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THE SPEECH

IN EXTENSO,

THE SUBSTANCE OF WHICH

WAS DELIVERED AT

THE EAST INDIA-HOUSE,

13TH MARCH, 1858,

BY

JOHN COOK, Esq.,

ONE OF THE PROPRIETORS

AGAINST

THE TRANSFERENCE OF THE COMPANY

TO

THE CROWN.

LIKE boys on mischief bent, they pulled the old
Indian Clock to pieces, and inserted
Wheels that were unfit ; and screened themselves behind
The gaping and deceived crowd ; who
Wondered why it did not go as once it
Did ; the admiration of a polished world.

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THE following speech would not have appeared in print, but from the world-wide spread charge that the East India Company, the Proprietors, and Directors, had been corrupt and corrupted, negligent, *effete*, and unfit any longer for the Rule and Government of the mighty Empire which their wisdom and energy raised and won.

The Directors have been heard in their Petition, in their state of facts, and in Parliament, and have disproved most fully the charge against them.

The Proprietors, who SIR CORNWALL LEWIS, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, says, "have brought it all on themselves," i.e. their downfall, have not been heard. And as I raised my voice to give my reasons why (as we were brought up for judgment) sentence of political death ought not to be passed upon us, and as those reasons were not given as they ought to have been by the leading press, to the Parliament and Public about to condemn us, and take away further rights; it was necessary those reasons should be given to the world, as an answer to posterity against the charge, as also because my observations were attributed, in some papers, to another name, viz. Mr. STEWART.

LETTER.

On the 19th of January, 1858, I wrote to the Directors of the India House a letter, the substance of which was, to say—"That I thought that we were, as Proprietors of East India Stock, precluded *in limine* by the Charter of 1833, from entertaining the motion before the Court (viz.—resisting the transference of the Empire of the East Indies to the Crown), that I thought there was a legal *estoppel* at the latter part of the first page of the Charter, to our preventing Her Majesty's Government from taking the government of India from the Company; by reason of the consent of the Company, recited at the bottom of the first page, to their rights and territories being given over to the disposal of Parliament; in consideration of the *corpus* of their property, at par, and their dividends thereon, being secured till and payable in 1874 (see clause 12), and also by virtue of the authority of clause 13th of the said Charter, contemplating and acquiescing in the *implied* contingency of the Parliament depriving the Company of the possession and government of the said territory, and that I thought the Proprietors had ceded all their power by that arrangement, and that there remained nothing for the Proprietors, but the alternative of leaving their claims to be paid off till 1874, or calling for the redemption or payment of those claims within three years of Her Majesty's Government depriving the Company (a right seemingly clearly ceded) of all government of the Indian territories.

And under these views, excusing myself from attending the meeting.

(Signed) JOHN COOK,

Healthy Hill House,

Gt. Missenden, Bucks.

—o—

LEGAL POINT INVOLVED HERE, AND I BEG TO ASK THIS QUESTION :—

If a man goes to the relations of another man having large possessions, and states he is not capable of managing his own affairs—and knowing he is ignorant of the real value of his property, persuades him to part with it for a half or third of its value, and ensconces himself in that man's possessions, and (his relations, believing the tale, also look on) allowed the transfer to be made; would not he and they, when they found the tale fictitious and trumped up, in order to despoil him of his possession, call upon a Court of Equity to declare the deceiver and despoiler to be only a Trustee for him who had been cheated, and make him disgorge his unjust gains, instead of entrapping him further?

So we Proprietors, or our predecessors (whose representatives we are), were the sick man represented by Ministers falsely to John Bull and Parliament, as not able to manage our affairs, and got us, not knowing its value, to part with our estate, for a vastly inadequate price. We have discovered the misrepresentation—both as to the price and our ability to govern, or manage. And we call upon John Bull and Parliament to help us to recover our lost Estate, instead of yielding to further demands. And we call upon the Court of Equity of Nations to displace this wrongful bad manager of our Estate—the Board of Control, and to return it to our hands.

—o—

After mentioning the letter, I stated,— Since this letter was written, the subject has been so ventilated by the discussions and papers from the India House, in public meetings, and in Parliament. The storm has so broken up the ground, and revealed the hidden springs and under currents, and swept away so many errors, prejudices, and mistakes, that I have come to a very different conclusion, viz. :— that our ancient rights have not passed away by that bargain—which involves a point of Equity, in which the Parliament are Trustees for us, the Proprietors.

SPEECH, &c.

GENTLEMEN, DIRECTORS, AND PROPRIETORS,

IT was fortunate this Court was adjourned upon the resolution on the 7th of April,—that the able Report should be printed. That document has been circulated in the columns of the press; and a more able document, criticising the two Bills never emanated from a body of men: it is a document that does them great credit and honor, for its independence and clear condemnation of the two Bills brought in to destroy this great Corporation, and handing it over to the Crown. It has placed matters in a clear light, and the Directors deserve the approbation and thanks both of the Proprietors and the public at large. And that document must smash these two Bills to pieces, and have already done so.

I shall not condescend to discuss those bills at all, as they are totally useless and are not at all called for, as the Company in its pristine form would be perfectly able to govern India to the satisfaction and happiness of India, of England, and the whole world.

These Bills have been got up, as you justly say in your Report “in deference to clamour, which represents the Government of India by the Company, as characterized by nearly every fault of which a civilized government can be accused, and the Company as the main cause of the recent disasters.”

Why, the very majority of 147 in the Commons was given through their having been inoculated by that false charge.

The second Bill for destroying this time-honored Corporation, and absorbing it into the Crown, is now before the world; and in whatever else we differ, we all agree in this,

viz., that it is one of the greatest and most momentous questions that ever agitated the minds of men—and affects the Proprietors in the tenderest point. The late outbreak in India, and the awful atrocities consequent thereon; the renown of the Empire, and the East India Company with its threatened dissolution, and the impending battle, have riveted the eyes of the universal globe upon us, and princes, diplomatists, potentates, and powers stand on tiptoe with *erectis auribus*, and are eager to catch at the slightest news, and see what will be the next step in this drama now acting before the world,—that world is looking for justice, truth and fair play. And let us hope that the *Proprietors* of this great Corporation who are *chiefly assailed* and calumniated, will stand forth like men, and defend themselves, their characters, and their rights, and not allow themselves to be crushed by the power and false notions of Her Majesty's Ministers, unheard.

This may be the last time we may meet, and let us raise a unanimous voice against aggression, falshood, and wrong.

The late storm which brooded so gloomily over this house, has at last burst and overwhelmed the *Proprietors*. The Directors have escaped, and if prostrated for a moment, are resuscitated to be enstalled in full glory in another form, or some favored ones at least.

The Proprietors, whose estate in equity it is, are not only to be held forth as the base cause of the ruin of this world-wide honored and revered Corporation; but her time-honored Electoral Rights (or the greater and most valuable part of them) are to be given away to others who had no part or interest in the glorious achievement, east, west, north, and south, under a false and base charge of corruption and effeteness, engendering their own fall, the loss of this great and mighty empire, raised and won by their capital, energy, and means. Whereas, I hope I shall make you and the world at large, see if we have fair play at least, that that saddle should of right and truth be put on the other horse. I, as one of the Proprietors, beg to raise a warning voice, first against the principle of the Bills—viz., the transference of the Indian Empire to the Crown. “If a beloved friend asked bread, would you give him a stone; or a fish, would you give him a serpent?” Remember, you are now dealing with a soured and exasperated race, whose evil passions have been raised to the uttermost. Those passions fall harmlessly on the East India

Company; they form, as it were, a shadow invulnerable, that from its constitution, ramifications, and corporate capacity cannot be hit or damaged.

Tho' the storm madly rage, it idly beats the shore,
And spends its useless rage, until that rage is o'er.

But it is not so by handing the Empire over to the Crown; you thereby make the Crown the target and butt of all those evil passions and roused energies; you make it the focus of attraction for all those malignant rays, and put in peril that beloved and now happy head, whose safety and happiness is the delight of every one of us to guard and cherish. Beware then ye Ministers, of that first most dangerous step, too harrowing to dwell on. On this ground I call upon you, the Parliament of England, to *pause*, ere you take the desperate leap, and look back in vain for the safe standing your feet had rashly quitted. The measure is also a blow heralded by the usual lying abuse struck at *corporate* and *prescriptive* rights, under the pretence of widening the elective principle, a claptrap for assent to get in that of *dictation* and *nomination*: as the Board of Control has ever since its institution, domi-nered over the elected Directors, the root, the bane, of good and wise management, and to seize on a vast patronage so long longed for. Not only are corporate and prescriptive rights perilled and assailed, but a blow is struck at enterprise and daring, which must deter men from acquiring rights, which, when they are of a magnitude to excite envy in high quarters, are to be unjustly wrested from them, either by cajolery or power, under false charges!!

Now Sir, there seems this important feature in this controversy—that while the Directors have justly escaped censure, and secured applause,—we, the Proprietors, have been brought up for judgment, and condemned, and that unheard!! “*Audi alteram partem.*”

It would be tedious and bad taste to go at length into the history of this Company, before those so well acquainted with it; let it suffice to say:—this venerable Company dates its rise from the time of Queen Elizabeth; in 1599 its shares were doubled. There however arose one or two new companies as rivals, but in 1702 they were united by a deed tripartite—the Crown and the two Companies being parties, (the Act of Parliament of the first company being somewhat defective), and from time to time lent money to the Government, at a low or no interest, as a sort of price for the renewal

of their privileges. The company, by its wisdom, energy, and perseverance, established a trade of so vast a magnitude, and acquired such great territorial possessions, that she became the surprise, admiration, and *envy* of the world; but like all greatness, was envied both for her power and riches; and never wanted for detractors to pick a quarrel with her! it being the old story of the wolf and the lamb—she was to be swallowed up. The machinery of the Government, and action of this successful and enterprising Company, was of the simplest and most efficient kind.—A Board of twenty-four Directors, chosen by the Proprietors (whose money and interests were at stake), for their wisdom, education, ability, talent, and experience, like the Amphictonic Council (who numbered about thirty, to settle the disputes among the States of Greece), with power to nominate an Indian Council; and a Governor-General, subject to the approbation of the Crown; with a Court of Proprietors (an efficient board of control), with power to call meetings, to check, advise, or propose any measure that seemed necessary.

Under this simple machinery, this efficient machinery, never hitching or stopping, combining wisdom, energy, erudition, and dispatch; all under one roof, was this empire founded, raised, and consolidated,—and it became the envy of surrounding nations, and at length our own monarchs taught most unwisely to look upon it advisable, at some distant day, to absorb it into the power of the Crown.

And accordingly, in 1784, after well abusing them, the first step was taken to curb the power of the Directors, by erecting a GOVERNMENT Board of Control; no doubt with the distant view, as Ministers now admit, of falling into the hands of the Crown; every step at each renewal of the charter taking, as they affirm, that direction. “*Sapiens incipit a fine: et quod primum est in intentione, ultimum est in executione.*”

The envy of the Crown, or rather the envy of the Ministers of the crown, for the crown would never covet that which would be prejudicial to its interest or person.—George III. repudiated the attempt,—the notion proceeding from Ministers’ having a false idea of the real interests of the crown to covet the acquirements of its enterprising subjects.

I say it was unwise advice of the ministers of the crown, to counsel it to seize on corporate rights, well governed and benefiting the nation, in order to govern them themselves;—

when they have, according to their own showing, by their own *intermeddling*, nearly brought about the ruin of the Empire. While under our management, of twenty-four Directors, chosen for their wisdom, ability, and capacity to conduct the enterprise; and a Court of *Proprietors* acting as a *Board of Control*, having their subscriptions at stake; and with argus' eyes constantly on the concern, having power to advise, check, or bring forward any malversation or grievance at home or abroad, at every quarterly court, or at any time, by a requisition signed by nine Proprietors—*Plus vident oculi quam oculus*—the enterprise flourished, prospered, and increased to an extent unparalleled in the annals of any nation, and acquired a world-wide renown, and with it *envy* at its increasing power. Princes courted their friendship as allies, and feared them for their power. And this bore internal and external evidence that their policy and rule of acting was *sound, wise, and prudent*. However, Mr. PITT in 1784, as Mr. ROEBUCK says, cajoled the Directors and Parliament to admit a Board of Government Control—which was the entry of the point of the wedge to rive the empire from them.

In 1813, the next step was, the abolition of the Company's exclusive trade (no doubt for the public good). In 1833, after the usual abuse, in order to get rid of that Board of Control—the *Proprietors* (and acquire their territorial rights and property in that vast empire), whose property was bound up with it, and forming the vigilant sentry and efficient check forced upon them, or cleverly induced a compliance with what the Parliament or what the Government called a *quid pro quo*; a sort of guaranteed stock and dividends for their *real* rights; but in fact a very inadequate consideration for such immense interests given up; a plumb to suck for a diamond snatched away, which was in assets alone, £15,858,000, with their whole territorial possessions of incalculable value, thrown into the bargain; a most *jejune* and inadequate consideration! amounting to bamboozling, for the sum received or partially, not wholly secured, of £12,000,000. The dividends being the *first* charge upon the *revenue* received from India—and £2,000,000 invested at compound interest until it should amount to the sum of £12,000,000 (now worth about 4½ millions), supposed to be reached in 1874.

The third step was to acquire their whole interest at an inadequate price, involving the mischief to the Empire of India, calling off their *sharp supervision*, stimulated by their interest, so *long* contributing from its origin to the welfare of the Corporation and enrichment of the Kingdom, constituting an efficient wholesome Board of Control. There are many people who believe in omens and superstitious noises as being bound up with strange events, and it has been said, whether true or false, I know not, that ever since that bargain, in the stillness of the night, there has been heard in the India House the melancholy soft voice of a small bird, whistling the tune of "Why did my master sell me?" "Uncle Tom can tell!"

The Government Board of Control however was, as now appears, the real over-riding, over-bearing, presiding, and only guiding over-ruling genius of the Company, and whose *fiat* was not to be resisted. Nay so much were the Directors considered powerless, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir C. Lewis,) stated, that if they had held up their finger to resist one of the late Orders of the Government in the late crisis, they would have been instantly dismissed.

Here then was the steersman that guided the ship, and if she got among the breakers his was the hand that sent her there!

The fourth blow, prior to the long arranged scheme of finally swallowing up the Company, was the Act of 1853, cutting down of twenty-four Directors to eighteen; six of whom were to be nominated by the Crown, and taking twelve from the Election of the Proprietors. *Plus vident oculi quam oculus.*

Sentinel and Proprietary Guard—away, begone!

And now, what have been the effects and results of these changes and alterations made in the machinery by which this Empire was acquired and consolidated? By this forcibly would-be partner in this venerable concern, whose prestige and renown as the greatest commercial enterprize in the world, looked up to, at home and abroad, with veneration, awe, surprise, and pleasure. An old, I say again, venerated commercial monument of the great conception, energy, talent, and enterprise of Britons, bound up with our old, our earliest associations of Corporation-self-governing rights; the only basis and essence of the English

Constitution. And if these venerable edifices are thus rudely, and under *pretended cover* of the public good, under false charges, and paltry and sham tales of old ladies voting interference in political matters, to be done away and the rights of the founders given to others—what acquirement of bright conception, ingenuity, enterprize, zeal, and intelligence is safe? Then comes again the question, *Cui-bono*, has it tended, and in what good is it to result? And for why is it to be cashiered? To what good it has tended, is seen already in the disorganization, revolt, and bloodshed lately brought about, through the destruction of the vigilance of six heads in the Direction, the keen *supervision* of the Proprietors, and turning topsyturvy the old Policy, viz:—Governing by the native Princes.

By the interference of the forced in-coming new Partner, the Government Board of Control, forcibly changing the Policy, and putting the old perfectly efficient machinery out of gear, making it stop, and drag, and hitch, and blunder, and is, and has been (as is now confessed) paramount only for mischief and delay. The double Government being confessed to be full of weakness, indecision, vacillation, delay, and paralysis! A rare mixture to govern an Empire withal!

Look on this picture, and on that of the former Government, which I say stands unrivalled for simplicity, wisdom, energy, and dispatch; to the latter you owe the foundation of a glorious Empire; to the former, by its altered *state*, almost its fall!

If Sir, England's Constituencies and English men allow this Corporation to be struck down, they *undermine* every Corporation in the land, and strike a blow at every local and prescriptive right. It is a blow to enterprize, and to rights acquired by discernment, industry, intelligence, sagacity, and perseverance. Notwithstanding Parliament has claimed the right and justly so, of granting renewals from time to time of the Charter, to prevent antagonistic action, which she ought not to refuse, so long as it tended to the good of the common weal and engendered not the public mischief, with which she is falsely charged, and which I deny the Company has done.

Now that the charge (the stale one at each renewal of the charter, made in order to chip away her rights) has been made against the Directors, but they boldly, to their immortal

honor, repelled the charge so long bruited about unjustly as before, to serve a base purpose, and by their eloquent Petition, and the other publication of facts, that those charges of despotism, cruelty, keeping back religion and education, railroad improvement, irrigation, bridges, and civilization, were totally and basely false, perfidious, and corrupt; and their slanderers have not only abandoned their charge, but that very charge has recoiled on themselves. Through the late *discussions* of the question, and through their cab-carriage oscillating dispatches between Cannon Row and Leadenhall Street; like Mahomet at Mecca, who, as the song says "swings in the air *see-saw* with a tremulous motion." For they have admitted that the allowed paramount dictatorial Board of Control, and their altered machinery and battle-door and shuttle cock game from Cannon Row to Leadenhall Street; *baffles wisdom, cripples energy, nips precision, benumbs celerity, begets irresponsibility, and finally brings on the curse of blasting delay.*—SEE THE EVIDENCE:—

DOUBLE GOVERNMENT.

SIR F. CURRIE, Deputy-Chairman, says:—"It is a perpetual source of embarrassment, misunderstanding, and weakness."—Times, February 12th and January 28th.

LORD PALMERSTON, says:—"It is a system of check and counter-check, oscillation of cabs,—so a fortnight's delay was exchanged for *to-morrow* night. The adventures of a *dispatch* were like the old tale of that of a Guinea! full of embarrassment not fit to accomplish the purpose of good Government."—Times, February 13th.

SIR C. LEWIS, late Chancellor of the Exchequer:—"Embarrassed by needless delay, encouraged procrastination, divides responsibility, and throws obscurity on power."—Times, 13th and February 7th.

Mr. Roebuck:—"Mr. Pitt cajoled the Directors into allowing and establishing a Government Board of Control."—"Times," February 16th.

MR. LOW:—"Navibus atque quadrigis petimus bene vivere." "Intolerable delays were engendered."—"Times," February 16th.

SIR H. RAWLINGSON:—"After a long tale of the adventures of a dispatch, says:—"Can a more destructive, unbusiness-like proceeding be conceived."—"Times," February 16th.

COL. SYKES:—"Answers to dispatches being first drafted at the India House, then sent in a previous communication to the Board of Control, originated all the delay now spoken of."—"Times," February 19th.

Solomon says—whatever you have to do, "do it with your might." Why an arrival of succour at only one moment prior to a fatal act, would turn the fate of a battle, would save life, on the one side, and the guilty soul's perdition on the other. An *instant* of time might have prevented the slaughter at Cawnpoor, and the awful scenes of lust and butchery that at once struck horror and disgust, sorrow and

anguish, and a desire of vengeance on every feeling heart. And at whose door does the obstruction of earlier railways lay? as well as the electric telegraph, by which the rebellion and butchery would have been prevented:—

“He (Mr. BAILLIE), agreed with the hon. gentleman who seconded this motion,—that if the great trunk-line from Calcutta to Lahore had been finished when the late outbreak had occurred, many of our disasters might have been avoided. Even the knowledge that the government could in a few days transport troops from one end of India to the other, would have prevented many of those outrages on the part of the Sepoys, which were encouraged by the hope of impunity.” Debate on Indian Railways. *Times*, 21st April, 1858.

Mr. CRAWFORD—“The Court of Directors, when the establishment of railways in India was first mooted, deputed Mr. Simms, a civil engineer to investigate the subject, and lost no time in digesting, considering, and submitting to the Board of Control, a proposal for the introduction of the railway system into India. It was to that board, and not to the East India Company, that the *whole blame* was attributable, for the delay in the establishment of Railways.” Mr. C’s speech, *Times*, 21st April, 1858.

Again,—“As a specimen of the mode in which the Government carried on public enterprise, he might state, that in 1847, he waited on the Secretary of the Governor-General in India, with reference to a project for the construction of an Electric Telegraph, when he was told not to trouble himself about the matter, as it would be undertaken by the Government.—Now the wires might have been put up, and the Telegraph in working order in twelve months; it was *seven years* before the work was accomplished! (hear, hear!) Mr. AYRTON’s speech, *Times*, 21st April. Parliamentary Debate on East India Railways, 20th April, 1858.

Well the bold, manly, honest, upright, unimpeachable, lion-like front of the Directors, caused their assailants to quail! and knowing they had no case, to abandon in despair the charge against them.

The Premier (Lord PALMERSTON), the chief huntsman, tried to call off his facts-abused-for-want-of-enquiry pack of gentlemen from worrying them,—by wisely trying (as some excuse must be got up) and mildly trying and *justly succeeding* in laying all the mischief on the *system*—which system, bless the mark! they themselves, the Government, had introduced,

in place of the former, twenty-four enlightened Directors, and a board of vigilant Proprietors; whose property, ability, and management, had founded, raised, acquired, and consolidated, substantially, without Government aid (and whose fortunes were at stake), this great and mighty empire! *Artifex opere cognoscitur.*—The artificer is known by his work. For if ever there was a system contrived by the lower regions, to baffle wisdom, weaken and benumb enterprise, and hatch delay, which every school-boy, after he can make pot-hooks and hangers, is taught by a copy to know is dangerous, this is it. Yet this delay, or the dangers of this delay, and the mischiefs of this delay and change of policy, has not only not been seen by grown-up statesmen, but forced down the throats of the Company against their will, experience, warning, and judgment. The Directors having remonstrated and forewarned them of the probable consequences they sagaciously foresaw in the distance. Contemplate this long nursed political darling of Downing Street—this Board of Control—ye shades of Diplomats and Statesmen—ye Talleyrands, ye Guizots, ye Pozzo di Borgos, and Metternichs. And can ye wonder then, when such a thing got into the old Indian clock, tore out its wheels, and sat upon its pendulum, that it went wrong.

Why every Proprietor, while he derived his dividends from the profits of the company, was a policeman and detective on the watch, and all his relations, if he had any in India, were so also, besides the twenty-four Directors, all acting in concert under one roof—a system necessarily of vigour and dispatch.

But you have removed from the sentries their just interest in the matter, called off their vigilance, given them an opiate, a sugar-plum for a diamond; and taken six of the Directors enlightened detectives from off their *beats*, changed also their policy, and what could you expect? *Sublato fundamento cadet opus.*

You have yourself put irresponsibility a sentinel in the place of responsibility, above all reversed the policy of the Directors, and you have reaped the fruit of your own change—uproar for tranquility, through loss of vigilance.

But it appears, there must be a scape-goat (the Directors having escaped), *in the Proprietors.* Besides that, you have yourselves introduced the elements of obstruction, and made the inconvenience of the system, causing the delay and blun-

dering, and blundering worse than delay, the reason and plea ; your own act and deed, for cutting down the company !! So us Proprietors and our predecessors, we are to be fixed upon to bear the sin or blame as the falsely-alleged root of the cause for destroying this ever-revered monument of British enterprise, and of the rebellion also. It is an outrage on truth, justice, and right: for the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir C. Lewis says,—you, the Proprietors, have brought it all upon yourselves, from the corrupt manner in which you have ever used your right of voting for the Directors. “Gentlemen and Ladies, holders of Indian Stock, are totally ignorant of every thing relating to India, Calcutta, Bombay, or Madras, except what they hear from candidates for directorship, as to the Presidency to which the cadetship is to belong ; which is promised in return for their votes !”—Lord Palmerston’s speech, 13th February, 1858. You the Proprietors, he means to say, have forgotten all sense of public good, all love of country, and scandalously bartered away your votes to serve your own narrow-minded private ends and interests.

Why, was the *damage* done *while under our old* pure machinery and regime ? Or since you put your bungling hand to it, by your double Government alterations ? *Why*, is it not since the latter, while in your over-ruling in everything !

Why, you say the Directors are not to blame ! Which and who of the Directors were the specimens of our corrupt electing ; where are there bad, wicked, untalented, and unfit appointees in India ? Are the Lawrences, the Havelocks, and that bright galaxy of names that fill the page of Indian History, and whose Statues look down upon us from those niches.—See Lord Derby’s eulogy at the Mansion House. “Yet upon the whole, there never was a Government which for so lengthened a period displayed so much power, so much ability, made so admirable a choice of servants, who in their turn exhibited such distinguished talents ; or which upon the whole conducted its affairs with such purity of motive, and so studied the interests of the people, confided to their charge, as the Government of India. My Lord Mayor, I am bound to pay that tribute to the Government of the East India Company.”—Times, April 6th, 1858.

Why, the ability of the Company’s servants from the highest to the lowest, and the able manner in which they

have *acted*, and the brilliant achievements they have made, have been notoriously, both praiseworthy and glorious, and is a sufficient, and the best answer to the charge; a full and complete exculpation of us, but of condemnation that recoils on you, and that most justly. For we proprietors, say on the contrary, it is your Board of Control change of *policy* in *particular*, and your altered machinery, that is the whole cause of the mischief. You acknowledge, you admit, *pro confessio*; the Board of Control the Double Government is the source of what;—not of wisdom, but of *weakness*, *embarrassment*, *vascillation*, and delay.—What greater curse can it have?

Now my lord Ellenborough says, that the proprietors have no right any longer to take part in the election of the Directors, because (I suppose they are not only corrupt), they are interested only in so much stock, and none in the welfare of India, in fact, you say we have brought you out! This brings forward the motive and fairness of the exchange of Indian profits and enormous territory, £15,858,000 assets, and enormous territory for £12,000,000, for so much partially-secured stock and dividends! Was not the motive to dispossess them of their rights and territory, to pick a hole in their coat for that purpose by torrents of unmerited abuse, and the effect to lull their vigilance, destroy their power and rule, and weaken the Indian Government? Now, as I understand the bargain, upon mature reflection, the dividends are secured as the first charge upon the revenue. You, the Government, by taking the government rule out of our hands, have jeopardized that revenue, you having substantially taken the government of India out of our control (conjointly with the Directors), which we acquired, watched over and, left alone, governed well; we had no such disaster,—our policy being to govern by the native princes, and to avoid the soreness and exasperation of annexation.—See the resolution of the Directors against the wars in Scinde.—Miles' speech, 25th January, in the *Times*. Acknowledging as Mr. Disraeli does "that there has been too great a disregard of the feelings of the *Native Princes*." You have taken it into your own by a Crown Board of Control or Directors and other alterations, and in the result, by a reversed policy, have damaged all; laying the foundation for revolt, by exasperating annexation, thereby admitting the fault, and by your requiring alterations, that that government board of control was a mischievous and unfit innovation

—leaving exasperation, dissatisfaction, and soreness where they should have founded friendship and content. The expenses of war swallowing up the improvements of peace: by which you, the Government, have jeopardized India, through uncalled for wars and annexation, and our dividends the first charge upon it;—for if you had by the late mutiny been driven out of India, the sums realized by the investment of two millions in 1833, would not now have realized more than one third of the corpus of our property or stock (four millions out of twelve), therefore our interest is not guaranteed, but jeopardized, and gives a lien on the whole management still; though we may demand payment on our dismissal in three years, instead of waiting till 1874, when the two millions sunk shall have realized twelve millions. Who therefore can allege justly, that we have no right to take part in the election? whereas we have the greater right to our plurality of votes, for safety to our interests. And we have a right to call you, the Government, to account for so jeopardizing our interests:—for the same mismanagement which jeopardized our Indian Empire and our interests might ruin your power to pay us in that time:—as your pugnacious principles might, by being pushed too far, involve us in wars with neighbouring states; and taking our ancient corporate rights away under the pretence of governing better, is unjust, when through your clumsy interference you had plunged India into unwise wars and debt, and from exasperation almost lost the Empire, which we originally acquired, and ruled on just and honorable principles, *Sublato fundamento cadet opus*.

Then comes again the great question, who and what is the real father and cause of this awful Mutiny? Is it not grasping unwise annexation, causing concealed soreness, and exasperation? If not, why shirk enquiry? Why falsely charge us?—Will you say we cannot Govern India now? Restore the machinery you have spoiled, and see! Has it been brought about by those who conceived, formed, raised up, this colossal Empire until it was the envy of the world; or by those who cut away six detectives (Directors), and sold the vigilance of the Proprietors for a song? Who altered the main policy and machinery, by the wisdom of which it was acquired? I say you, the incoming Partner, who forced your way into the concern, with over-swaggering authority, substituting new views and rules, and taking the lynx-eyed detectives, the vigilant sentries, the deeply interested

Proprietors, the interested *basis* of the Corporation, and six Directors off the watch—are to blame, and not us, who planted, raised, and nurtured the noble plant.

Are you, then, who through charging us falsely to John Bull with bad management, snatched the helm (under the pretence and false charge, that we could not steer), and run the vessel on the rocks, displacing the old pilot, to charge *us*, whom you have superseded with steering wrong? we who carried the vessel triumphantly through the deep! Are you for ever to cashier the master, pilot, and crew, and set yourselves up as the better steersmen? I say to the people of England, you are not to be trusted further. You have run the vessel aground, damaged her cargo, hypothecated her for ten millions for repairs, and thereby plunged the owners deeply into debt, by your blind perversity and self-conceit, of your fitness to Govern.—*Ne sutor ultra crepidam.*

Under these charges and undermining circumstances you call upon the Proprietors who elected able men, who steered the vessel well, and brought her safe into harbour, to give up the last remnant and major part of their elective rights, after having been bamboozled out of their territorial possessions, that you may be installed in the command, you who through your management wrecked the vessel, and whose crew got murdered on that lee shore, on which you ran her. You circumvented the Proprietors by obtaining their property for less than its value, called off their vigilance, displaced the Directors, struck down their seats of learning—all against their warning. Now a great outcry has been raised about our plurality of votes, which is greatly misunderstood. The original large shareholders were entitled to a share in the management; but it was found that by death and transfer of interest, there was not the same masculine and fit mind changed with it to govern, and then a plurality of votes was given according to the stake to insure the return of a mind, fit to protect the Empire and their interests, and lest a radically wrong person should be brought in by the overwhelming majority of those having the lesser stake, and more likely to be influenced through that cause. In fact it was a property qualification to guard and protect the best interests of the Empire, and we claim it now as a proper and wholesome right. You sowed the seeds of discontent by changing the policy of the Directors of governing by the native Princes as the rule: annexation being the exception. You called off

the vigilance of the real detectives, the Proprietors and six Directors, making *annexation your rule* and governing by the Native Princes the exception,—making the Court of Proprietors a nullity and derision, instead of what they formerly were, a vigilant effective Board of Control, deeply interested in the welfare of India. Remember what Mr. WILLOUGHBY, M.P. and Nominee Director, said in this Court on the 29th of January last :—“ If the Court of Directors would treat the Proprietors as they ought, and would consider them as a body for the discussion of Indian grievances, the Court of Proprietors might be made a Parliament for India, and would be the strongest possible support to the Court of Directors.”

The Duke of Wellington said,—“ It was deceiving the people of England to affirm that a trading company, which after nearly a century of constant wars, had acquired the sovereignty over a vast population, and territory yielding an income of twenty millions, with a debt not exceeding forty, was unfit for the functions of government, or unfit for the management of commerce.”—See Mr. Whiteside's speech 16th February, in the *Times*.

Where was your vigilance when cakes were disseminated as some secret symbol from province to province? Where was the foresight of your altered machinery, your cut down staff, when you took the stillness of the impending tempest for the calm of satisfied repose? When rumours were industriously circulated in the native army that their religion was about to be assailed, and your's forced upon them; indicated as they thought, by the use of greased Cartridges! Who can doubt the putting at Meerut eighty-five men in irons, to work ten years upon the roads, was to them the overt sign of compulsion, secretly instilled by the soured Native Princes, and the match that at last *lighted* the deep hidden and long smothered combustibles of rebellion.

The mischief you charge falsely on us, is the real work and result of your change of Policy, substituting souring annexation for Native-Prince rule, irresponsibility and vacillating counsels for that which was replete with wisdom, energy, decision, and dispatch! Is it then becoming, is it fair of you to throw the blame upon us;—of you, who introduced this bungling element (as you admit) of dissatisfaction, delay, and mischief? Is it right of you, who persevered *against warning* in the system of dethronement of the Native-Princes, and in annexation as the rule; to charge

us with your misdeeds—make us pay a penalty—and hand us down to *posterity* as the base cause of the downfall of the *East India Company*—this venerable *Corporation*? Who introduced this system of dethronement of the Native Princes, and annexation as the rule? the Directors, who deprecated it, or you, the Board of Control who adopted it? *noxa sequitur Caput*. This is at the bottom of the Rebellion, the fruit of the tree of your own sowing and planting:—See the Resolution of the Directors opposing the wars against the Ameers of Scinde.

There is to be no enquiry, for fear John Bull should see the injustice of the measure, fraught as it is with as much mischief as wrong, giving away our electoral rights under false pretences, degrading in the eyes of posterity the Indian elective body, and striking at the root of all Corporate rights.

The two Bills which are brought to our notice, having the same object to destroy this time-honored Corporation (without cause), the one being a Whig and the other a Tory hammer to knock out our brains, most magnanimously offered to our choice to lay our heads under. Let us unanimously protest against them as unjust to the Proprietors, and as letting in the mischief of the system of Nomination, a blow at Corporate and Prescriptive Rights, and totally uncalled for; the reasons for them as unsupported by facts; and as greatly stopping up the old road to honor and fame—the almost prescriptive right of the middle classes.

Seeing then the reins of the old drivers of the time-honored and noble India coach have been substantially taken from their hands, who drove her safely through many a perilous journey, and given to others who insisted on the ribbons being given up to them: who taking through ignorance the wrong road (reversing the old policy), and way of driving and brought on an upset and a smash; let us call upon Parliament and the people of England to dismiss the pretenders to good driving, and recall the old coachmen to their seats.

Will you Englishmen install the *bad drivers* in the places of those who drove her through many a long year safely and secure?

Will you, the constituency of England, the middle classes, allow the Corporate-elective principle to be in us assailed, and the edge of the nomination wedge to be got in and

sanctioned, to be at some future time driven home, to your grief and loss of patronage and honor from which you will be shut out. Will you ye city men, and ye old Corporations of London and the country, see your old friend and ancient neighbour the India House, tumbled into ruins, almost by the destruction and absorption, through circumvention and false charges, of her ancient rights and privileges. If so, look well to yourselves, ye House of Commons, ye middle classes, ye mighty Press! Now allow me to say a word or two as to Religion, linked hereto; there has been a great outcry, that she has not been made more broad-sown throughout India by the Directors. The encouragement given by them has satisfied the over-ruling power, the dictating Board of Control, which is another word for her Majesty's Ministers. Why then lay the charge, if just, on the Directors? Why should the religious world stretch out their hands to pull them and the Company down, as if they had no master? The policy was said to be extreme caution, lest the Sepoy should think his religion was to be destroyed by force; and the late resistance at Meerut, and the result, shows the deep danger of encouraging any thing having the least appearance of compulsion, instead of mild persuasion. But the statistics of the number of Churches, Schools, Missionary Stations, the speeches of Bishops, and the admission of many Missionaries, have shown they have not been supine, on that all important question, but that they have done all that the times, the wars, the finances, and their *honest convictions*, of what could be *safely* (for that is the point) done, under an idol-prejudiced population. See Extract of Speech of the Archbishop of Dublin, 25th January, at a Meeting of the Church Missionary Society, where he states:—"Government would have allowed twenty times as many Missionary Stations, but it was not proper policy to force them; it was our own province to come forward with our own money to overspread India with Missions and Schools." It is affirmed that Lord Ellenborough and Lord Dalhousie subscribed to Idol-worship, and forbade the Officers to subscribe (under a penalty) to Missions.—Why cry out at the Directors?

Now if the Religious world, our Clergy, had been shocked that the Religion of Christ had been kept back, when it ought to have been promoted; persecuted when it ought to have been supported, why did not the Bishops bring the

subject before the House of Lords and the country? Why did not they permit some eloquent clergyman to hold so much Indian Stock in trust, and send him to the Court of Proprietors, and advocate, from time to time, the claims of their Heavenly Master? and show up the Directors and the Government for their laches and neglect of this great subject, so important to us all, and said to involve a curse upon the country? Why, did not Mr. Poynder advocate the abolition of *Suttee* year after year, and at last succeeded (making an impression of its absurdity), in putting it down, hammering on the reason till he broke down the prejudice?

Had there been any great delinquency in the Directors in this matter, they could have made them blush through these stone walls, to their utter disgrace in the eyes of the country.

Now again with regard to the Religious question; I hope I may be indulged to say how I humbly think it should be dealt with. We all allow the Christian Religion is the basis of the civilization of Europe, America, and the Colonies; the basis of the law of nations, the root of all virtue; of civil, common, maritime and equity law; of all good-behaviour, decency, and refinement in society. She lies at the bottom of all our glorious charities, for the relief of the afflicted and the poor; and for that reason, wherever the British Banner is unfurled there, like the Ark of God, she should be carried, and planted, and set up, as an amiable guest, to be *imitated* and *invited* for her virtues;—Not forced upon the reception of others, but guarded from insult, and protected in her peaceful walks of mild and bland persuasion.—That is a debt of gratitude due to God, our Country, and India, and a solemn commission ought to sit to find the wise and just course.

Seeing then that in 1784, the Board of Control, the element, foundation, and root, of all the blunders, the bungling delay, and of the overturning of the tried and successful plan of the Directors, of ruling by the Native Princes, and introducing a policy of annexation, exasperating those Native Princes;—taking off the old watchers and sentinels, withdrawing vigilance and foresight, bringing on unnecessary wars, rebellion, and accumulated debt; thereby choking the root of civilization, and preventing roads of rapid communication, and that they have charged upon us, the basest of acts, and the faults of which they themselves are guilty, and seizing our rights, on that false pretence of baseness and incom-

petence ; though inoculating all England, with those charges, let us implore the Houses of Parliament and the country, not to allow this wrong to India, to the Proprietors (whose money acquired this empire), to the Directors, through whose wisdom and energy it was consolidated, and to the country, to be clinched and sealed against all wisdom, law, justice, and rights, both corporate and electoral, letting in new and untried men and schemes in such an awful crisis—trying jimcrack experiments when an empire is at stake, like fiddling while Rome was burning ; and to the obliteration of the wise, solid, and wholesome *rules*, by which the empire was acquired and gloriously raised up. Why should we, the Proprietors, be handed down to posterity as the base mercenary wretches who brought about the ruin and downfall of this time and widely honored mighty corporation, by venally selling their votes, when on the least reflection they must know, it was killing the goose for the golden eggs. When under a false and trumped up charge we have been cajoled and circumvented out of great territorial possessions—out of a great empire, which our able and virtuous ancestors acquired, to be betrayed at the last moment, Judas-like with a kiss.

With these observations, and upon these grounds, I call upon the Proprietors to vindicate themselves in the eyes of the country, of posterity, of history, and of the world, from this charge of mischief laid falsely at their door ; and as far as they can, reject the absorption of this corporation into the Crown, as unbeneficial to that, as iniquitous and unjust to us ; and listen not to the voice of servants, discarded for their incompetency, to be allowed to put that house in order, which they have contributed to put in confusion. Let Her most gracious Majesty and her beloved Consort, weigh well the proffered gift before she receives it ; let her view it on all sides, before she takes possession : it is worse than the gifts of the Greeks. O had I the talismanic wand of a magician, and could procure her gracious majesty's presence here, I would with bended knee importunately implore her Majesty to reject the proposed gift, to avoid it as she would a deadly thing. I would tell her it would be a serpent under her crown ; it would be a thorn in her side. And, if her gracious Majesty repudiated it, she would not then have to exclaim in the words of our Poet,—

“Ye happy poor lie down ; uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

There is no necessity whatever for the Bills. Let the old

East India Clock be put in its pristine order ; let the wheels which were taken out by the bungling pretenders to political horology, be replaced for those unsuited to its action, which they ignorantly put in ; let the old time-keeping pendulum be adjusted, and it will beat true political seconds suited to the meridian and the times ; it will then go admirably, and beat the St. Stephen's clock hollow—stopping as that continually does—putting the household out of order. Let that incubus and nightmare —the Board of Control be taken from the shoulders of the Directors, Proprietors, and the people of England ; and the East India Company will rise from her lethargy like a giant refreshed with wine, and go on flourishing to the satisfaction and happiness of the people of India, her Majesty, the people of England, and be the admiration of Europe and the world.

With these observations, I beg leave to return my thanks for the attention with which you have listened to me, and leave the matter confidently in your hands.

