

informing of public opinion as to the exact facts, will do more than anything else to bring England to her senses. For there is no denying the fact that England is administering India for England's benefit and not India's. It is hard for me to say this, because, until I went to India, my sympathies were all on the English side. My early education was much in England and I have many dear personal friends there. But what I am saying now is the truth, and the truth must be told.

"A most peculiar complication in the matter is that personally the officials of England in India are the finest sort of men in many ways. Probably a more honorable and clean service, freer from the corrupt use of money, could not be found than the civil administration of India. It is a service of gentlemen of high character and breeding, and many of them are truly friends of India in theory; but as active officials their whole nature seems to change—the official conscience, official sentiments, are exactly the reverse. I have seen Indian gentlemen, personal and deeply esteemed friends of mine, treated with positive discourtesy. Those same Englishmen would cut off their right hands before they would treat an Englishman so, but they will go out of their way to insult an Indian.

"Not long ago Mr. Morley made a speech in which he said he 'hoped he would not be blamed for the Indian famine; he did not suppose even Indians will demand of the Secretary of State that he play the part of Elijah on Mount Carmel,' intimating that the only difficulty is the failure of the rains. But this is not true, and it seems incredible that any intelligent, adequately informed man could so misunderstand the situation.

"There are factors in this terrible question which I would not care to discuss even in this room. The obvious fact stares us in the face that there is at no time, in no year, any shortage of food-stuffs in India. The trouble is that the taxes imposed by the English Government, being fifty per cent of produce, the Indian starves that England's annual revenue may not be diminished by a dollar.

"Eighty-five per cent of the whole population has been thrown back upon the soil because England's discriminating duties have ruined practically every branch of native manufacture; and these tillers of the soil, when they have sold themselves for the last time to the money-lender, when they have over and over again mortgaged their crops and their bit of land, are 'sold out' by the tax-collector to wander about until they drop of starvation.

"Once when I was in Rugah, just after a terrible famine, I saw several small children viciously hitting another, a little girl, and trying to take something away from her. It proved to be a lump of mud, mixed with a little wheat chaff, she had found in a shed. She was carrying it away

to eat and the others, brutal from hunger, were trying to get it from her. Later, I was visiting in Rubaton at the home of a well-known missionary. In the field adjoining the house, they told me, there had been a fire burning night and day for three months, the fuel of which was dead bodies—the harvest of famine and its inevitable companion, plague.

"We send shiploads of grain to India, but there is plenty of grain in India. The trouble is that the people have been ground down until they are too poor to buy it. Famine is chronic there now, though the same shipments of food-stuffs are made annually to England, the same drainage of millions of dollars goes on every year. . . . The present initiative of the Indian people themselves is the thing we should seek to nourish. In this present generation, there has sprang up the Swadeshi movement, like the Irish Sinn Fein, like our colonial boycott; young men are sacrificing everything to get industrial education and revive the ruined industries of their country. 'And this is where we Americans can help, without in the least encroaching on the rights of our sister nation. . .'"

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Americans of probity and fearless sincerity, who have gone to India, who know the facts at first-hand, are practically unanimous in their verdict. The great trouble is that the majority of our ninety millions are without information on the subject, and hence can have no judgment or opinion in the matter. As Dr. Hall truly says, the crying need is the creation of a thoroughly informed, intelligent public opinion in America.

MYRON H. PHELPS.

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## THE CRY FROM INDIA.

### Extracts From a Private Native Letter From India.

Coming to the famine problem, the ryots are in a very sad plight. Those holding *ryotwari* land from the Government find it very difficult to sustain themselves even when the rainfall is normal and the outlook of crops fair. . . . The poor agricultural class has to starve, year in and year out, whether the rains come down or not. The canal tax, the land tax, colonization dues, water tax and numerous others, leave the tiller of the soil nothing to live upon. Prompt payment of the dues is compulsory—otherwise the *Government* would starve! If a man fails to pay in time, woe be to him! Down comes the department official and confiscates his property—cattle, clothes and all—selling them at rock-bottom prices, that the amount due may be immediately realized. This done the family, which generally numbers eight to ten, is left to face the crisis as best they can—the children squalling for food, and certain death staring them all in the face. It is no un-

common thing for this class to live on one meal a day—they cannot afford more—hence the regular increase of mortality among them. They are all thin, angular, with bones everywhere protruding—a pitiable sight.

During my travels in Central India I have known hundreds of these poor agriculturists and villagers to live on baked mud, the bark of trees, leaves and a few wild berries. The average hut would contain one or two broken *charpoys*—beds interlaced with thin string or broken *bukah*,—and a brass *lota*, a vessel from which to drink water. Sometimes throughout a whole village the pieces of rag about the loins of the men and women were all that could be found in the shape of clothing or even cloth. Children, both male and female, until they are nine or ten, go about naked. The entire family works in tilling the land. In some villages the women make and sell baskets woven of twigs. In this class money is practically unknown, traffic consists of exchanges, the glamor of the outside world is a myth—and yet they were a contented class in years gone by.

Does the white man who drains away crores of rupees annually, care to get an insight into the life of these swarms of people? No. Shooting parties and balls, dancing and nautch parties, take up all his leisure time. He devotes a few hours to his official duties, and spends the rest in amusement—golf, billiards. The ruling of the people, all direct contact with them, is left to minor authorities who find it easy enough to fleece the defenseless native. The Sahib is dreaded in the villages and feared as a god. During his prescribed tour of the villages, the people try to hide themselves. He is known as the Bari Sarkar (Big ruler) and the Ma-Bap (mother-father).

Season after season the scarcity of food is becoming more and more imminent until now practically every year is a famine year. The present alarming rise of prices forecasts dire results. The condition varies little throughout the country. The Government issues proclamations, brings out the famine-code “for meeting agricultural distresses,” starts relief works, paying the starved coolies barely enough for sustenance, opens poor-houses (the official outlet to the other world) for those who are too weak to work—mere ceremonial shows—the flimsiest hypocrisy. For all the time that these poor Indians are dying for want of food the Viceroy with his council, together with their ladies and flunkies, are busy giving dinners and organizing football and hockey tournaments, presenting expensive cups and medals to successful teams, planning hunting trips, garden-parties and balls. They must have their pleasures, though “the niggers die as dogs.” When they are obliged to come down to the plains, they preach inoculation and rat-killing to combat the plague; they show no little outward sympathy for the suffering

poor, *but* they never inquire into the real cause or exert one muscle to provide real relief. . . .

In ancient times all the output of grain was stored in granaries, in every principal town. This provided amply for all years of poor agricultural returns. But the wise Government, the Government that looks anxiously after the welfare of India, prefers to see the Indian starve, while he himself fattens on the produce of the Indian’s soil and toil. The poor agriculturist dare not store even sufficient grain for his own use, but is called upon to explain why he has misappropriated produce and robbed the Government of its legal due.

India was won at the point of the sword, and India is held in the same way. It has fallen into the iron grip of an unscrupulous nation—a nation of moral cowards. England does not seem to realize that she is sounding her own death-knell, digging her own grave, in pursuing this reactionary policy. It is the same policy that has ruined many nations; the day that India wins her emancipation, England falls. And that day is not far off. Every successive sun helps to sever the bond once existing between England and India. Thread after thread is being cut, skein after skein unraveled; and though a thousand Morleys and a thousand Parliaments shout until they are hoarse that India is unfit to rule herself, nevertheless *India will*.

When I see the wealth of India being drained year after year; when I see her grain and produce carried away, forced away from her season after season; when I see plague and famine working havoc, 500,000 victims failing week after week; when I see the legitimate rights of Indians ruthlessly disregarded—liberty denied them—the last morsel of food snatched from their mouths; when I see the solemn pledges made by Queen and King openly belied and broken (Lord Curzon even going so far as to admit that these were made only to pacify the excited natives, and were not meant to be fulfilled); when I see the Indian denied any part in the government of his own country, and Europeans and Eurasians substituted in his place robbing him of his birthright;—when I see all this, when all this is burned into my eyes, my brain, my heart, day after day, year after year, what can I say but that British rule in India is a failure, a most miserable failure, a failure unprecedented in the history of the whole world. . . .

My heart aches as I write. Is justice dead? Is brotherly love extinct? Is progress a dream? Sisters and brothers of America, show us what to do—how to check this wholesale swindling, sacking, shooting, slaughtering of helpless Indians. A government is responsible for the agents and deputies in its pay. England should have realized this from the beginning. Equal justice for Englishman and Indian alike would have proved the