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MARITIME COMMERCE OF BRITISH INDIA.

It is impossible for any person, who has examined the arguments employed by those who advocate the abolition of the few remaining privileges of the East-India Company, not to have been disgusted with the spirit of selfish injustice in which they are urged. The declaimers at Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Bristol, seem really to imagine that the people of India were created solely for their advantage; that those who are entrusted with the administration of our eastern empire are bound to rule it in complete subservience to their views; that the activity or depression of our cotton and woollen manufactures, and the prosperity or decline of our shipping interests, are the infallible criteria of the wisdom or folly of their government. It is amusing, on the occasion of such exhibitions of ignorance or cupidity, or of both, to note the professions of disinterested generosity with which they are introduced: "I trust, sir, that a British parliament will never think of governing India solely with a view to its own advantage;"—"God forbid that I should advocate any measures likely to affect the happiness and prosperity of the countless population which the inscrutable decrees of Providence have subjected to our yoke." Such is the parade of hypocritical philanthropy by which attacks on the system of the East-India Company, and the true interests of their subjects, are usually prefaced. Scarcely, however, has the languid applause excited by the exordium of the harangue died upon the ear, before we find that the "blessings of civilization"—"the cultivation of the arts of peace"—"the consolations of religion," are, in the vocabulary of the patriotic speaker, mere synonimes for the more extended use of British cotton and woollen goods, the employment of a few more spinning jennies, the rise of freights, or the revival of the peculiar branch of domestic industry in which he may happen to be engaged. Now, though we heartily despise the contemptible cant which dictates effusions of this description, we have no objection, particularly in the present distressed state of the country, to a manly and open avowal on the part of the merchants, manufacturers, and ship-owners of this country, of their desire to have every opportunity of commercial intercourse with Asia fully and fairly thrown open to them. All we ask is, that, before their request be complied with, they condescend to consult other interests besides their own, and to inquire, ere they reproach the East-India Company, how far the proposed innovations may consist with the prosperity of our Indian empire. Undoubtedly, as subjects of the English Crown, the Directors of the Company are bound to use every *honest* exertion to render our Indian possessions of advantage to this country; but they are held by a much higher obligation to rule India in justice to its inhabitants, and to esteem the promotion of *their* happiness and welfare as superior to all other considerations. Supposing, therefore, for the sake of argument, that the admission of British merchants to the trade with China and the traffic in tea were demonstrated to be measures not only attended with no danger, but highly conducive to the advancement of British commerce, it would still remain to be proved that the proposed change would be productive of good

to India, before the Directors of the East-India Company would be justified in consenting to its adoption. In their capacity of sovereigns, they have the same duties to perform as the legislative bodies of England, of France, and of the Netherlands. They cannot destroy vested interests, they cannot depress thriving manufactures, they cannot consign all those, the value of whose property depends on the maintenance of the present system, to bankruptcy and ruin, merely to afford additional facilities to British commerce, without gross and flagrant injustice. It was the boast of Mr. Canning that, wishing well to all mankind, and by no means envying the prosperity of other states, the chief object of his policy was the interest of England. That sentiment was worthy of the great man who uttered it, and is indeed the true motto of a British statesman; but it would come with an ill grace from the Directors of the East-India Company, who are bound by every consideration of justice and of honour to prefer (should they chance to clash) the interests of India to the interests of England.

We have been led to this reflection, the abstract justice of which, we believe, few men of right principle will venture to deny, by an inquiry into the probable effects on our Indian dominions of any further relaxation of the restrictions on British commerce with Asia. The direct trade to India is, to all intents and purposes, free; the coasting trade of India is also free; the circuitous-trade acts have removed all fetters from the intercourse between India and Europe; nor is there any restraint on the commerce with the islands of the eastern Archipelago but the prohibition to touch at Canton and of all traffic in the article of tea. It is supposed that, by removing these prohibitions, a great demand for British manufactures would be created, and that an immense export of goods from England would be repaid by large returns of the produce of China and of the Eastern islands. In confirmation of these expectations, the great increase of trade at Singapore is referred to; and it is argued that, if there be any impediment to the direct intercourse of British merchants with the Chinese at Canton, the teas may be brought by the junks to some free port, and there exchanged for the commodities of Europe. Now, all this seems at first sight extremely plausible, and consistent with the most enlightened theories of trade and the soundest principles of political economy. To a certain extent, also, it obviates those objections urged against the participation of private merchants in the tea-trade, which are founded on the known jealousy entertained of foreigners by the Chinese. Singapore, Banjar Massin, or whatever port might be selected, would thus, no doubt, in course of time, be raised to great opulence; and if no interests were to be consulted but those of cotton and woollen manufacturers, and of persons who are content to drink bad tea cheap, it might be admitted to be a plan not altogether unworthy of adoption. Unfortunately, however, there are certain ports, beyond the Cape of Good Hope, on the prosperity of which immense multitudes of human beings depend, of which the rapid rise into mercantile and political importance has no parallel either in the old or the new world, and which the contemplated scheme of direct intercourse between England and China has an inevitable tendency to destroy. If the inhabitants of

these vast emporia of European traffic, and of the territories which surround them, were the subjects of the emperor of Japan, or of the Great Mogul, the Directors of the East-India Company would have contracted no relation with them which should prevent, on the principle avowed by Mr. Canning, the consultation of British interests as the primary and paramount object of their policy. But the population of these great cities, and of the provinces of which they are the capitals, are British subjects, who claim, in return for the cheerful and willing obedience which they pay to the King's representatives in India, a fair and full protection of their interests. Among them, as in Liverpool, and Bristol, and Manchester, may be found great merchants, and manufacturers, and ship-owners, many of whom have invested large capitals in their respective trades, in full reliance on the consistency and liberality of British policy. Living in a style of princely splendour and luxury themselves, these merchants are the purveyors of all the comforts and accommodations of European life to a wealthy landed aristocracy in the surrounding country. Subordinate to them are innumerable shopkeepers, tradesmen, and artizans, and a laborious contented peasantry, who look for the reward of their industry and frugality to the prosperity of the principal settlements. Why should Calcutta be sacrificed to Liverpool, or Bombay to Glasgow, or Madras to Bristol, or Dacca to Manchester, or Benares to Leeds? Bishop Heber tells us that the wealthy natives of India have their houses decorated with Corinthian pillars and filled with English furniture; that in Calcutta they drive the best horses and the most dashing equipages. We learn from Mr. Rickards, that many of them speak English fluently, and are well read in English literature. If we take up a file of Indian newspapers, we find, in the advertisements and reports of meetings, associations, and societies, at least as much evidence of taste, of knowledge, and refinement, and above all, of native gratitude to their rulers, as can be met with in the journals of provincial communities in England and Ireland. These are all symptoms of an extensive and lucrative trade, imparting its beneficial effects to all ranks of life, invigorating domestic industry, encouraging foreign adventure, improving the manners and understandings of those by whom its advantages are enjoyed, and tending more surely to the civilization of the people of India, and the permanence of British power and influence over them, than any measures which the advocates of unrestricted intercourse and colonization have hitherto been able to suggest. We know very well that these proofs of the increasing prosperity of the three presidencies, and of the territories in more immediate contiguity with them, are adduced by the writers whom we have cited as illustrations of the good effects produced by the relaxation of the Company's charter on the occasion of its last renewal. Nothing is further from our wish than to depreciate the consequences which have resulted from a measure which, however questionable at the time when it was first proposed, and over-valued now, has unquestionably been the source of considerable benefit to the maritime commerce of India; but he must, indeed, be ignorant of the condition of our eastern empire, who looks upon the simple permission of private trade, in 1813, as the only cause of its rapid

and wonderful improvement. The mere import of our cottons, and woollens, and hardware, into Bombay and Calcutta, might gratify the natives with a sight of English fabrics, but would not enable them to buy them. If the relations of India were confined to England, there would be no English furniture and dashing equipages to grace the native establishments at Calcutta. A very cursory glance at the returns of British exports and imports at the three presidencies will suffice to shew that, if the commercial circle were not completed by the intervention of other countries, if a valuable and extensive trade of transit did not centre at our principal settlements, the industry of India must soon be paralysed by the disappearance of the symbols of value, and the exports from England decline as the ordinary consequence of the drain. We must look, then, to the influence of other causes besides those to which the prosperity of British India, and more particularly of our old provinces, is usually attributed; and when we have discovered them, we shall find that, although the introduction of European manufactures may, in some degree, have stimulated and assisted a commerce already adult and vigorous, the great increase of our exports since 1813 has rather been the consequence, than the cause, of successful industry in other directions.

Mr. Sykes, in presenting a petition from certain ship-owners of Whitby or Hull, on the 3d of April, is reported to have said, that he looked for relief to the shipping interests of this country to the alterations which he trusted would be made in the East-India Company's charter; and that he and his constituents would be grievously disappointed if, upon the renewal of that charter, the British seaman should be prevented from going to any port of India or China to which the sailors or shipping of any other nation were permitted to go. Now, that the ship-owners of Hull or Whitby, in the present state of limited information respecting the commerce of Asia, should entertain these expectations, does not strike us to be at all extraordinary. It is very natural for them to imagine, that nothing more is required but the repeal of a few clauses in the Company's charter to produce an immense demand upon their dock-yards, and to restore all the crazy vessels which have survived the decline of their northern fisheries to their former value. It never occurs to these petitioners, that there are ship-owners in Asia as well as in Europe; that the game of competition is one at which two parties, at least, must play; and that a ship can be constructed by better builders, of better timber, at Bombay or Calcutta, than here, and delivered just as cheap in the Thames or the Humber, as from any of the dock-yards of Great Britain. It is possible that the admission of the unemployed tonnage of this country to the China trade might produce a temporary activity at Liverpool, Bristol, and Hull, and a temporary activity,—the result of ignorance and delusion,—is probably all that the most clamorous of the malcontents at those places expect or desire; but that the stimulus would fail on the first news of their arrival in the Eastern Archipelago, or at any of the three presidences, we entertain no sort of doubt. Their owners would very soon be informed, that the carrying trade of that part of the world is as fully and as well supplied with ships as the carrying trade of

Europe; and that, of the two, it is much more probable that the teak, saul, and sissoo vessels of India should eventually supersede those of British oak, than that the latter should triumph over all competitors in the Indian seas. It is very well known, that some of the finest vessels in the British navy were built in India, and that the materials, which the forests in our vast territories afford, exceed in durability, and every other desirable quality, the best timber grown in England.

We question, indeed, if the government of any country, either in ancient or modern times, could adduce so wonderful an illustration of the good effects of its measures on the prosperity of the people acknowledging its rule, as is afforded by the history of the ship-building business in India; and we are quite sure that there is no record of mischievous interference which could be compared, in point of folly and injustice, to the ill-advised liberality which would be evinced by the Directors of the East-India Company, if they became accessaries to the competition between British and Anglo-Indian shipping contemplated by Mr. Sykes and his constituents.

"Bengal," says Mr. Lambert, in his account of the commerce of that part of our dominions, "was formerly under the necessity of prosecuting her maritime trade on ships built in foreign ports. Before these provinces fell under the dominion of Great Britain, the natives never attempted marine expeditions, and prior to the year 1780, we have not heard of any effort made by Europeans to construct ships in Bengal for the purposes of commerce. Two small snows, the Minerva and Amazon, were indeed built at Calcutta for the Company previous to this period, but it does not appear that this example operated as an incentive to others. The country trade of Bengal was then supplied with shipping from the ports of Surat, Bombay, Damaun, Pegue, and by occasional purchases of foreign Europe ships; and if any considerable repairs were wanted, the ships were obliged to proceed to those ports to have them effected. A very calamitous event gave rise to ship-building in Bengal, the famine produced in the Carnatic by Hyder Ali's invasion in the year 1780. The extraordinary and pressing demand thereby created for tonnage for the transport of grain and supplies of troops and stores to our settlements on the coast of Coromandel, raised the price of freights to such an enormous height as roused the attention of every person in the remotest degree connected with commerce, to share in this profitable traffic. Ships not being procurable from other quarters in any proportion to the demand, individuals then began to turn their attention to the construction of ships in Bengal, and this noble and useful art has been ever since pursued with so much vigour, that Bengal, instead of depending on other countries, as formerly, for the means of conveying her produce to foreign parts, now supplies not only shipping for her own commerce but for sale to foreigners; and ship-building has become a very considerable branch of home manufactures. The first attempts, except those already mentioned, were made in the Sunderbunds at Chittagong and at Sylhet: but the vessels then built at these places being hastily run up on the spur of the occasion, composed of green timbers and bad materials, and unskilfully constructed, fell quickly into decay, and for many years created a strong prejudice against Bengal ships. Ship-building is now almost entirely confined to Calcutta, where ships are at present built of all burthens, equal in point of construction, workmanship, and durability, to any class of merchant-ships in Europe, and superior to most."

The work from which this extract is taken, was published about twenty-five years ago; and the following account of the quantity of tonnage annually employed in the country-trade between the different ports of British India and Canton, from 1808-9 to 1826-27, inclusive, will give our readers some idea of the extent which the ship-building business of India has since attained:

Years.	Calcutta. Tons.	Madras. Tons.	Bombay. Tons.	Total. Tons.
1808-9	8,598	2,352	24,991	35,941
1809-10	6,683	1,200	12,934	20,817
1810-11	5,605	3,693	12,827	22,125
1811-12	7,466	80	17,789	25,335
1812-13	3,146	5,550	13,692	22,388
1813-14	13,198	5,789	10,572	29,559
1814-15	13,298	725	10,811	24,834
1815-16	13,068	4,800	17,070	34,938
1816-17	16,519	4,671	18,022	39,212
1817-18	17,762	2,400	17,310	37,472
1818-19	16,128	2,767	20,850	39,745
1819-20	10,141	2,532	16,813	29,486
1820-21	18,360	5,375	8,476	32,211
1821-22	14,323	2,532	20,016	36,871
1822-23	12,314	4,107	19,862	36,283
1823-24	10,763	2,564	15,419	28,836
1824-25	14,962	4,054	18,854	37,870
1825-26	8,715	3,912	17,383	30,010
1826-27	21,724	667	26,722	49,113

From this account it will be at once perceived, not only that interests exist in India, at least as worthy of consideration as the shipping interests of Great Britain, but that the petitioners of Whitby and of Hull are likely to meet with more formidable competitors on the other side of the Cape of Good Hope than they seem to imagine. That they may be enabled, however, to form a correct estimate of the real value of the advantages of which they represent the Americans to have been so long in possession, to their (the petitioners') prejudice, it may be useful to set before their eyes the extent to which that nation has profited of the privileges which it has enjoyed in India ever since the year 1795, when, as we have already seen, the ship-building business of Calcutta had not existed above fifteen years. It appears, from an account to be found among the papers presented in the course of last session to Parliament, that the competition of the Americans with the country traders in the coasting trade of India has been so unsuccessful, that the average amount of tons employed in it during the ten years ending in 1827 was only 542; and the following statement, taken from the records of the British consulate-general at Washington, shows, not only that the American tonnage beyond the Cape of Good Hope has considerably decreased during the last fifteen years, but that since 1818 it has never once reached, and is now scarcely a third of, the amount of the English country trade to China alone:

American Tonnage beyond the Cape of Good Hope in each Year from 1813 to 1828.

Years.	Tons.	Years.	Tons.	Years.	Tons.
1814	1,995	1819	23,249	1824	20,724
1815	23,650	1820	25,098	1825	27,322
1816	35,253	1821	25,905	1826	19,070
1817	39,169	1822	23,714	1827	17,078
1818	36,586	1823	24,459	1828	14,112

This account is well worthy of the serious consideration of the landed and shipping interests of Great Britain. Let them beware how they reduce the rate of freights in Asia, and compel those who have embarked large capitals in country shipping, and the ship-building business of India, to indemnify themselves for the loss of their own proper sphere of industry by adventuring in the carrying trade of Europe and the coasting trade of Great Britain. It is possible that, in the early stages of the competition thus contemplated by Mr. Sykes and his constituents, British energy, and enterprize, and capital, might prevail; but it must not be forgotten, that they would have to wrestle with the influence of long-established connexions, with much experience, and no small degree of intelligence and activity; and it is more than probable that the result would be the serious loss, if not complete ruin, of the existing race of ship-owners both in England and in India, and the ultimate transfer of a large proportion of the ship-building business of the British empire to Calcutta and Bombay.

But what is the nature of the commerce which furnishes employment to so large an amount of tonnage, and what are its effects on the condition of our Indian dominions? Of the large quantity of British manufactures annually exported to India, the greater part is consumed by the European and native residents at the three presidencies. The surplus is sold, in Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay, to the merchants, and by them shipped on board the country traders for the minor ports along the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, the Eastern Archipelago, and the Persian and Arabian Gulfs. It is impossible to ascertain exactly the quantity or value of European goods which are thus annually transferred from the warehouses of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, to the country ships, because the official returns notice only the gross amount of piece goods, without descending into details of British or Indian manufacture. The proportion of manufactured goods to raw produce, in the exports from India to other parts of Asia, is probably regulated by the use which the free-traders may have made of their newly acquired privileges in the preceding year. Of British goods, since the opening of the private trade, the supply has always very much exceeded the Indian demand; but in some years the indiscretion of the private merchants has produced a perfect glut, and the manufactures of England have often been purchased much cheaper at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, than they could be procured at Leeds, Birmingham, or Manchester. When this occurs, the native merchant steps in, and purchasing the goods at less than prime cost, waits a favourable opportunity of conveying them to other ports of Asia, where they are sold often profitably *to him*, but

at a price which would not remunerate the original importer. That the Asiatic trade of India, and particularly what is called the Malay trade, thus acts as a vent for the surplus imports of British manufactures into India, might be suspected from a mere inspection of the following return of exports and imports between the three presidencies and the eastern islands; and an examination into the nature and quality of the goods will establish the fact.

	Imported into India.			Exported from India.		
	Merchandise.	Treasure.	Total.	Merchandise.	Treasure.	Total.
	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.	Rupees.
1814-15	47,20,381	22,83,038	70,03,419	75,89,723	6,84,166	82,73,889
1815-16	49,89,535	22,21,379	72,10,914	73,66,091	97,265	74,63,356
1816-17	49,10,977	44,06,675	93,17,652	62,97,274	34,157	63,31,431
1817-18	36,97,502	50,86,482	87,83,984	76,12,214	96,766	77,08,980
1818-19	38,52,667	44,16,203	82,68,870	53,97,443	75,962	54,73,135
1819-20	23,57,594	54,15,375	77,72,969	61,71,066	1,92,017	63,63,083
1820-21	34,08,285	46,58,368	80,66,653	86,31,534	6,57,062	92,88,596
1821-22	38,17,259	42,84,731	81,01,990	1,11,18,071	8,82,238	1,20,00,309
1822-23	33,20,259	48,73,240	81,93,499	1,08,54,843	1,32,189	1,09,87,032
1823-24	45,37,242	30,19,204	75,56,466	93,43,665	9,30,344	1,02,74,009
1824-25	44,53,421	25,92,831	70,46,252	76,19,562	38,650	76,58,212
1825-26	29,03,705	21,53,327	50,84,032	60,78,320	61,233	61,39,553
1826-27	30,15,270	82,19,610	1,12,34,880	44,14,534	2,17,600	46,32,134

Previously to the opening of the private trade in 1814, the total value of exports from the three presidencies to all parts of Asia east of Prince of Wales' Island had never exceeded 80,00,000 rupees; and we see that the exports to the islands of the eastern Archpelago alone, since 1815, have not fallen much below, and have sometimes greatly exceeded, that amount. We know that the eastern islands have no manufactures of their own, and that this circumstance is the cause of a very material difference in the character of the exports from India thither, and those from India to the Chinese empire. Mr. Crawfurd, in his *History of the Indian Archipelago*, tells us that chintzes, printed cottons, white cottons, cambrics, handkerchiefs, velvets, woollen and iron manufactures, plated-ware, glass and earthen ware, are in great demand in the islands. On looking over the reports of external commerce from Bengal, Fort St. George, and Bombay, we find the statements of Mr. Crawfurd confirmed: from which, however, we draw conclusions very unlike those at which that gentleman would wish us to arrive. From these reports it would seem that the 1st, and greatest export from India to these islands is of cotton piece goods; 2nd, opium; 3rd, wine and spirits; 4th, cotton, and cotton yarn; 5th, sundries (Europe); 6th, iron and steel; 7th, wearing apparel, haberdashery, hosiery, perfumery; 8th, braziery, ironmongery; 9th, cutlery and hardware; 10th, glass and earthenware; 11th, carriages and sadlery. The returns for this export of Indian produce and British manufactures, consist partly of the productions of the islands (some of which are well suited to the Indian markets, particularly

in the Marhatta states), but principally of gold and silver. The great influx of treasure into the three presidencies, through the channel of this traffic, alleviates what would otherwise be the intolerable pressure of an unfavourable balance against India on the English trade, infuses vigour and activity into agricultural and manufacturing pursuits, and occasions all those appearances of prosperity which result from an abundant circulation of the precious metals among a thrifty and industrious people. We, therefore, on the part of the Directors of the East India Company, object to Mr. Crawfurd's and Mr. Whitmore's scheme of erecting Singapore or Banjar-Massin into emporia for Asiatic commerce with England, that it tends directly to the destruction of the valuable traffic now carried on between the three presidencies and the eastern Archipelago, and, by the certain diminution of the means of our Indian subjects, to repress their own domestic industry, and restrict the consumption of British goods in India. The immediate effect of such a measure would be to ruin many wealthy European and native houses of business at Bombay and Calcutta, by diverting the transit trade, which they now carry on, to some little island in the southern seas. The eastern Archipelago could furnish no merchandize suited to the European market, in return for the manufactures with which they would be deluged by the overtrading of Manchester and Leeds; India would be annually drained by an unfavourable exchange; the population at the three presidencies would be impoverished; the knowledge acquired by the native residents would speedily become a powerful engine of disturbance, and we might very soon find, to our cost, that the churlish promotion of British interests, to the prejudice of those which have an equal claim upon our consideration in India, would not only be injurious to our commerce, but fatal to the permanence of our power.

The traffic carried on between the three presidencies and the Persian and Arabian gulfs partakes very much of the nature of that which exists between India and the Archipelago; the returns being principally made by large importations of treasure. The trade between India and China is of a different character, and the difference arises partly from the circumstance of China being a great manufacturing country, and partly from the monopoly of the tea trade possessed by the East India Company. Nothing can be more false and injurious than the assertion, which is continually made, that the East India Company enforce their right to the exclusive enjoyment of the general trade to China. That that portion of the subjects of the crown of England, over whose interests it is the especial duty of the East India Company to watch, partake largely of its advantages, is clear from the statement of country tonnage engaged in the China trade, given in a preceding page, and we make no doubt that it will appear, in the course of the inquiry now going on, that the regulations, under which the traffic at Canton is conducted, are conceived in a spirit of disinterested sacrifice of the privileges of the Company as traders, to their duty as sovereigns of an extensive and flourishing empire. It has been very ably urged by Mr. Ellis, in in his first letter on the East India question, that the monopoly of tea enjoyed by the Company, is employed by them as a means of realizing that portion

of their revenues which is expended on account of the territory in England. This operation is effected by a large annual exportation of Indian produce, chiefly opium and raw cotton, on board the country ships, to Canton, the proceeds of which, being paid into the Company's treasury for bills on the Indian presidencies, furnish the means of purchasing the teas which are afterwards shipped to England. The total annual value of the British trade between India and China is about 16,000,000 dollars, of which 14,000,000 is the value of the exports of opium and raw cotton. This trade is now almost entirely abandoned to private merchants, and, besides the tonnage which it employs, is the source of incredible prosperity in some parts of Bengal, in the districts on the Nerbudda River, in Guzerat and Cutch. Of the importance attached to it by the mercantile community at the three presidencies, some idea may be formed from the memorial transmitted in 1815 to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, by the merchants of Bombay. This memorial was drawn up at a time of great disappointment and irritation, occasioned by the stoppage of the country trade at Canton, on account of some disputes between the Company's factory and the Chinese government. It is, therefore, a document, the authority of which is above all suspicion.

"We now show your lordship (say they,) that without the trade hence to China and back, Bombay could not exist as a port of commercial importance. It is known that Bombay does not afford, either in produce or manufacture, the means of export trade beyond the reach of its immediate vicinity. It is a place certainly not very happily endowed by nature, but it is geographically well situated for trade, and an active commerce affords employment to a most enormous population. From the port of Bombay, all the cotton that is grown in Guzerat, surplus to the wants of that country, is eventually exported; and China has been, and it is probable will continue, at least for some years, to constitute the chief and most profitable mart for it. In return for that cotton, and generally for the value of the outward loading of our ships, articles of China produce and bullion are imported, which again constitute the means of an important trade, and give rise to a distinct and numerous set of merchants. The merchandize so imported is peculiarly fitted for the wants of the Persian and Arabian Gulfs, the northern parts of Guzerat, and the dominions of his highness the Peshwa. In the resort hither of the ships and traders from all those places, an accession of advantage accrues to the commerce of this island; and from the constant flux and reflux of the products of many various parts of the world, results that advantage which has made Bombay so conspicuous among the commercial ports of the east. But as Bombay does not produce in itself those articles that are necessary to the wants of neighbouring and distant countries, this place is mainly dependent upon the China trade for its present commercial importance; and if that be abstracted from the industry of British merchants and native traders, either by law, or by any system that defeats the practical advantages of that trade, the lapse of a very few years would leave but the record of history for the commercial importance of this place; and the barrenness of the rock on which we reside would justify a doubt of its once having yielded the means of subsistence to a population as numerous perhaps as the subjects of some independent states."

Now let any person, whose vote is not already pledged against the East

India Company, compare this mode of realising the revenues of India, in its effects on the industry and prosperity of that country, as described in this extract, with the annual revenue investment, the ruinous consequences of which are so eloquently depicted by Mr. Burke in the ninth report of the East India Committee of 1783, and he will pause before he encourages any rash or sudden alteration of the existing system. China is essentially a manufacturing country. Its government has, for the last fifty years, admitted the import of cotton as a raw material, but has never countenanced the introduction of manufactured goods. This is the cause of the difference between the exports from India to China and those to the islands of the eastern Archipelago. The object of those who contend for the establishment of a free port in the southern seas is to supersede the use of the home fabrics of China by smuggling the cotton and woollen manufactures of England. To these it is of little consequence whether the agricultural and commercial interests of India flourish or decline, so long as temporary activity be communicated to our manufacturing districts. Not so with the Directors of the East India Company. They may commiserate the distresses of their fellow subjects in England, but they cannot sacrifice, to an attempt at their alleviation, the prosperity of their Indian subjects. That prosperity, five years hence, as the Bombay memorialists most truly say, would be a mere record of history, if the transit trade in British manufactures and the country trade to Canton should cease, and the present mode of realising the Indian revenues be superseded by the exploded system of revenue investment.

We cannot conclude this article without adverting to the deplorable condition in which India would be placed, if its government should ever be transferred to the ministers of the crown. Having no persons to represent their wishes, or consult their welfare, in the House of Commons, acts of parliament affecting the interests of the native traders would ere long be passed, in the same spirit of relentless hostility which now animates the petitioners against the existing system. He must be a powerful and influential minister who, without the assistance of some counteracting body, like the East India Company, could withstand the selfish disposition manifested by the mercantile and manufacturing classes of this country to legislate for India, solely with a view of pecuniary profit to themselves. To a weak or dishonest administration, the temporary popularity which might be obtained by doing a great wrong to India, in the hope of effecting a trifling good for England, would be a temptation almost irresistible. We, however, have no fear at present for any such result. The inquiry now pending before the committees of both houses of Parliament will refute the charges so unsparingly lavished on the present administration of India, and prove, to all who are not inaccessible to conviction, that the system of the East India Company is better calculated to secure the true interests of our eastern empire, than any other form of colonial government.