manager or assistant must occasionally visit the lands, and that the factory servants must be regularly deputed to see that the ryot ploughs, sows, weeds and cuts at the proper dates. With all this, they affirm that this supervision is not carried to an extent calculated seriously to harass the cultivator, and that the same kind of watchfulness and care are exercised, though in a less degree, by the *mahajan* who advances money on the security of the ryot's rice crop, and by the officers of Government in regard to the cultivation of the poppy. The ryots who appeared before us, on the other hand, are loud in denouncing the above supervision as harassing and vexatious. They say that they are required again and again to plough, to crush the clods, to remove stalks, to smooth the ground, to sow at the precise moment which the planter may dictate, until neither their time nor

their labour can be called their own; their rice grounds are left untilled or only half tilled; and they are subjected to such constant annoyances, indignities and oppression, while their bundles of plant are unfairly or hurriedly measured, that they have learned to hate the very name of indigo. For confirmation of the above remarks, we have only to solicit His Honor's attention to the evidence on both sides, which, on this head, is too copious to detail.\*

60. We believe that one explanation of these contradictory statements, and the main point which it is necessary to keep in view from this time forward, is, that the cultivation of indigo is *not* profitable to the ryot on the terms heretofore existing. Without anticipating our conclusions on the just and fitting relation between ryot and planter, we think it absolutely essential, for a right understanding of the whole subject, at this stage of our report, to draw His Honor's special attention to this fact; and that it is a fact not to be disputed or questioned, we shall now show, not from the evidence of exasperated ryots relating their grievances, or from that of the gentlemen who have testified in their behalf, but from the admissions of the planters themselves, or of those who have spoken somewhat on this side of the question.

61. It is admitted, then, by one planter, Mr. J. P. Wise, (A 30), "that the ryot takes very little interest in his indigo crop," and presently by the same witness (A 120) "that indigo at present is not so profitable to ryots as other crops;" by a gentleman who has had experience as a Magistrate of a large indigo district, that the crop is unproductive, and that "hitherto the planter has taken upon himself too little of the risk, and left too much of the risk with the ryot" (A 273); by an old planter of large experience that "the risk is, no doubt, with the ryot" (A 372), and (A 374) that "the ryot, generally speaking, does not produce enough to cover his advances;" by a gentleman who was a planter formerly, "that the cultivation is not popular because it is not profitable, and the ryot has to bear the whole brunt of the risk" (A 513); by another gentleman, that *nij* is more profitable to a planter than "dissatisfied ryots, who give a great deal of trouble, and cost a great deal of money;" by a gentleman who has a large *nij* cultivation, "that even were a beegah of indigo to pay better than a beegah of rice, the ryot would give a preference to the rice" (1,453); by Mr. Larmour, "that indigo may not be profitable or popular in some places," (2,161); by Mr. Clarke, that the ryot "will sow a small quantity to please his zemindar, although he may not gain much profit by it," (3,443); and, generally, by planters and by zemindars of experience in *ryotti* cultivation, that the cultivation is not directly remunerative to the ryot; but it is pleaded that this is to be attributed mainly to bad seasons, high prices, and the precariousness of the crop. In mitigation of this charge, too, it is urged, that it has still been found comparatively easy to satisfy the ryot, and to keep him contented and faithful to his engagements, by the grant of what have been termed collateral advantages; and that even with the above disadvantages, several ryots, working honestly and faithfully, have cleared their advances, and received large payments in excess. This last averment is quite true, but it is also true that by the practice of the factories, some ryots who might have cleared themselves are nevertheless kept in debt, because it would seem, when their delivery of indigo would suffice to clear their balance, the planter prefers to pay fresh cash to the ryot for the indigo, and retain the old balance against him. With the favorable exceptions, the fact remains of the greater number of ryots being in balance, and sometimes in heavy balances in all the large Concerns of which we are qualified to speak, and of their having been so for years; in other words, the fact of their having repeatedly grown plant without profit, under a supervision which planters themselves avow to be requisite, and which the ryots declare to be vexatious,

\*NOTE.—Appendix No. 1, Evidence of Ryots, *passim*.